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M'sian piano virtuoso adds another feather to his cap

Penang-born Vincent Ong clinches joint fifth place at prestigious International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition.

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Malaysia should continue highlighting its quality yet affordable education, cultural diversity, English-friendly environment and strategic location to attract more international students. – *AI IMAGE GENERATED BY AZURA ABAS/THESUN*

'Health rules for haj in line with Islam's core principles'

New measures meant to protect life, prevent harm and uphold true spirit of *syariah*: Academic

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Set up NS junior programme for school delinquents

Initiative acts as intervention platform to guide troubled students through structured discipline, physical training and character-building: Expert

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Chance to woo more foreign students

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US tightening of visa policies on international scholars provides M'sian universities golden opportunity to strengthen twinning programmes and position country as top regional education hub: Educationist

New *haj* restrictions rooted in Islam, says scholar

'Individuals unfit due to illnesses not accountable for missing pilgrimage'

BY **HARITH KAMAL**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Health restrictions for next year's *haj* may have sparked concern among would-be pilgrims, but Islamic scholars say the measures are rooted in faith, protecting life, preventing harm and upholding the true spirit of *syariah*.

International Islamic University Malaysia assistant professor Dr Abu Hafiz Salleh Hudin said the new rules mirror one of Islam's core principles that no act of worship should endanger life.

"Although difficult for some, the restrictions do not contradict the essence of *syariah*. *Haj* is only obligatory for those who are physically and financially capable."

He added that those unfit due to serious or contagious illnesses are not accountable for missing the pilgrimage.

"Islam is compassionate and realistic. It never burdens a soul beyond its capacity.

"Those prevented from going because of illness still receive spiritual reward for their sincere intention."

Citing *Surah al-Imran*, verse 97, "Pilgrimage to the House is a duty owed to *Allah* by those who are able to undertake the journey", he said the concept of *istita'ah* (ability) now extends to modern health and safety standards.

"In the past, ability meant having strength, means and safe passage. Today, it also includes compliance with measures that protect pilgrims' wellbeing."

He acknowledged the disappointment felt by elderly or ill Muslims who have saved for the journey but reminded them that divine reward lies in intention.

"The Prophet said 'actions are judged by intentions.' If someone is sincere but prevented by factors beyond their control, their reward remains as though they had performed *haj*."

Abu Hafiz said the rules reflect Islam's call to preserve life.

"Restricting high-risk individuals helps prevent disease outbreaks and protects millions gathered in one place, fulfilling the Quranic principle that saving one life is like saving all mankind."

He urged Malaysian religious bodies and *haj* course organisers to emphasise health readiness and support those unable to perform the pilgrimage.

"Those affected should be reminded that their patience and intention are honoured before *Allah*. Sometimes, enduring such a test brings even greater reward than the pilgrimage itself."

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia public health specialist Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said Saudi Arabia's tighter health rules for the 2026 *haj* are justified, given the high costs and risks involved.

"If people fall sick there, the cost would be huge, borne by the pilgrim, the Saudi authorities and the Malaysian government."

She added that most elderly pilgrims have multiple chronic illnesses, making health screenings vital to ensure only the fit could handle the physically demanding journey.

"*Haj* is an arduous journey. The screenings make sure only those capable of handling the strain are allowed to go."

However, she said the rules could have drawbacks.

"Many may not be able to participate because they might not make the cut. Medical facilities would also now be run by Saudi personnel rather than Tabung Haji (TH), so those who fall ill may face financial difficulties if they need hospital care."

Saudi Arabia's new policy bars individuals with serious chronic illnesses, infectious diseases, high-risk pregnancies, or conditions affecting mobility and cognition. The move aims to protect pilgrims' health during the mass gathering in harsh desert conditions.

TH said the policy aligns with the Saudi Ministry of Haj and Umrah's stricter requirements prioritising safety and comfort.

"Individuals with certain medical conditions will not be eligible for *haj*. These measures ensure the safety and comfort of all pilgrims," TH said, adding that most Malaysian personnel sent to the Holy Land each year are Health Ministry medical staff.

Sharifa said while the rules may disappoint some, they strike a necessary balance between faith and safety.

"The intention is not to exclude but to protect. *Haj* is a sacred duty, but it also demands endurance."



Sharifa said most elderly pilgrims have chronic illnesses, making health screenings vital to ensure only the fit could handle the physically demanding journey. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

Govt reappoints Abdul Rashid as TH chairman

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has reappointed Tan Sri Abdul Rashid Hussain as Lembaga Tabung Haji (TH) chairman and board member for a two-year term effective Dec 20.

TH in a statement yesterday said the move reflects the government's continued confidence in Abdul Rashid's leadership, under which the institution has implemented significant strategic and governance reforms.

Since assuming the role on Dec 20, 2023, he has led several key initiatives, including strengthening TH's financial position and boosting returns to depositors.

"This is evident in TH's success in recording strong profits and ensuring competitive and sustainable dividend distributions," the statement said.

For the 2024 financial year, TH recorded a profit of RM2.92 billion, while its assets under management rose to about RM95.06 billion.

The institution also earned international recognition when it received the Labaytum Diamond Award from Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Haj and Umrah during the 1446H/2025M *haj* season, the highest accolade for *haj* management agencies.

Abdul Rashid expressed his appreciation to the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar for the trust placed in him to continue leading TH's transformation.

"I am grateful and deeply honoured for the opportunity to continue serving alongside TH's dedicated staff in strengthening the institution's financial position through continuous improvement and innovation, while growing depositors' funds and facilitating pilgrims in performing the *haj*.

"Our goal is to reinforce TH's standing as a respected Islamic savings institution in line with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's aspiration for TH to continuously enhance its governance and management for the benefit of depositors." – Bernama

Transformation agenda needed for progress: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia must embrace a genuine transformation agenda to progress as a nation and build a fairer, more sustainable society.

He said the country could no longer depend on outdated systems and practices, adding that meaningful change must start with a shift in mindset and a firm commitment to good governance.

"If this country is to move forward and establish a better society, it cannot sustain the old system. There are some positive aspects we could continue, but change is essential," he said when officiating at the Permodalan Nasional Berhad Knowledge Forum 2025 yesterday.

He also said transformation must go beyond slogans or policy talk, adding that reforms would be meaningless unless translated into effective action.

"We have been talking about reform and transformation, but the real test for the government, public sector and corporations is how to make these ideas work in practice."

He said structural change would not be possible without integrity and accountability in governance, adding that corruption and abuse of power remain obstacles to national progress.

"How could we talk about transformation if we are still tied to corruption and abuse of power? Challenging elites who think they can squander wealth is not easy, but it must be done."

Citing government enforcement efforts, Anwar said the administration had recovered about RM15.5 billion in lost revenue from leakages, as well as smuggling and corruption cases over the past two years.

He also highlighted the government's push to rationalise subsidies and restructure the economy, describing these as difficult but necessary steps for long-term transformation. – Bernama

'Putin considering attending summit'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Russian President Vladimir Putin is considering attending the upcoming Asean Summit, but for now, only the country's deputy prime minister has been confirmed as a representative.

Anwar said Putin had earlier expressed interest in attending the summit during their recent meeting in Beijing, but no final confirmation has been made.

"We have sent him (Putin) an invitation. He told me in Beijing that he would seriously consider it, but for now, he is sending the deputy prime minister."

The 47th Asean Summit, themed "Inclusion and Sustainability", is scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur from Oct 26 to Oct 28, with the participation of leaders from the 10 Asean member states as well as key dialogue partners including the United States, China, Japan and India.

The summit is expected to be the largest in its history since it was first held in 1976. – Bernama

Online varsity classes during Asean Summit

PUTRAJAYA: The Higher Education Ministry has announced that public and private higher learning institutions in the Klang Valley may opt to conduct online or physical teaching and learning sessions during the 47th Asean Summit next week.

In a statement yesterday, the ministry urged universities and colleges, particularly those in Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and Putrajaya, to review the locations, dates and times of road closures scheduled from Oct 26 to 28.

The ministry said the measure aims to help institutions decide whether to switch to online classes to ensure staff and students are not affected by traffic disruptions.

"The flexibility is provided to ensure the wellbeing of the staff and students of institutions of higher learning, allowing them to plan their movements while ensuring that the teaching and learning process runs smoothly," the statement said.

Earlier reports stated that six major highways and 25 key roads across the Klang Valley will experience diversions in conjunction with the summit which will take place from Oct 26 to 28.

Bukit Aman Traffic Enforcement and Investigation Department director Datuk Seri Mohd Yusri Hassan Basri said the affected highways include the North-South Expressway Central Link or Elite, New Klang Valley Expressway (NKVE), Guthrie Corridor Expressway, North-South Expressway, MEX Highway and KL-Seremban Expressway.

Among the roads to be affected are Lebuh Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Putrajaya ring road, as well as several major routes in the city such as Jalan Istana, Jalan Damansara, Jalan Tun Abdul Razak, Jalan Ampang, Jalan Sultan Ismail, Jalan Bukit Bintang, Jalan Parlimen and Jalan Kuching.

The summit marks the culmination of Malaysia's Chairmanship of Asean under the theme "Inclusivity and Sustainability". – Bernama

Malaysia poised to lead education hub race

Academics say tighter US curbs on foreign students open window to attract global talent and strengthen position as regional base

BY **QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: With global student mobility shifting amid tighter US restrictions, Malaysian universities have a golden chance to strengthen twinning programmes and position the country as a top regional education hub, said Malaysian Association for Education president Dr Mohd Majid Konting.

He said it was timely for local universities, especially private institutions, to expand and deepen their international collaborations to attract global talent and reinforce the country's role in regional higher education.

"This is an opportunity for Malaysia and it's in line with the National Higher Education Strategic Plan and the Malaysian Education Development Blueprint."

Majid said the higher education sector already has a strong pool of expertise, with more than 60,000 academic staff across public and private universities capable of developing and managing international-standard curricula for twinning programmes.

He added that many retired academics from top research universities continue to serve in private institutions, bringing decades of experience that can be harnessed to co-develop and strengthen global collaborations.

"With government support, these experts can help expand not just twinning programmes but also other academic partnerships that position Malaysia as a global education provider."

However, Majid said greater coordination, effective management and supportive policies are needed to ensure the success and sustainability of such collaborations.

"Strong leadership is essential to align differing institutional visions and maintain smooth operations between partner universities," he said,adding that local industries play a crucial role in supporting talent development through internships, research collaborations and mentorship.

"Sustainable investment is also key to ensuring long-term success. The best investment lies in talent development and industries that benefit from globally trained graduates should continue to provide opportunities and resources to strengthen such programmes."

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) academic development director Assoc Prof Dr Suriyani Ariffin said Malaysia has long positioned itself as a regional hub for higher education.

"Expanding twinning programmes can further reinforce this standing.

"Students gain valuable exposure by studying at partner universities abroad, allowing them to immerse themselves in diverse academic environments and cultural contexts.

"Through structured credit transfer arrangements with the host university, their academic achievements are formally recognised and integrated into their study programme."

Suriyani added that local industries are becoming more receptive to collaborating with universities on such initiatives, given the growing demand for globally competent graduates.

"Twinning creates a shared platform for universities and industries to co-develop talent pipelines that benefit both sectors.

"Our cultural diversity, political stability and cost competitiveness make the country an attractive choice for global students."

She added that the approach also helps students build global networks and gain a deeper understanding of international industry standards.

"UiTM has implemented various twinning and mobility programmes that allow students to broaden their academic exposure while earning credits recognised as part of their study plan.

"The Higher Education Ministry has consistently supported efforts to enhance international collaboration in higher education. It can further help by easing regulations, building global education frameworks and offering incentives to strengthen partnerships."



BENEATH THE BEAST ... Visitors flock to A'Famosa Safari Wonderland in Malacca to get a close-up view of a crocodile gliding overhead at the underwater tunnel of the park's Crocodile Kingdom. The 150ha park, home to over 150 wildlife species, blends education, conservation and adventure. – ***AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN***

Twinning programmes cost-effective path to international exposure

PETALING JAYA: For many parents, sending their children abroad is a dream often limited by cost. This makes twinning programmes an attractive alternative.

The idea of "global education at home" has gained traction as it offers international exposure at a fraction of the cost while keeping students close to family.

For Nurlaila Ngah, 51, the chance for her children to gain global experience while studying locally is something she fully supports.

"The cost will be much lower. We want all the exposure for our children – the experience of learning in an international environment, understanding different perspectives and being globally competitive. But at the same time, we want them near us since we're getting older."

Nurlaila said the Covid-19 pandemic reshaped how many parents view overseas education.

"When lockdowns happened and borders were closed, many students were stranded abroad or had to continue their studies online. That made us realise that being close to home can sometimes be safer and less stressful, especially in uncertain times."

With three children currently studying at local universities, Nurlaila believes twinning between Malaysian and foreign institutions offer parents a practical, cost-effective alternative to full overseas education.

She said besides significantly lowering expenses it also provides the quality and exposure.

"Students can still experience international-style learning and benefit from the same academic recognition as those studying abroad.

"It's a win-win situation. Our children get global experience and an internationally recognised degree and parents don't have to worry about the high cost."

Nurlaila said local universities and industries must now be ready to deliver education on a par with international standards to meet the growing demand for globally recognised programmes.

She added that she would prefer her children to pursue a twinning programme as it strikes the right balance between affordability, quality and family closeness.

Norziaty Mohd Noor, 51, said she supports expanding twinning programmes as it opens doors for students who may not have the financial means to study abroad.

She said she would consider enrolling her child in a local twinning programme with professional recognition.

"They give our students the opportunity to experience international education, even if only for a short period abroad.

"It's important that the programmes are recognised by professional bodies such as the Board of Engineers Malaysia."

She added that the concept could help families save significantly on tuition and living expenses, especially when dealing with countries that have a stronger currency.

"Global learning, even when done locally, enhances career prospects and personal growth.

"Many students now come from private or international schools that already follow international syllabi, so adapting to global learning systems is no longer a challenge."

However, given the choice, Norziaty said she would still prefer her children to study fully abroad.

"Studying abroad helps broaden cultural exposure and enhances personal development.

"It helps students be more independent, confident and open-minded.

"It also offers experiences that shape both their character and future careers."– By ***QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI***

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Party leaders should prepare successors: Analysts

'Denying youth space to move up would discourage them from politics'

BY **IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com



Chin said many leaders act as if they are beyond reproach once in office, while the political arena remains dominated by ageing figures. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

PETALING JAYA: In Malaysian politics, succession planning often means waiting for someone to retire or expire. Analysts say it is time party leaders stop treating their posts like family heirlooms and start grooming the next generation.

Universiti Malaya academic Dr Mohammad Tawfik Yaakub said party presidents who have held office for more than two terms should prepare successors and give younger members a shot at leadership.

"Leaders who are already 75 should step aside and make way for new faces. Most political parties today still have presidents aged above 75," he told *theSun*.

He said parties should not just expand membership, especially in their youth wings, but must empower younger members by appointing them to senior posts such as vice-president or supreme council member through appointed seats.

"Parties should open up competition at all levels, including among youth, while providing political training and exposure so that young people are encouraged to participate actively."

He added that denying young members space to speak up or move up the ranks would only discourage them from joining politics. He suggested introducing political education and leadership training from the age of 15 so that by 18, Malaysians are ready to lead.

In the University of Tasmania, political analyst Prof James Chin said Malaysia's problem, shared by many developing nations, is that corruption often sits at the heart of politics.

He said this fuels the reluctance of leaders to groom successors, preferring instead to cling to power.

"And when succession does happen, it usually stays within the family," Chin said, adding that Malaysia's case is complicated by fear that proteges might one day turn against their mentors.

"There are plenty of examples, but the most prominent is the fallout between Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. Mahathir believed he could trust Anwar; that decision backfired."

He said the same pattern unfolded with Mahathir's other proteges; the late Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and the now-incarcerated Datuk Seri Najib Razak.

"The root of the problem lies in the refusal of senior politicians to accept differing views or directions from their successors."

He also said many leaders act as if they are beyond reproach once in office, while Malaysia's political arena remains dominated by ageing figures.

"Most are already in their 70s. We need more dynamic, forward-thinking leaders. With technology advancing rapidly, some older politicians' worldviews have become outdated, yet they stay in power for decades, relying on emotional, religious or racial rhetoric to stay relevant."

Meanwhile, Universiti Teknologi Mara Chair of the Malay Rulers Institution Prof Datuk Jayum Jawan said academic qualifications alone do not make a capable leader.

"Wisdom and leadership insight come from real-life experience, not just from books or degrees."

He said true leadership demands compassion, empathy and understanding of others' struggles, not sympathy posts on social media for likes.

He reminded young leaders that leadership is about responsibility and not popularity, adding that in Malaysia's multi-ethnic context, leaders must serve all communities, not just their own.

"With a representative system, those who rise to state or national leadership must serve everyone. Senior figures must guide young leaders to stay on course."

Jayum added that political parties must invest in their youth wings so that when the time comes, capable successors are ready.

"Too often, older leaders assume they could stay in power indefinitely and when they are rejected, the party plunges into crisis because it failed to plan for succession."

Today, PKR is led by its 78-year-old president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, with his 44-year-old daughter and deputy president, Nurul Izzah, waiting in the wings.

Umno's president, Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi is 72, while PAS is helmed by 78-year-old Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang and Bersatu by Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, also 78.

DAP, by contrast, is led by 48-year-old secretary-general Anthony Loke, with 52-year-old Gobind Singh Deo as national chairman, a sign, analysts say, that it is possible to renew leadership without losing direction.

Call for fairness, transparency in Bersatu leadership

PETALING JAYA: Former Bersatu MP Datuk Wan Saiful Wan Jan has called on the party leadership to uphold transparency and fairness by appointing independent, qualified members to its Appeals Board, not political loyalists or "yes-men".

The Tasek Gelugor MP said the board is currently unable to function properly as only its chairman, Datuk Zulkifli Nordin, has been appointed.

"At the moment, only the chairman of the Appeals Board has been named. Under the party constitution, the board must have five members and at least three must be present for any meeting to make binding decisions," he told *theSun*.

He urged the Bersatu Supreme Leadership Council to convene and appoint the remaining members to meet the quorum and ensure the board could operate effectively.

"The president (Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin) must ensure those appointed are qualified and not merely yes-men. If the party is serious about justice and fairness, it must show this through the composition of its disciplinary and appeals bodies."

He added that he has yet to file his appeal against his dismissal as the Bersatu headquarters remained closed for the Deepavali break.

Wan Saiful, who was also a member of the council and Bersatu's Bangi division chief, was sacked with immediate effect on Oct 13 along with four other division leaders: Mohd Azrudin Md Idris (Hang Tuah Jaya), Mohd Faizal Asmar (Pengerang), Mohd Fadhli Ismail (Ipoh Timur) and Mohd Isa Mohd Saidi (Ampang).

Their expulsion followed a disciplinary probe into their alleged involvement in a controversial statutory declaration reportedly aimed at pressuring Muhyiddin to step down and make way for new leadership.

The issue has fuelled internal dissent in Bersatu, with claims it was part of a wider push for leadership change, an allegation Wan Saiful has denied.

Separately, Machang MP Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal was suspended for one term over a separate disciplinary matter related to last year's internal party elections.

"At the moment, only Zulkifli is in the Appeals Board, making it a one-man body. That is not enough for a full composition to convene. The board must be more transparent and independent than the Disciplinary Board to ensure justice," Wan Ahmad Fayhsal said.

He had earlier questioned the impartiality of the Disciplinary Board, chaired by Datuk Mohammed Radzi Abdul Manan, father-in-law to Bersatu Deputy President Datuk Seri Ahmad Faizal Azumu and father to Supreme Leadership Council member Datuk Nolee Ashilin. – *By* ***Ikhwan Zulkaflee***

'Full term needed for govt to implement policies effectively'

PETALING JAYA: Amanah election director Mohd Sany Hamzan has expressed hope that the current Parliament would be allowed to complete its full term, adding that this would provide the stability needed for the government to implement its policies effectively.

The Hulu Langat MP said fulfilling promises made to the *rakyat* requires time and continuity.

"A full parliamentary term would give the Unity government a fair opportunity to deliver on its commitments without unnecessary political disruptions.

"If we look at our country, almost every week there is a visit or engagement involving national leaders, especially world leaders. They do not come alone; they bring their Cabinet members and business figures.

"These visits are not just symbolic, they show how seriously the government is working," he told *theSun*.

He also pointed to improving economic indicators, adding that the unemployment rate continues to decline and the ringgit is gradually strengthening.

Meanwhile, Bersatu Supreme Council member Wan Ahmad Fayhsal Wan Ahmad Kamal, who is now under suspension, claimed that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim may be reluctant to call an early general election due to rising economic uncertainty and unresolved issues within his administration.

"I believe PMX is afraid because both global and domestic economic conditions are becoming increasingly unstable. There are also major unresolved scandals involving his leadership that have not been answered clearly or satisfactorily."

He said the Madani administration lacks a clear advantage or strong performance record to justify its continued mandate.

He also expressed confidence that Perikatan Nasional (PN), particularly PAS, would not only maintain its current support but likely gain additional parliamentary seats in the next general election.

"The momentum is with us. PAS especially would continue to grow its presence and PN as a whole is poised to make further gains."

There has been growing speculation that GE16 could be called earlier than scheduled to coincide with upcoming state elections, particularly in Sabah next month, followed by state polls in Malacca and Johor later.

Aligning GE16 with the state polls would help streamline resources, reduce voter fatigue and lower costs. – *By* ***Ikhwan Zulkaflee***

Woman injured after attacked by man with sharp object

MALACCA: A young female factory worker suffered a back injury after she is believed to have been attacked with a sharp object by an unidentified man while riding pillion on a motorcycle along Jalan Tangga Batu here on Monday.

Central Malacca district police chief ACP Christopher Patit said the 18-year-old victim, who works at a factory in Tanjung Kling, was taken to the Malacca Hospital for treatment and is in stable condition.

He said the incident occurred as the victim was heading home to Batu Sembilan in Tangga Batu with her 21-year-old sister-in-law, who works at the same factory.

"Preliminary findings showed that the sister-in-law did not notice anyone tailing their motorcycle before the attack, but the teenager suddenly complained of pain in her lower back and asked her to stop by the roadside.

"The sister-in-law then spotted a dark blue motorcycle ridden by a man wearing a dark jacket and blue helmet speeding away," he said in a statement yesterday.

He also said a doctor's examination found long tear marks on the victim's shirt, consistent with injuries caused by a sharp object.

He added that investigations revealed that the victim, who hails from Tangkak, Johor, arrived in Malacca about three weeks ago to work at the factory and is not known to have any disputes or contacts in the state.

Following police investigations, a 25-year-old man was arrested at 11pm on Monday at a house in Jalan Tangga Batu, Tanjung Kling in connection with the case.

Police also seized a knife, a motorcycle and helmet believed to have been used by the suspect.

The man has been remanded for seven days to assist investigations under Section 326 of the Penal Code for causing grievous hurt by using a weapon or dangerous instrument.

The remand order, issued by magistrate Sharda Shienha Mohd Suleiman at the Ayer Keroh Magistrate's Court yesterday, expires on Monday. – Bernama

Govt urged to implement National Service Junior

Initiative would guide troubled students through structured discipline and character-building: Education specialist

BY **HARITH KAMAL**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: The government has been urged to establish a National Service (NS) Training Programme Junior to rehabilitate students with serious disciplinary issues and help them rebuild positive values and self-discipline.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia education expert Dr Anuar Ahmad said the initiative could act as an intervention platform to guide troubled students through structured discipline, physical training and character-building while allowing them to continue their studies under the supervision of experienced teachers.

He said many students fall into cycles of misbehaviour due to overlapping social, family and psychological factors, rather than simply being "bad" or "lazy".

"Student misbehaviour happens for many reasons. Some misbehave because of poverty as their parents work day and night to survive.

"Some grow up without moral guidance at home while others are influenced by social media, excessive gaming or peers. Every problem requires a different remedy."

Anuar said instead of expelling troubled students, which merely shifts the problem from classrooms to communities, Malaysia needs a structured intervention system that rebuilds character, discipline and purpose.

"When we suspend or expel a student, the school's problem is solved, but the child's problem is not.

"They return to society and continue facing the same negative influences. In many cases, their behaviour worsens."

He proposed NS Junior, modelled after the national service training for post-Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia youth but adapted for younger students struggling with serious behavioural issues.

He envisions NS Junior as a year-round rehabilitation camp where students spend three months undergoing holistic character and skill-building activities under professional supervision.

"It is not meant to be military. The focus is on rebuilding self-discipline and confidence, and helping them recognise their talents and potential.

"Maybe a student misbehaves because they are not interested in studying, but they might be good at singing, art or sports. In NS Junior, we would identify and nurture that potential."

Anuar said NS Junior should not replicate the existing programme but instead provide a space in which children could rediscover their abilities and rebuild self-esteem, discipline, communication and respect for others.

He suggested that the programme be managed by the Education Ministry, possibly in collaboration with the Defence Ministry, and staffed by professionals, such as child psychologists, counsellors, retired teachers and motivational trainers.

"It is not a punishment camp. It is a place for self-development.

"Through community service and creative projects, these students could rediscover their self-worth and learn to respect others."

Anuar also proposed that participants continue their studies during the programme under trained educators, with a strict ban on social media and gaming to break unhealthy habits.

"For three months, they should be fully focused on rebuilding themselves. If they are separated from social media and peer influence during that time, their habits could be corrected," he said.

He acknowledged that implementing NS Junior would require significant resources but argued that prevention is ultimately cheaper and more effective than cure.

"Yes, it would be difficult and costly. But which is harder: developing NS Junior or building more drug rehabilitation centres and prisons?

"Which is more challenging: managing students now or dealing with the social consequences later?"

Anuar also said current disciplinary approaches, such as warnings, lectures and suspensions, are outdated and ineffective in addressing today's realities.

"We are still stuck in the old framework of punishment. Counselling sessions are often just half an hour of scolding. Students do not respond to that anymore.

"We need new, bolder solutions that truly engage them."

He added that a well-structured NS Junior could serve as a "second chance system" for troubled youth, giving them a controlled environment to rebuild their mindset and reconnect with learning.

"We need to stop merely punishing and start rehabilitating," he said.

"If we fail to act now, we risk losing a generation of young Malaysians to social problems that could have been prevented."



Anuar proposed that participants continue their studies during the programme under trained educators, with a strict ban on social media and gaming to break unhealthy habits. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

Teen stabbing suspect to be charged with murder today

KUALA LUMPUR: The male suspect involved in the fatal stabbing of a 16-year-old female student at a secondary school in Bandar Utama, Petaling Jaya will be charged with murder at the Petaling Jaya Magistrate's Court today.

The Attorney-General's Chambers said they have studied the investigation paper submitted by police over the death of the female student.

"A detailed study of the investigation paper found adequate basis for the male student involved in the incident to be charged.

"As such, the department has decided to charge the student under Section 302 of the Penal Code for murder," the department said in a statement yesterday.

The 14-year-old male suspect was previously remanded for seven days to facilitate investigations after the female victim was found dead in a toilet at the school after being allegedly stabbed repeatedly by the suspect, Bernama reported.

In the incident on Oct 14, Yap Shing Xuen died at the school after she was reportedly stabbed in the chest and neck by a schoolmate.

Celebrities back phone ban as bullying cases rise in schools

KUALA LUMPUR: Bullying in schools remains a pressing concern, with a growing number of cases involving not only physical violence but also emotional harm that threatens students' safety and mental wellbeing.

The surge in bullying incidents has prompted the government to propose several proactive measures, including restricting phone use among students aged under 16, to address the negative influence of social media linked to cyberbullying, aggressive online gaming and disciplinary problems.

Acknowledging the seriousness of the issue, local celebrities Bella Astillah and Elizabeth Tan have voiced concern for safety of the younger generation.

Both expressed support for the government's initiative, calling it timely given the alarming rise in school-related incidents.

The proposal, one of three measures decided by the Cabinet last Friday, was seen by the singer-actress duo as a necessary step to address the challenges faced by today's students.

As mother to eight-year-old Mohamed Ayden Adrean and five-year-old Ara Adreanna, Bella, whose real name is Dayang Ara Nabellah Awang Astillah, 31, said she is often moved by reports of bullying and crime occurring in institutions regarded as safe havens for children.

"Bullying, whether big or small, leaves an impact. Parents must always talk to their children because school has become their second home. The phone ban proposal makes sense because at that age, children should be focused on their studies and family.

"Social media could be a supplement, but it is not a necessity. If introduced too early, I worry they might be exposed to harmful content," said Bella, best known for her song "Lebih Indah Berpisah" (More Beautiful Apart).

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim reportedly said the Cabinet has recommended that police and the Home Ministry step up safety monitoring in schools.

The Cabinet further proposed enhancing educational content, with support from parents and Parent-Teacher Associations, to instil moral values and positive character among students.

Tan said although the recommendations are under review, such measures could help shape a younger generation that is emotionally healthier.

"In Australia, they have a law under which kids aged under 16 are not allowed to have social media. It is illegal and if they are found to have accounts, their parents could be fined.

"I think that is an interesting law, especially moving forward, because social media is getting more dangerous. For example, if you watch a violent video and like it, the algorithm would keep pushing similar content," she explained.

Nevertheless, the "Knock Knock!" singer stressed the importance of strong parent-child relationships, which allow children to share their problems openly without fear. – Bernama

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M'sian pianist places fifth in international competition

Laureates to embark on international concert tours, performing at world's most renowned venues

BY **T.C. KHOR**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com



Ong dismissed suggestions that his playing was nonchalant, saying he pays close attention to the sound and responds to it as it develops. – ***T.C. KHOR/THESUN***

PETALING JAYA: Penang-born pianist Vincent Ong has struck a historic chord for Malaysia, clinching joint fifth place at the prestigious International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw, becoming the first from the country to reach its finals.

The 24-year-old's achievement marks a major milestone for Malaysia in the five-yearly competition, long regarded as one of the world's most demanding showcases for classical pianists.

The results were announced yesterday following the final concerto performances and hours of deliberation by a 17-member international jury chaired by American pianist Garrick Ohlsson.

The winner of this year's competition received EUR$60,000 (about RM305,000) and a gold medal funded by the president of Poland.

Ong shared fifth prize with Poland's Piotr Alexewicz while Eric Lu of the United States took first place, Kevin Chen of Canada won second and Zitong Wang of China got third. Fourth prize went jointly to Tianyao Lyu of China and Shiori Kuwahara of Japan while William Yang of Australia placed sixth.

On the official Vincent Ong Music Project page, administered by his mother Sue Sudarak, she said: "A huge bonus for Vincent to get the fifth prize. He aimed only to reach the finals. Well done, Vincent! We are really proud of him and truly love his music!"

The competition offers a total prize fund of more than EUR$240,000, with EUR$60,000 going to the top winner.

Laureates would also embark on international concert tours, performing at some of the world's most renowned venues.

Each of the 11 finalists was required to perform the "Polonaise-Fantasy, Op. 61" and one of Chopin's two concertos, "E minor Op. 11" or "F minor Op. 21", accompanied by the Warsaw Philharmonic under Andrzej Boreyko.

Ong told the media on Oct 15 that the most demanding part of the competition was not the repertoire but coping with the flood of reviews, opinions and even compliments, which could at times feel overwhelming.

"Still, it is an important personal experience," he added.

He dismissed suggestions that his playing was nonchalant, saying he pays close attention to the sound and responds to it as it develops.

"Some may mistake this awareness for detachment," he told the Polish Press Agency, Poland's national news agency and a media partner of the competition.

A former winner of the 19th International Robert Schumann Competition and a fellow of the Lieven International Piano Foundation in Vienna, Ong currently teaches at the Märkisch-Oderland District Music School in Petershagen, Berlin.

He showed musical promise from the age of four after enrolling at Penang's Digital Music Academy and later trained under Malaysian pianist Ng Chong Lim before continuing his studies in Germany with Eldar Nebolsin.

This year's competition drew 642 applicants, with 162 shortlisted and 84 advancing to the main rounds.

Among them, 66 qualified through preliminaries while 19 gained direct entry as winners of other major competitions.

The participants, born between 1995 and 2009, were mostly from China, Poland and Japan.

The nearly century-old competition, inspired by the spirit of the Olympic Games, is named after Polish composer Frederic Chopin. It is held every five years in Warsaw around Oct 17, the anniversary of Chopin's death.

Widely regarded as the world's most prestigious event for young concert pianists, the competition has launched the careers of legends, including Martha Argerich, Krystian Zimerman and Seong-Jin Cho.

Traditional Kelantanese play to be held this week

KOTA BHARU: Forty-two Kelantan-born performers will bring theatrical production "Raja Kubang Labu" to life in Kuala Lumpur on Friday and Saturday in a bid to showcase traditional Kelantanese arts and culture on the national stage.

Pertubuhan Seni Rupa Jiwa deputy chairman Nik Ahmad Farhan Nik Azim said the free performance at the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka Auditorium would feature a contemporary fusion of acting, music and dance.

"This is more than entertainment. It is a reflection of identity and heritage, retelling history and tradition through a fresh, modern lens," he said.

"Raja Kubang Labu" would mark its third staging, following performances at Universiti Sains Malaysia Kubang Kerian in 2023 and Prince of Songkla University in Thailand last year.

"The work by Sabri Mohd Zain drew nearly 6,000 spectators over two nights. That response convinced us it is ready for a national platform."

Nik Ahmad Farhan added that the original script, written by Zakaria Sabri Muhammad in 1954, is among the earliest examples of Malay theatre, rich in folklore and moral values.

"Centred on a classic tale of power, love and betrayal, the reimagined production explores a king's inner conflict, torn between authority, humanity, vengeance and redemption," he said.

The cast features emerging talents, including Hafiz Mustaffar, Nik Nur Shuhada and Uda Ahmad, alongside veteran actress Datuk Fauziah Nawi.

Presented in an experimental format, the production relies solely on physical expression, without props or technical aids, to heighten authenticity and raw emotional depth.

The project is supported by the Cultural Sector Support Grant under the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka and the Kelantan Culture and Arts Department, as part of efforts to strengthen Malaysia's performing arts ecosystem.

"We are targeting over 700 attendees across the two nights," said Nik Ahmad Farhan.

Free tickets are available at www.ticket2u.com.my/event/46192/teater-eksperimental-raja-kubang-labu. – Bernama

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Sandiford after she was sentenced on Jan 22, 2013. – ***AFPPIC***

Reprieve for death row British grandma

JAKARTA: Indonesia signed an agreement yesterday to repatriate two British nationals, including a seriously ill grandmother on death row for more than a decade on drug charges, a minister said.

Lindsay Sandiford, in her late 60s, was sentenced to death in Bali in 2013 after she was convicted of trafficking drugs.

Customs officers found cocaine worth an estimated US$2.14 million (RM9.04 million) hidden in a false bottom in Sandiford's suitcase when she arrived in Bali from Thailand in 2012.

Sandiford admitted the offences but said she had agreed to carry the narcotics after a drug syndicate threatened to kill her son. In 2013 she lost an appeal against her death sentence.

Senior Law and Human Rights Minister Yusril Ihza Mahendra said he had signed a deal with British Foreign Minister Yvette Cooper for the transfer of Sandiford and Shahab Shahabadi, a 35-year-old serving a life sentence for drug offences after his arrest in 2014.

"We agreed to grant the transfers. The agreement has been signed," Yusril told a news conference in Jakarta.

The pair will be handed over after technical details of the transfer are agreed, which the minister said could take "around two weeks" to organise.

Both prisoners are suffering from severe health problems.

Sandiford has been "examined by our doctor, as well as by the doctor from the British consulate in Bali, and is seriously ill", said Yusril.

Shahabadi was "suffering from various serious illnesses, including mental health issues", he said.

The Immigration and Corrections Ministry said more than 90 foreigners were on death row, all on drug charges.

Sandiford's case caught tabloid attention back in Britain, with one newspaper publishing an article written by her.

"My execution is imminent, and I know I might die at any time. I could be taken tomorrow from my cell," she wrote in the *Mail on Sunday* in 2015.

"I have started to write goodbye letters to members of my family."

Sandiford, originally from Redcar in northeast England, wrote that she had planned to sing the Perry Como hit *Magic Moments* when facing the firing squad. – AFP

Takaichi named Japan's first woman prime minister

She pledges to make economy stronger

TOKYO: Japan got its first woman prime minister yesterday after Sanae Takaichi, a China zhawk and social conservative, forged an 11th-hour coalition deal.

Parliament appointed Takaichi, 64, an admirer of Margaret Thatcher, as prime minister, after she unexpectedly won a majority in a first round of voting.

She will formally take office after meeting the emperor.

The former heavy metal drummer became on Oct 4 head of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has governed almost non-stop for decades but is losing support.

Six days later the Komeito party, uncomfortable about Takaichi's conservative views and an LDP slush fund scandal, quit their coalition.

This forced Takaichi to form an alliance with the reformist, right-leaning Japan Innovation Party (JIP), which was signed on Monday evening.

JIP wants to lower the consumption tax rate on food to zero, to abolish corporate and organisational donations and to reduce the number of MPs.

Takaichi pledged on Monday to "make Japan's economy stronger, and reshape Japan as a country that can be responsible for future generations".

"She's a strong-minded person, regardless of being a woman," pensioner Toru Takahashi, 76, said in Takaichi's hometown Nara.

"She's not like Trump. But she's clear about what's right and wrong."

Takaichi has promised a Cabinet with "Nordic" levels of women, up from two under outgoing premier Shigeru Ishiba.

These could include the right-wing Satsuki Katayama in charge of finances and the half-American Kimi Onoda as economic security minister.

In Nara, company worker Keiko Yoshida, 39, told AFP she hopes Takaichi will "make Japan a more liveable place for women".

"I'd be happy if we saw more policies from a woman's perspective: support for childcare, and help for women returning to work after having children," said student Nina Terao, 18.

Details of a trade deal between Washington and Tokyo remain unresolved, and Trump also wants Japan to stop Russian energy imports and boost defence spending.

"I'd like her to be a prime minister who can clearly say 'No' when needed," said Satoshi Sakamoto, 73, another Nara pensioner.

Beyond Trump, Takaichi's many challenges include reversing the decline of Japan's population and injecting some vim in the flatlining economy.

Being in a minority in both houses of parliament, the new coalition will need support from other parties to push through legislation.



Applause for Takaichi after being elected on Monday. – ***REUTERSPIC***

Takaichi has in the past backed aggressive monetary easing and expanded government spending, echoing her mentor, former premier Shinzo Abe.

Despite walking back on these "Abenomics" calls in the LDP leadership contest, her victory has boosted Japanese stocks to record highs.

She previously said that "Japan is completely looked down on by China", and that Tokyo must "address the security threat" posed by Beijing.

But she has since toned down her rhetoric on China, and stayed away last week from a festival at the Yasukuni shrine honouring Japan's war dead.

Takaichi will also be under pressure to restore the fortunes of the LDP after a string of poor election results that cost Ishiba his job.

Smaller parties gaining support include the populist Sanseito, which calls immigration a "silent invasion".

"Prices have gone up, and it's tough," said Nara pensioner Satoe Tominaga, 77.

She said she was "50-50" about Takaichi. – AFP



AUSPICIOUS TAKEOFF ... Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Manet placing flowers in front of a Buddha statue as his wife Pich Chanmony looks on during an inauguration ceremony for the newly built Techo International Airport in Kandal province, on the outskirts of Phnom Penh, on Monday. – ***AFPPIC***

Hanoi envoy regrets 'touch'

SEOUL: South Korea summoned a Vietnamese envoy over allegations of sexual misconduct by Hanoi's deputy defence minister during a visit last month.

Vietnam's Deputy Defence Minister Hoang Xuan Chien is alleged to have inappropriately touched a South Korean civil servant during an annual security forum last month.

South Korea's Defence Ministry said yesterday it had taken "appropriate action" over the incident but could not confirm the summoning.

The official said that "disclosure of detailed facts is limited out of respect for the victim's wishes".

In a closed-door briefing with South Korean journalists on Monday, the Defence Ministry said it "condemned the conduct of the Vietnamese vice-defence minister and requested measures to prevent a recurrence".

The accused deputy minister left South Korea the day after the incident, and the attache was summoned a week later.

Hanoi's attache reportedly expressed regret and assured the ministry the incident would not happen again.

Hanoi's embassy in Seoul did not respond to calls from AFP.



Sarkozy starts 5-year sentence

Former French president claims innocence



Sarkozy, with his wife Bruni, leaves his residence to present himself to La Sante Prison. – ***AFPPIC***

PARIS: Former French president Nicolas Sarkozy began a five-year sentence yesterday for conspiring to raise campaign funds from Libya, arriving at La Sante prison in Paris in a stunning downfall for a man who led the country between 2007 and 2012.

The former conservative president, 70, left his home for the car journey to the prison, walking hand in hand with his wife Carla Bruni and cheered by a crowd of supporters chanting "Nicolas, Nicolas" and singing *La Marseillaise* national anthem.

Sarkozy, who was convicted and sentenced last month, is the first former French leader to be jailed since Nazi collaborator Marshal Philippe Petain after World War II.

Shortly after he headed for La Sante, Sarkozy published a long message on X in which he claimed to be a victim of revenge and hatred.

"I want to tell (French people), with the unshakable strength that is mine, that it is not a former president of the Republic who is being imprisoned this morning – it is an innocent man," he said.

Sarkozy's conviction capped years of legal battles over allegations that his 2007 campaign took millions in cash from Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who was later overthrown and killed during the Arab Spring uprisings.

While Sarkozy was found guilty of conspiring with close aides to orchestrate the scheme, he was acquitted of personally receiving or using the funds.

He has consistently denied wrongdoing and has called the case politically motivated.

His lawyers said they had filed a request for early release, pending his appeals trial, and that they expected this request to be reviewed in about a month. They said they hoped they could get Sarkozy freed on early release by Christmas.

Sarkozy will likely be held in La Sante's isolation unit, where inmates are housed in single cells and kept apart during outdoor activities for security reasons.

Conditions are similar to the rest of the prison: cells measure 9-12 sq m and, following renovations, now include private showers.

Sarkozy will have access to a television – for a monthly fee of €14 (RM69) – and a landline telephone.

Sarkozy told *Le Figaro* he would take three books for his first week behind bars, including Alexandre Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* – the story of a man who is unjustly imprisoned and who plots his revenge against those who betrayed him.

The decision to jail a former president has sparked outrage among Sarkozy's political allies and the far right.

"Nicolas Sarkozy is not a criminal," said Sarkozy supporter Jacqueline Fraboulet, who was among the crowd cheering him yesterday.

"We actually feel like the justice system is taking the power, and that's not good for France."

Sarkozy's children and brothers also attended the gathering. Sarkozy, looking sombre, waved at his supporters before heading into his car for the journey to La Sante.

The sentencing reflected a shift in France's approach to white-collar crime. In the 1990s and 2000s, many convicted politicians avoided prison altogether.

Despite his legal troubles, Sarkozy's political influence has proved resilient as French society has shifted to the right.

President Emmanuel Macron, who had warm relations with Sarkozy and Bruni, said on Monday he had met Sarkozy ahead of his incarceration. Justice Minister Gerald Darmanin said he would visit him in prison.

That angered left-wing politicians who said Macron and Darmanin were breaching judicial independence.

The son of a Hungarian immigrant, Sarkozy became president in 2007, pledging to shake things up with pro-business reforms that would reinvigorate France's stagnant economy and elevate the country to the top table of global players.

Those efforts were quickly upended by the 2008-2009 economic crisis, and voters gave him little credit for raising the retirement age to 62 from 60 and loosening rules requiring a maximum 35-hour work week. – Reuters

British TV channel deploys AI host

LONDON: A British television channel became the latest from around the world to use an artificial intelligence (AI) presenter, in a programme on Monday about the emergent technology's growing impact.

Channel 4 said it opted for an AI-generated host for the latest episode in its long-running current affairs series, *Dispatches*, to raise a wider question about trust and authenticity in the digital age.

The publicly owned, privately funded channel claimed the stunt was a first for British TV.

"The use of an AI presenter is not something we will be making a habit of at Channel 4," its head of news and current affairs Louisa Compton said in a statement.

"Instead our focus in news and current affairs is on premium, fact-checked, duly impartial and trusted journalism – something AI is not capable of doing.

"But this stunt does serve as a useful reminder of just how disruptive AI has the potential to be – and how easy it is to hoodwink audiences with content they have no way of verifying."

The *Dispatches* episode, "Will AI Take My Job?", investigated how it is changing workplaces across industries, including law, music, fashion and medicine.

The fact that the presenter, named Aisha Gaban and who appears on-screen throughout the programme, was entirely AI-generated is revealed in its closing moments.

"Some of you might have guessed: I don't exist, I wasn't on location reporting this story. My image and voice were generated using AI," she informs viewers.

Highlighting the growing role of AI tools in workplaces, the episode revealed that nearly three quarters of UK bosses have already introduced the tech for tasks previously performed by humans.

AI hosts have been appearing on TV screens in different parts of the world.

Xinhua news agency made headlines in 2018 when it introduced an AI news anchor who was a digital version of one of its regular presenters.

More recently, an AI persona named Fedha read the headlines for Kuwait News in the Gulf emirate, while Greek state broadcaster ERT did the same with an AI host named Hermes in May 2023, according to the BBC.

South Korean broadcaster SBS also handed over the duties of news presenting to AI-generated character Zae-In, for five months in 2023 while India and Taiwan have seen similar stunts, *The Guardian* reported. – AFP

Trump promises US subs for Australia

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said Australia would get coveted nuclear-powered attack submarines and signed a deal on rare earth minerals with Prime Minister Anthony Albanese at the White House on Monday.

The promise to Australia, which promotes itself as a key US ally against China, came after the Trump administration said earlier this year it was reviewing a deal for the subs signed under president Joe Biden.

"The submarines that we're starting to build for Australia are really moving along," Trump told reporters as he sat alongside Albanese in the Cabinet room of the White House.

"We've worked on this long and hard, and we're starting that process right now. And it's really moving along very rapidly, very well."

The two leaders also signed a deal on critical minerals and rare earths, which are vital for the technology that runs the global economy.

Albanese has touted Australia's abundant critical minerals as a way to loosen China's grip over global supplies.

The Australianprime minister managed to ride out an awkward confrontation between Trump and Australia's ambassador to Washington, former prime minister Kevin Rudd.

Rudd deleted a series of critical social media posts about Trump following the Republican's election victory last year.

"I don't like you either. I don't. And I probably never will," Trump said to Rudd when a reporter pointed out that the ex-PM was in the room and asked the president whether he minded the comments.

Australians have a mostly unfavourable view of the Trump administration, polling shows, though the country relies on the United States to balance China's expanding military clout in the Pacific region. – AFP

Chatbots fail Dutch voting aid test

THE HAGUE: AI chatbots are "unreliable and clearly biased" when offering voting advice, the Dutch Data Protection Authority (AP) said yesterday, warning of a threat to democracy eight days before national elections.

The four chatbots tested by the AP tended to advise people to vote for parties on the left or on the far-right extreme of the political spectrum, the watchdog tested.

The machines "often end up with the same two parties, regardless of the user's question or command", the AP said in a new report ahead of the Oct 29 election.

In more than half of the cases, the chatbot suggested either the far-right Freedom Party (PVV) of Geert Wilders or the left-wing GroenLinks-PvdA led by former European Commission vice-president Frans Timmermans.

Some parties, such as the centre-right CDA, "are almost never mentioned, even when the user's input exactly matches the positions of one of these parties".

The deputy head of the AP, Monique Verdier, said that while chatbots might seem like clever tools, "as a voting aid, they consistently fail".

Voters are being pushed towards a party that does not necessarily align with their political views, she said.

"This directly impacts a cornerstone of democracy: the integrity of free and fair elections.

"We therefore warn against using AI chatbots for voting advice, as their operation is unclear and difficult to verify." – AFP

Respect Gaza ceasefire, Trump warns Hamas

Group condemns Israeli violations

TEL AVIV: President Donald Trump warned Hamas it will be wiped out if it breaches the Gaza ceasefire, as Vice-President JD Vance travelled to Israel to shore up the fragile truce.

Special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner were already in Tel Aviv, where they were meeting Israeli hostages released by Hamas after two years of captivity.

The vice-president was expected to meet Witkoff, Kushner and US military experts monitoring the truce. According to Israeli media reports he will meet Israeli leaders, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu today in Jerusalem.

After Israel said Hamas killed two soldiers on Saturday and accused the group of stalling the handover of hostages' bodies, Washington has redoubled efforts to cement the fragile Gaza deal Trump helped to broker.

Trump says he believes the deal is still holding and that the group understands what will happen if they breach it. "They'll be eradicated, and they know that," he told reporters at the White House.

US ally and fellow truce mediator Qatar accused Israel of what its leader called the "continued violation" of the now 11-day-old ceasefire.

"We reiterate our condemnation of all Israeli violations and practices in Palestine, particularly the transformation of the Gaza Strip into an area unfit for human life," Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani told legislators.

Hamas has denied any knowledge of Saturday morning's deadly clash in the southern Gaza city of Rafah.

Israel responded after the soldiers' deaths with an intense wave of bombings the territory's Health Ministry said had left 45 Palestinians dead.

Hamas's Gaza leader, in Cairo for talks with deal mediator Egypt and Qatar, issued a statement expressing confidence the truce will hold.

"What we heard from the mediators and from the US President reassures us that the Israeli war on the Gaza Strip has ended," Khalil al-Hayya said.

Hayya insisted Hamas was serious about retrieving the bodies of the remaining 15 hostages held in Gaza, but warned that the search has been hampered by the level of destruction in the territory after two years of Israeli bombardment.

"We face extreme difficulty in recovering the bodies and continue our efforts; we have said that we need advanced heavy equipment for search and recovery," he said.

Both sides say they are committed to the US-backed truce despite the weekend's violence, and Israel confirmed Hamas handed over the body of a deceased hostage on Monday, taking the total to 13 of the 28 it had pledged to return.

The ceasefire, which went into effect on Oct 10, established an outline for hostage and prisoner exchanges, and proposed an ambitious roadmap for Gaza's future. But its implementation has quickly faced challenges.

Under Trump's 20-point plan, Israeli forces have withdrawn beyond the so-called "Yellow Line", which soldiers are busy marking with painted concrete blocks.

This leaves them in control of around half of Gaza, including the territory's borders, but not its main cities. – AFP



A displaced Palestinian girl carries water in Gaza City. – ***REUTERSPIC***

Trump-Putin summit timing unclear

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said yesterday it was unclear when a summit between President Donald Trump and President Vladimir Putin on seeking an end to the war in Ukraine would take place, and that no dates had been mentioned.

Trump has repeatedly said he wants to end the Ukraine war, the deadliest in Europe since World War Two, though he has said that finding peace has been harder than reaching a ceasefire in Gaza or ending a conflict between India and Pakistan.

After speaking to Putin on Oct 16, Trump said Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov would meet this week ahead of a possible summit in Budapest within two weeks.

But CNN cited a White House official as saying the anticipated Rubio-Lavrov meeting had been put on hold. It cited one source as saying Rubio and Lavrov had divergent expectations about a possible end to the war.

Lavrov told reporters that he had agreed with Rubio to continue telephone contacts, while the Kremlin said it was impossible to postpone a summit for which a date had not been set in stone.

"Listen, we have an understanding of the presidents, but we cannot postpone what has not been finalised," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

"We need preparation, serious preparation," Peskov said. "This may take time. That's why, in fact, no exact dates were initially set here."

Asked if Moscow had an understanding of a possible date for the summit, Peskov said: "No, there is no understanding." – Reuters

Slovak PM's attacker jailed 21 years

BANSKA BYSTRICA: A Slovak court ruled yesterday that a man who shot and wounded Prime Minister Robert Fico last year was guilty of terrorism charges and handed him a 21-year jail sentence.

Juraj Cintula, 72, shot at Fico five times from just over a one-metre distance as the prime minister greeted people in the central Slovak town of Handlova in May last year.

The verdict of the Specialised Criminal Court in the city of Banska Bystrica closes a trial that began in July and whose main question was whether Cintula, who admitted shooting Fico, was guilty of terrorism or less serious crimes.

Fico, 61, was struck four times and was seriously injured in his abdomen, and also suffered injuries to his hip, hand and foot. He made his first public appearance in July last year, a few months after the attack and returned to work shortly after.

Cintula has said he wanted to hurt but not kill Fico, because he wanted to stop him from continuing his policies which he said damaged Slovak freedom and culture.



Cintula taken to court yesterday. – ***REUTERSPIC***

The shooting laid bare deep divisions in Slovak society. Fico has blamed the mostly liberal, pro-EU opposition for fostering a climate of anger that led to the shooting.

The opposition accuses Fico of eroding democratic standards, media freedom, and covering up corruption.

Judge Igor Kralik cited Cintula's own reasoning for the attack when reading his justification for the terrorism count.

"The court considers proven that the defendant did not attack a citizen but specifically the prime minister," Kralik said.

The sentence was less than the maximum of life in prison. – Reuters

Andrew faces fresh scrutiny

LONDON: A posthumous memoir by Virginia Giuffre, who accused Prince Andrew of sexually abusing her as a teenager, went on sale yesterday, days after the disgraced prince gave up his Duke of York title.

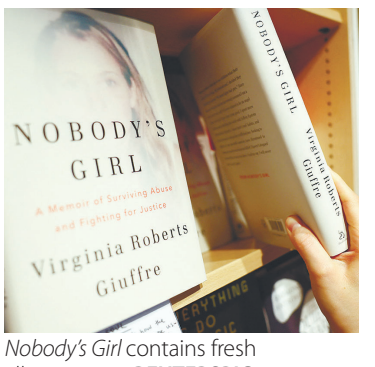
Much of the contents of the book were reported before its release, triggering renewed scrutiny on Andrew, whose conduct and connections with the late Jeffrey Epstein have long been criticised.

Andrew, 65, has always denied Giuffre's account.

He quit all royal duties in 2019 and then was stripped of his military links and royal patronages in 2022 during legal action by Giuffre in the United States.

That year, he settled a lawsuit brought by Giuffre, who died by suicide in April, which accused him of sexually abusing her when she was a teenager.

Nobody's Girl contains fresh allegations. She wrote that she feared she might "die a sex slave" and describes three alleged sexual encounters with Andrew in London, New York and a private island.



Nobody's Girl contains fresh allegations. – ***REUTERSPIC***

In Friday's statement Andrew said he would voluntarily give up his titles while repeating that he denied accusations against him.

The Scottish National Party has called for further action and is seeking a parliamentary debate demanding the government introduce a law to formally strip Andrew of his titles.

The government has said it believes the prince took the right course of action giving up his titles. – Reuters

Lessons our schools cannot ignore

COMMENT by Vanessa Scully and Dr Sean Thum

EVER so often, a nation is forced to look at itself, not through speeches or slogans, but through tragedy.

Recent incidents of violence involving students have shaken us deeply. They are not random misfortunes but reflections of what we have allowed to grow in the shadows of our schools and communities.

This is not simply about discipline gone wrong or youthful rebellion; it is about a quiet corrosion of empathy – when anger is left unaddressed, when rules replace care, when silence replaces guidance.

The hard truth is this: both the victims and the perpetrators are children. That should trouble us more than it does.

For years, our schools have focused on producing results but struggled to nurture resilience and empathy. We celebrate grades and medals but overlook the emotional and psychological bruises many young people carry unseen. When a student believes that harm is a way to be heard, the system has already failed to listen.

But this is not the moment for blame. It is not a time to point fingers or turn grief into political theatre. Doing so mirrors the very culture of humiliation and hostility that we want to eradicate.

What Malaysia needs now is not outrage but resolve to confront what is broken and to rebuild what can still be saved.

The natural impulse may be to form committees and issue statements. Yet, what children need most is not another directive but genuine presence. We need teachers, counsellors and parents who notice when something feels wrong and care enough to act.

In the short term, we must move swiftly to rebuild safety and trust in schools. Every school should have enough trained counsellors to meet the needs of their students.

Teachers, too, must receive regular training to identify signs of distress, trauma or isolation and to respond in supportive, trauma-informed ways.

Helplines and reporting systems must not only exist on paper but work in practice, ensuring that children can speak safely and be heard without fear.

Beyond crisis response, we must ask deeper questions: How did we raise a generation that equates cruelty with strength or ridicule with humour? These are not instincts; they are learned behaviours absorbed from online spaces, from unchecked media and sometimes from adults who have forgotten how to listen.

That is why social and emotional learning must be treated as a core part of education, not an extracurricular luxury. We should teach empathy as deliberately as mathematics and conflict resolution as rigorously as science. Countries that have done so, including Finland and New Zealand, have shown that when children learn compassion, classrooms become calmer and societies become kinder.

> *"We celebrate grades and medals but overlook the emotional and psychological bruises many young people carry unseen. When a student believes that harm is a way to be heard, the system has already failed to listen."*



The internet has become an invisible classroom where many children learn values, for better or worse. Digital literacy must, therefore, grow into moral literacy. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

We must also recognise that safety today extends beyond the school gate. The internet has become an invisible classroom where many children learn values, for better or worse. Digital literacy must, therefore, grow into moral literacy: teaching young people the difference between influence and integrity, between attention and empathy.

The measure of an education system is not the number of distinctions it produces but the kind of citizens it nurtures. We cannot afford to raise bright minds who have lost their humanity, such as children who can code but not care and who can argue but not understand.

Let these painful moments not fade into memory. Let them move us to reflection, reform and renewal. Because the safety of a school is not built by fences but by trust. And trust can only grow where compassion is taught, practised and lived.

Let us not cancel but correct. Let us not blame but build. For when we teach our children to heal, we teach a nation to remember its humanity.

Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

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What card will Trump play at Asean summit?

WITH the clock ticking down on President Donald Trump's expected attendance at the Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur, opposition to the invitation has intensified on regional social media. However, none of the mainstream media, especially in the West, have seen it newsworthy to report it.

The calls from many Asean social media commentators for the bloc to withdraw its invitation to Trump stem from a mix of historical precedent, current economic and geopolitical anxieties and a rejection of his political style and policies.

These concerns can be discerned in several key areas:

Multifaceted economic impacts

Trump's tariff war is arguably the most potent and immediate threat to Asean's near-to-medium-term economic outlook. While internal challenges are significant, the US-driven global trade war would be an exogenous shock of a magnitude that could easily overshadow them and become the dominant negative factor for the region's development.

- ***Broken links:*** Asean is a critical node in global supply chains, particularly in electronics, automobiles, wood products and textiles. Many products are manufactured across Asean, China, other parts of Asia and Europe, with components crossing borders multiple times. The tariffs initiated by Trump have disrupted this complex network and made it more expensive and logistically chaotic.
- ***Increased production costs:*** Companies have to deal with higher costs for imported goods and components, squeezing profit margins and forcing costly and rapid reconfigurations of their supply chains.
- ***Global and regional slowdown:*** The IMF and World Bank have downgraded global growth forecasts due to the trade war. A weaker global economy means less demand for Asean's exports, reduced earnings, greater fiscal challenges, rising unemployment and worsening of poverty across the region.
- ***Commodity price volatility:*** The uncertainty has led to fluctuations in global commodity prices, affecting key Asean agrarian sectors and rural populations.

Disruption and "Maga" diplomacy

Asean's central principle is consensus and neutrality. The bloc operates through careful and quiet diplomacy, avoiding public confrontation and maintaining a balance between major powers.

- ***Trump's disruptive style:*** Commentators point to his previous performances at international forums (like the G7 and North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) where he openly berated allies, dismissed multilateralism and prioritised bilateral transactional deals. They fear he would use the Asean summit as a stage to:
- Publicly pressure individual leaders on trade deficits or security commitments;
- Force a binary "with us or against us" choice regarding China, which Asean fiercely resists;
- Disrupt the carefully crafted, consensus-based language of the summit's final communique.
- ***Perception of disregard and disrespect:*** His past behaviour, such as skipping key Asean-related meetings during his previous presidency, has left a perception that he does not value the member organisation or its leaders. Inviting him back is seen as rewarding this dismissive and arrogant attitude.

Damage to Asean's centrality and cohesion

"Asean centrality" is the cornerstone of the bloc's foreign policy – a long-held and repeatedly reaffirmed position that Asean should serve as the primary driving force in shaping regional architecture and geopolitics. This underpins Asean's fear and rejection of anti-China groupings such as QUAD and Aukus, which have been initiated by US policymakers to contain China in the Indo-Pacific region.

- ***Undermining the bloc:*** Trump's well-documented preference for unilateralism over multilateralism or even bilingualism is a direct threat to this concept. By dealing with countries one-on-one in the tariff war, he is seen as weakening Asean's collective bargaining power.
- ***Creating division:*** Commentators fear he will exploit existing divisions within Asean (for example, between claimants and non-claimants in the South China Sea) to benefit the US, thereby fracturing the unity that is essential for the bloc's wellbeing and relevance.

Concerns over volatile and unpredictable agenda

Unlike a traditional political leader, Trump's agenda is highly personal and unpredictable. This is the consensus not only of foreign governments and allies but also of his domestic opposition in the US.

- ***Focus on grievances, not cooperation:*** There is a concern that he is not coming to discuss regional cooperation on climate, digital economy or infrastructure, or any of the region's concerns but to air threats and grievances about trade, demand support for his political narrative or launch new verbal attacks on China.
- ***The "Trump show":*** The summit could be hijacked and focus on Trump himself – his statements, controversies and feuds – rather than on the substantive challenges and issues facing Southeast Asia. This diverts attention from Asean's own goals and priorities.

Ideological and normative opposition

Many in Southeast Asia's civil society and among the educated youth are aligned with liberal democratic values. However, they are against any form of external pressure on how these values are manifested and reject attempts by outside forces seeking to impose their version on other societies.

- ***The "Trumpism" brand:*** Trump's political brand is associated with policies and rhetoric that are unpopular with these segments.
- ***Climate change denial:*** This is a critical issue for vulnerable Asean nations like Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia.
- ***Authoritarian sympathies:*** His praise for strongmen and autocrats is seen as undermining democratic movements and human rights in the region.
- ***Divisive rhetoric:*** His comments on race, religion and immigration are viewed as contrary to the pluralistic character of many Southeast Asian societies.
- ***Legitimising a figure they oppose:*** For these commentators, inviting Trump is seen as legitimising a figure many view as a threat to global stability and democratic norms. They do not want their region to be a platform for his political dominance and any new form of American hegemony.



Asean's central principle is consensus and neutrality. The bloc operates through careful and quiet dilpomacy, avoiding public confrontation and maintaining a balance between major powers. — ***BERNAMAPIC***



"Trump's tariff war is arguably the most potent and immediate threat to Asean's near-to-medium-term economic outlook."

The domestic US political context

The invitation is not happening in a vacuum.

- ***Legal troubles:*** Trump is currently a defendant in multiple criminal and civil cases. Some commentators argue that it is inappropriate to extend a state-level invitation to a figure facing such serious legal charges.
- ***Political instability:*** Inviting a leader who continues to challenge the legitimacy of US electoral institutions and is engaged in military action and acts of war against Venezuela and other neighbouring countries in Latin America is seen as injecting US domestic and foreign policy political turmoil into the Asean summit.

Conclusion: Clash of values and geopolitical visions

In summary, the call to withdraw the invitation is a reaction to the profound mismatch between the "Asean way" (consensus, quiet diplomacy, neutrality and institution-building) and the "Trump Way" (transactional, unilateral, confrontational and personality-driven).

For social media commentators and opponents against the visit, Trump represents volatility, disrespect for institutional norms and standards – a forced choice in the US-China rivalry that Asean member countries (except for one or two countries) would prefer not to be entangled in and what is being seen as the latest manifestation of American hegemony in Maga (Make America Great Again).

They believe his presence can:

- Undermine Asean's cohesion and centrality.
- Shift the focus from regional concerns and cooperation to US politics and geopolitical confrontation with China.
- Legitimise a foreign policy and political style they find damaging to regional and global stability.

Therefore, they see disinviting him not as an act of hostility towards the US but as an act of protection for Asean's own interests and principles.

The reality facing opponents of Trump's visit is that it is almost certain to proceed. A disinvitation may be seen as diplomatic *harakiri* for Asean. Therefore, the better strategy is to encourage Trump to play a positive role in supporting the bloc's peaceful and sustainable development by curtailing American foreign policy and economic actions aimed at bullying and exploiting the organisation's member nations.

One recent positive example is the outbreak of armed conflict between Thailand and Cambodia. The breakthrough ceasefire was the result of a coordinated effort. Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim played a central role as the host and mediator while Trump, according to some sources, is said to have applied diplomatic and economic pressure credited with pushing the parties to agree to a truce.

On its part, Asean should also, at the summit, explore the possibility of playing a mediator role in the current US-China trade conflict.

Whilst Asean's primary focus should be on shielding its economies from the collateral damage of the trade war and strengthening its own regional resilience, Asean actions and strategic importance can create important indirect pathways to influence the broader dynamic of deals that can benefit member countries now facing Trump's tariff bazooka.

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

Eco-conscious desires clash with budget reality

Survey shows most consumers only willing to pay less than 10% more for sustainable products



Recent findings by Central Force International reveal a great consumer tug of war - 91% want sustainable products but wallets resist, providing a clear roadmap for businesses to adapt.

KUALA LUMPUR: According to the Malaysia Consumer Trend Report 2025, a nationwide survey of 500 Malaysians has found that 91% of consumers are open to the idea of purchasing sustainable products.

However, this intention is heavily tempered by price sensitivity, with the majority only willing to pay less than 10% more, revealing a significant gap between eco-conscious desires and purchasing reality.

This brings us to the pivotal question: while people may care about the planet, are they willing to pay more to protect it?

The data reveals a clear answer: only if the price is right.

Widespread adoption is blocked by three major barriers - cost (most will only pay <10% more), credibility (32.4% are not sure if eco-friendly claims are real), and convenience (18.2% find sustainable products hard to find).

In short, consumers want to buy green, but to do so confidently, they need clarity, price confidence, and better accessibility to actually follow through.

Intention-action gap

This intention-action gap is further highlighted in daily habits. While many Malaysians are familiar with the core pillars of sustainability, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, full adoption is still a work in progress.

"Malaysians are trying, but their sustainability behaviour is still fragmented," said Central Force International CEO See Toh Wai Yu.

"While the intention exists, execution is often uneven due to habit, lack of infrastructure, or simple inconvenience.

"This is where businesses can step in to make sustainable choices."

According to the report, only 48.8% of Malaysians consistently practice the 3Rs, meaning that vast amounts of valuable resources still end up in landfills.

In Selangor alone, 10,000 tonnes of waste are generated daily, making it the nation's largest contributor and a significant source of emissions. The urgency is clear, businesses must step up with practical, low-friction solutions such as refill programmes, recycling partnerships, and in-store prompts to help turn consumer awareness into consistent green action.

Furthermore, action-reward steps are a powerful way to encourage change.

Motivation is key: the study found that 26.2% of Malaysians would practice 3R habits more often with rewards.

"Consumers are open to adopting greener habits, but they want it to feel worthwhile, not burdensome. Therefore, simple reward systems can build lasting habits," said See Toh.

The survey indicates that while a willingness to adopt sustainable habits exists, consumers remain practical in their approach.

To align with this value-driven mindset, businesses must tailor their products to offer clear and compelling value.

This behaviour suggests that purchasing decisions are influenced more by conscious prioritisation than by a lack of interest or weak habits regarding sustainability.

Resilient festive spending

Per the survey, consumers' selective spending behaviour, and purchase priorities are shown to extend to other areas as well.

Examining spending patterns during culturally meaningful occasions like festivals, for example, highlights a continued willingness to spend as they prioritise on sectors that prioritise celebrations, gifting, and presentation.

Supporting this trend, the report also uncovered that festive spending remains a non-negotiable priority for Malaysians, defying broader cost-of-living pressures.

This cultural spending is a powerful economic driver, evidenced by a 5.7% year-on-year jump in wholesale and retail trade to RM154 billion during the festive period.

Winning the Sustainable Shopper

To succeed in this space, a strategy must reflect both the emotional support for eco-consciousness and the financial realities of daily life.

The report advises businesses to make their products: Affordable, Transparent, Accessible and Motivating Sustainability is not just a trend; it's an evolving consumer expectation.

Tropicana receives two more green building certifications



(From left) Tropicana ESG senior manager Raja Zalina; Tropicana's M&S team senior executives Nik Hajar and Willie Tan; Tropicana ESG unit and group corp comm senior GM Serena Lim; Green RE senior manager Nur Fateha Jamaluddin; Tan; Ashwin; Wong; Tropicana general manager (project) Foo Mao Hsien; Tropicana senior manager (project) Oon Khai Yee; GreenRE sales and marketing manager Juanita Lourdes; and Tropicana ESG executive Muhamad Fadli.

PETALING JAYA: Last year, Tropicana Corporation Bhd inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with GreenRE Sdn Bhd, pledging its long-term commitment to green building and driving sustainable living in Malaysia.

This year, Tropicana celebrated two more green building milestones by receiving GreenRE certification for Tropicana Miyu residences at Petaling Jaya and Tropicana Cenang's Clarissa Serviced Suites at Langkawi.

This initiative is also aligned with Tropicana's vision to connect communities and forge sustainable futures by encouraging property buyers to adopt greener living, reduce carbon footprints, and embrace a cleaner, greener future.

This green partnership focuses on adopting best practices, as outlined by GreenRE, a leading green building certification body formed by Malaysia's Real Estate and Housing Developers' Association (Rehda) that promotes sustainability in Malaysia's property industry.

Tropicana managing director of project Allan Wong shared: "For more than 46 years, Tropicana has been redefining the art of living, pushing the boundaries between work-live-play-shop-learn concept.

"We are the master planners for more than 18 townships across Malaysia, and we recognise the importance of sustainable living."

He added the recent two more GreenRE certifications for Tropicana Miyu and Tropicana Cenang, showcases their continued pledge to their long-term commitment to green building practices.

"We are honoured to receive these awards, and we extend our appreciation to GreenRE for their recognition and to Temokin Group for their good support. We will continuously invest in green initiatives and embrace best practices."

Temokin Group executive director Jeremiah Tan said: "Our partnership with Tropicana is into its 6th year, and it has been a highly successful few years where we achieved many milestones together.

"We are pleased to collaborate with Tropicana, developing the modern Tropicana Miyu residences at Petaling Jaya.

"Having achieved 100% sold-out status and a high QLASSIC score of 85%, it is certainly a testament to the quality of the product that was born from this joint effort."

He added they celebrated another milestone by receiving GreenRE certification for this development and this marked their commitment to building a greener future for the community.

Over the years, Tropicana has built more than 20 developments that have received the hallmark of green building certifications, demonstrating its ongoing efforts for sustainable living.

Speaking at the certificate award ceremony recently, GreenRE executive director Ashwin Thurairajah shared: "We are pleased to present these two green certifications to Tropicana and glad to see that Tropicana has been an advocate of green building for many years.

"We are also pleased that the group has remained committed to this long-term partnership, reflecting our united vision for a greener future.

"We hope to encourage other corporate citizens to join our mission in making Malaysia a greener nation."

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Editorial
T: 03-7784 6688
F: 03-7785 2625
E: *sunbiz@thesundaily.com*

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Sasbadi, Agmo to jointly develop LLM for education sector

PETALING JAYA: Sasbadi Holdings Bhd (SHB), through subsidiary Sasbadi Online Sdn Bhd (Sasbadi), has entered into a joint venture cum shareholders' agreement (JVA) with Agmo Holdings Bhd (AHB), via wholly owned subsidiary Agmo Capital Sdn Bhd (Agmocap), to jointly develop a Large Language Model (LLM) specifically designed for Malaysia's education ecosystem.

The collaboration has been formalised through a joint venture arrangement designating Penerbitan Minda Sdn Bhd, currently a wholly owned subsidiary of Sasbadi, as the joint venture company.

Sasbadi and Agmocap will hold 55% and 45% equity interests in the JV, respectively. The initiative marks a major step forward in realising Malaysia's aspirations for data sovereignty and vision for an artificial Iintelligence-driven education system, in line with the National Artificial Intelligence Roadmap 2021–2025, the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint and the Digital Education Policy.

Under the JVA, SHB Group, Malaysia's education solutions provider with over 40 years of experience, will contribute its vast digital educational assets, proprietary content and domain expertise to train and fine-tune the LLM. The model will be aligned with Malaysia's National Curriculum and designed to support personalised, bilingual learning experiences for Malaysian students and educators.

Meanwhile, Agmocap will lead in developing and maintaining the LLM, overseeing its architecture design, dataset integration, and performance optimisation. The LLM will leverage advanced AI techniques such as natural language processing, reinforcement learning from human feedback, and multimodal AI capabilities to deliver accurate, contextual, and adaptive user interactions.

The collaboration aims to produce the nation's first education-specialised LLM, capable of powering AI-driven tutoring, adaptive learning systems and intelligent content creation tools, which are key enablers in the next phase of Malaysia's EdTech growth.

The partnership positions both SHB and AHB at the forefront of Malaysia's AI and digital education revolution, capitalising on the expected growth of EdTech and AI adoption across Southeast Asia.

By combining SHB's educational content leadership with AHB's technical capabilities in AI, the JV aims to offer commercial applications of the LLM in corporate training, language learning, and knowledge management, targeting both Malaysian and regional markets, with potential global export opportunities – offering new growth avenues and recurring revenue streams.

PM: Need to uphold sound governance, fiscal discipline

Economic growth cannot come at expense of social equity and integrity amid transformation, says Anwar



Anwar (left) and moderator Lorraine Hahn during a session titled 'In Conversation with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim' at the Permodalan Nasional Bhd Knowledge Forum 2025 yesterday. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has emphasised the importance of strong governance, fiscal discipline and education as Malaysia continues to restructure its economy amid efforts to strengthen growth and reduce inequality.

Reflecting on the government's performance in its first year, Anwar who is also the finance minister said the administration had to confront deep-rooted fiscal challenges, including high national debt and systemic inefficiencies, while embarking on comprehensive policy reforms.

"We were struggling in the first year because we inherited huge debts.

"People have to understand that we need to embark on new policies and restructure the economy," he said in his keynote address at the Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) Knowledge Forum 2025 here yesterday.

Anwar said that while Malaysia pushes forward with digital transformation and artificial intelligence (AI) adoption, the government remains committed to ensuring inclusivity and addressing structural disparities in education and connectivity.

"You talk about AI and digital, but we still need to educate the masses. Celik Madani is one of our initiatives to raise awareness on financial literacy, investment and savings. There is still a disconnect between those with full access to connectivity and those in rural or urban poor areas. We cannot tolerate this imbalance," said the prime minister.

Anwar reiterated that real progress must be anchored in sound governance, truth, justice and compassion, noting that economic growth cannot come at the expense of social equity and integrity.

He noted recent fiscal enforcement successes, highlighting that the government had recovered RM15.5 billion through stricter action against corruption, smuggling and financial leakages.

"Due to effective enforcement by the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, the police and tax agencies, we were able to recover billions that were previously lost to leakages and racketeering.

"The real question is, how did we tolerate this for decades," he said.

Anwar reaffirmed that the government's next phase of economic reform would continue to prioritise governance, accountability and equitable development to ensure Malaysia's transformation remains sustainable and inclusive.

He reiterated that he will not interfere in commercial decisions to uphold market integrity, underscoring his administration's commitment to maintaining transparency and professionalism in Malaysia's corporate and economic landscape.

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Business decisions should be driven by merit, efficiency and market realities rather than political influence, Anwar said.

"I do not interfere in commercial decisions, and none of my Cabinet colleagues should.

"Yes, we support new technology, green initiatives and welfare programmes, but we do not interfere in protecting personal or vested interests. The commercial decision is entirely yours."

Meanwhile, Anwar said the government has introduced several key policy measures to strengthen domestic investments, including initiatives such as the GEAR-uP programme, while realigning major institutions such as PNB and Khazanah Nasional Bhd with their core objectives to drive sustainable national growth.

He stressed the importance of staying true to their core aspirations and improving governance standards.

The prime minister added that while monitoring progress remains part of his responsibility, their hard work and strong commitment in implementing the reforms effectively have been commendable. – Bernama

MPOC: September palm oil stocks highest in 22 months

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's palm oil exports rose by 102,000 tonnes (up 7.7% month-on-month) to 1.42 million tonnes in September, with most regions recording gains except the European Union and the Asia-Pacific, Malaysian Palm Oil Council (MPOC) said yesterday.

The largest improvement came from South Asia, where exports to India reached 312,000 tonnes, the highest in 11 months.

Shipments to Sub-Saharan Africa, the Middle East and North Africa, the Americas and Central Asia also registered increases during the month.

"Palm oil stocks in September climbed to 2.36 million tonnes, the highest in 22 months, even though export growth outpaced production. The increase was largely driven by domestic consumption normalising to its usual range of 300,000 to 350,000 tonnes per month, after reaching a record monthly high of 499,000 tonnes in August. Imports also rose by 20,000 tonnes (+33.9% month-on-month), further contributing to the stock buildup," said MPOC.

It added that palm oil once again traded at a premium to soybean oil in the global market.

As of mid-October, palm oil was priced US$42 per tonne higher than soybean oil in Europe and US$26 higher in India. The price discount of palm oil to soybean oil was short-lived between April and September. Speculation over Indonesia's potential implementation of the B50 biodiesel mandate remains a key factor supporting palm oil prices.

MPOC said the ongoing US-China trade conflict has started to cause a buildup in US soybean stocks, as the country began harvesting its crop in September and October. It added that China has suspended soybean imports from the US since May 2025, sourcing almost entirely from South America.

The council said vegetable oil prices are expected to remain firm through the remainder of 2025, supported by strength in palm and soybean oil. "Diminishing exportable soybean oil supplies from Argentina are likely to lift prices in the coming months, while ongoing speculation over Indonesia's B50 mandate will continue to lend support to palm oil."

It added that palm oil prices are projected to hold steady above RM4,400 per tonne but market sentiment remains cautious amid weak crude oil prices, high vegetable oil inventories in major consuming markets such as China and India, intensifying US-China trade tensions and a buildup of global soybean stocks.

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Across Corporate Malaysia, a continuous transformation

More than just a strategic initiative – it's an ongoing journey of reshaping mindsets, rethinking strategies and refreshing values: Business leaders

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

KUALA LUMPUR: Across Corporate Malaysia, transformation has emerged as more than just a strategic initiative – it is a mindset shaping how organisations evolve, compete and create value.

For Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB), transformation reflects a journey of continuous growth and renewal, marked by a shift from a predominantly domestic investment focus to a more diversified and globally attuned portfolio.

PNB deputy president and group chief executive Datuk Rick Ramli said this evolution has required rethinking business models, refreshing corporate values and cultivating a stronger culture of purpose and learning.

"PNB's efforts underscore that transformation is not a single milestone but a sustained process of building resilience, trust, and relevance in a changing world. Since our inception, PNB's portfolio has undergone a remarkable shift. In the early years, about 96% of our investments were concentrated domestically, with only 2% allocated internationally.

"Today, while those proportions have changed significantly, the principle remains the same – transformation is never a one-time effort but a continuous process," he told delegates at a panel discussion entitled "Transformation at Scale: Delivering Sustainable Shareholder Value in Malaysia", at the PNB Knowledge Forum 2025 yesterday.

He said the challenge in this transformation journey lies in the evolution of PNB itself – an evolution that reflects the agency's growth and learning over time.

He added that this transformation required PNB to rethink, reorganise and re-strategise.

"We had to rebuild many of our processes and realign our distribution model, moving from a business focused mainly on annual monetary returns to one that offers broader, more meaningful services to our unitholders.

"Our goal has been to strengthen customer relationships, ensuring that we deliver not only financial outcomes but also real value and trust.

"To do this effectively, we needed to change how our organisation operates – from how we deliver services, to how we engage with our customers, partners and stakeholders. It has been a challenging but necessary journey, one that demanded both operational transformation and cultural renewal," Rick said.

Sime Darby Property Bhd group managing director and CEO Datuk Seri Azmir Merican said the company shares a similar conviction that transformation is an ongoing pursuit of excellence.

He said operating within an ever-changing market landscape, the company recognises the need to anticipate and adapt to cyclical shifts while staying anchored in its purpose – to serve communities and create lasting impact.

"At Sime Darby Property, we have made significant strides, but transformation also means acknowledging where we can do better. Understanding both our successes and our challenges allows us to make more informed decisions for the future.

"As a property developer, we operate within an ever-changing landscape, one that moves in cycles and responds to broader economic and social shifts. We cannot simply stand aside when these market cycles unfold; instead, we must anticipate, adapt, and position ourselves to capture emerging opportunities.

"Ultimately, our purpose remains clear: to serve the communities we build for. Transformation, for us, is not just about growth in numbers or projects delivered – it's about creating long-term value, improving lives, and ensuring that our developments contribute meaningfully to the people and places we serve," he said.

Maybank Group president and group CEO Datuk Seri Khairussaleh Ramli said the banking group will hold an annual awards convention every year to recognise and promote the spirit of transformation within the organisation.

He said this initiative is aimed at identifying effective ways to drive transformation and foster a supportive environment for it to thrive.

"At this organisation, we are committed to creating a new focus and pursuing policies that reinforce our transformation agenda.

"I believe this effort is increasingly important. Personally, I'm very keen to ensure that Maybank continues to build a strong culture of learning. Even if we start small, having everyone take part in this learning journey would be truly tremendous," he said.

PNB yesterday hosted the PNB Knowledge Forum 2025 themed "Transformation", highlighted by a session titled "In Conversation with Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim". Organised by PNB Research Institute, the forum brought together global thinkers, national leaders, corporate architects and personal voices to chart how transformation shapes economies, organisations and lives.

Permodalan Nasional's evolution drives sustainable returns for unitholders

KUALA LUMPUR: Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB) has moved from being a predominantly domestic investor to one that is increasingly global and evolved from a single-asset, equity-focused house to a multi-asset investor.



President and group CEO Datuk Abdul Rahman Ahmad said as a result, PNB has been able to deliver sustainable returns to their unitholders – distributing RM14.5 billion last year, the highest in five years, bringing the cumulative total distribution to all Malaysians to RM263.7 billion since its inception.

"At the same time, we are transforming how we serve our customers, from enhancing our digital platforms, expanding our products, changing our distribution model, all aimed at making investing more accessible, convenient and personalised. We hope that taken together, these transformation efforts will build the foundation for a stronger, more future-ready PNB," he told delegates at the PNB Knowledge Forum 2025 yesterday.

Abdul Rahman said PNB believes responsible transformation must be purposeful, disciplined and deliver positive meaningful impact. "For us, this means every transformation we undertake must be directed towards delivering better outcomes for our unitholders, in line with our purpose of enhancing the financial lives of Malaysians, across generation."

Abdul Rahman noted that since the change in presidency in the United States, geopolitics, world economy and global trade are all being redefined and transformed.

Decades of established politics, economic orthodoxy and trade policy are being recalibrated, creating what many now predict to potentially be a multipolar world, he said.

"At the same time, technology and AI are transforming how we live and work. More specifically relating to investment, technology and AI are fundamentally reshaping global markets with Magnificent 7 stocks today commanding a combined market capitalisation of more than US$20 trillion (RM84.5 trillion), driving capital market performance with size, influence and impact beyond most nations.

"In the context of Corporate Malaysia, where KLCI total shareholder returns over the last 10 years was anaemic, delivering return below fixed deposit rate, Malaysian companies must transform to deliver better shareholder value to avoid another lost decade," Abdul Rahman said.

As individuals, he added, Malaysians recognise the need to develop new skills, adapt to new ways of working and rethinking how to save and invest for the future.

"So the relevance of transformation at every level is clear. Yet we are mindful that transformation, while powerful, is not automatically positive. Change can bring progress and improvements but also adverse effects and negative disruption, and its outcome depends on how it is led and navigated.

"At PNB, we believe responsible transformation must be purposeful, disciplined, and deliver positive meaningful impact. For us, this means every transformation we undertake must be directed towards delivering better outcomes for our unitholders, in line with our purpose of enhancing the financial lives of Malaysians, across generation," Abdul Rahman said.

Since 2017, PNB Research Institute has organised the PNB Knowledge Forum as a platform that brings together thought leaders, industry experts and stakeholders to discuss issues shaping the nation and the economy.

PNB Group chairman Raja Tan Sri Arshad Raja Tun Uda (*pic*) emphasised that holistic transformation goes beyond economic reforms alone, encompassing leadership governance, institutional integrity, societal equity and cultural heritage.

He said the Madani Economic Framework serves as the blueprint to strengthen fiscal responsibility and empower the *rakyat* while positioning Malaysia competitively on the global stage.

"In today's fast-changing world, transformation is no longer just about adaptation, it is about rethinking how we work, lead, and create value at every level.

"For PNB, this means staying true to our mandate to enhance the economic wealth of all Malaysians through inclusive financial empowerment, offering diverse investment options that make wealth-building accessible to all, ensuring shared prosperity," he said.

This year, PNB has broadened participation to bring together not only Corporate Malaysia, industry partners and policymakers but also selected unitholders, and the next generation of Malaysians, particularly the *Celik Madani* participants. – *by* ***JOHN GILBERT***

Farmiera to raise RM29.25m from IPO to fund expansion plans

BY **HAYATUN RAZAK**
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

SHAH ALAM: Farmiera Bhd, a poultry producer and distributor, aims to raise RM29.25 million through its initial public offering (IPO) to fund its expansion plans.

Of the total proceeds from the IPO, 42.9% and 32.8% will be allocated for the construction of parent stock farms and a hatchery, respectively.

Farmiera managing director and CEO Hong How Seng said the company's expansion plans include the construction of three parent stock farms comprising 12 breeder houses, with four in Pahang and eight in Negeri Sembilan, to produce fertile eggs for its hatchery operations.

The group will also build a 36,000 sq ft hatchery in Mahsan, Negeri Sembilan, equipped with 12 incubators and designed to handle an annual capacity of 22.6 million eggs.

"The upstream move into broiler breeding and hatchery segments will enable Farmiera to secure its own day-old chick supply, exercise greater cost control and ensure consistent product quality throughout its vertically integrated supply chain. We are confident that these strategic initiatives will position Farmiera for sustainable growth and deliver enduring value to our stakeholders," he said at the prospectus launch yesterday.

To support the company's growth and upstream vertical expansion, 9.6% of the proceeds will be earmarked for working capital, while the remaining balance will be used to cover listing-related expenses.

Hong said that since its establishment in 2013, the group has built a strong track record of delivering a consistent and reliable supply of broiler chickens to support its live broiler trading and poultry processing businesses.

"We are now embarking on a decisive step towards upstream vertical integration, driven by our confidence that chicken meat will remain the most important and affordable source of protein amid rising demand," he added.

The IPO entails a public issue of 117 million new ordinary shares at 25 sen per share, representing 26% of its enlarged issued share capital of 450 million shares.

For FY2024, Farmiera recorded revenue of RM561.1 million and net profit of RM7 million, up from RM535.8 million and RM6.4 million respectively in FY2023.

Farmiera manages 15 self-operated farms and 44 contract farms across Peninsular Malaysia, supported by two processing facilities in Lukut and Ipoh with a combined daily capacity of 45,000 broilers.

The group's operations are halal-certified by the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia and MeSTI-certified by the Health Ministry, and the counter is syariah-compliant.

Malacca Securities Sdn Bhd is the principal adviser, sponsor, underwriter and placement agent for the IPO.

Malacca Securities managing director Lim Chia Wei said Farmiera has established a solid presence in the poultry industry, backed by strong farming standards and a clear focus on operational excellence.

Farmiera is scheduled to be listed on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities on Nov 12.

Vantris Energy JV secures Aramco diving services deal

Seven-year contract strengthens earnings visibility under group's overseas O&M division


Rawabi Sapura's collaboration with Aramco brings together Malaysian and Saudi expertise to strengthen regional energy infrastructure.

PETALING JAYA: Vantris Energy Bhd's joint venture Rawabi Sapura Ltd (Rawabi JV), has been awarded a seven-year contract commencing in 2027 to provide essential diving support services for Aramco, one of the world's leading integrated energy and chemicals companies.

Rawabi JV is a joint venture under Vantris Energy's Operations & Maintenance (O&M) division.

This landmark agreement, Rawabi JV's first with Aramco, will include the provision of comprehensive diving support services such as diving support vessels with crew, remotely operated underwater vehicle and associated personnel, diving equipment, divers, diving management, and supervisory, diving, and onshore support personnel to perform diving services in Saudi Arabia.

Effective from May 1, 2027 until April 30, 2034, the scope of work also covers underwater inspections, surveys, photography, material testing, structural repairs, and related activities.

Rawabi JV's diving support services are essential for maintaining and inspecting subsea infrastructure, directly protecting the integrity and longevity of Aramco's valuable assets in Saudi Arabia. This collaboration combines the strengths and expertise of both partners to deliver world-class offshore solutions.

Vantris Energy group CEO Muhammad Zamri Jusoh said, "Securing this seven-year contract with a global leader like Aramco is a strategic milestone for Vantris Energy. It validates our growth strategy, which includes expanding O&M's portfolio beyond Malaysian shores. This is also part of our effort to rebalance our order book towards long-term, day-rate based contracts – helping us build a stronger, more resilient Vantris Energy for the future."

This contract is expected to contribute positively to Vantris Energy's earnings and net assets over its seven-year period, supporting the company's financial stability and growth in the region.

Rawabi Sapura is a strategic joint venture between Sapura Saudi Arabia Company (Sapura Saudi) and Rawabi Vallianz Offshore Services Co Ltd. Sapura Saudi is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sapura Offshore Sdn Bhd, which itself is an indirect wholly owned subsidiary of Vantris Energy.

KPMG Malaysia unveils MyAccess Hub for foreign investors

PETALING JAYA: KPMG in Malaysia has launched KPMG MyAccess Hub, an integrated business entry platform that enables foreign businesses and investors to establish and grow their operations in Malaysia.

This initiative aligns with the government's commitment under the National Investment Aspiration, to attract foreign direct investment, fostering economic development, generating employment opportunities, and advancing technology transfer.

Drawing on the firm's multidisciplinary expertise beyond audit, tax, and advisory – including ESG, technology, and risk consultancy – and their network of service providers, KPMG MyAccess Hub delivers comprehensive support to help clients navigate Malaysia's business landscape with greater clarity and confidence.

"The introduction of KPMG MyAccess Hub is a testament to our purpose to be at the forefront of serving and strengthening our markets and communities in tangible ways. By providing a unified solution for navigating complex regulatory landscapes, we directly address the significant challenges encountered by foreign businesses, while concurrently supporting Malaysia's ambition to enhance its position as a premier investment destination. With a single access point, we deliver comprehensive solutions to enable ease of doing businesses," said KPMG in Malaysia tax head Soh Lian Seng.

He added they ensure that organisations are fully equipped to make a meaningful impact while complying with regulatory requirements and optimising the incentives available to maximise their expansion prospects.

KPMG MyAccess Hub signifies a strategic advancement in positioning KPMG in Malaysian as an essential partner in achieving market success. Practically, this approach enables businesses to experience a more seamless entry into Malaysia, characterised by expedited market access, minimised compliance risks, and a fortified platform for sustainable growth.

Foreigners end two-week net buying run, pull US$1.7b from Asia

KUALA LUMPUR: Foreign investors became net sellers last week, ending their two-week streak of consecutive net buying in Asian markets, with net foreign outflows totaling US$1.71 billion (RM7.2 billion).

MBSB Investment Bank Bhd's (MBSB IB) fund flow report for the week ended Oct 17 said that among the markets tracked, only India, Korea, and Indonesia registered net foreign inflows, while the rest saw net selling activity led by Taiwan, which posted the largest regional outflow.

"India extended to a two-week consecutive streak of net foreign purchases, registering the region's largest net foreign inflow at US$968.5 million, a 4.9 times increase compared to the previous week.

"South Korea extended their streak of net buying activity to three consecutive weeks, recording US$569.5 million in net foreign inflows, while Indonesia extended to a two-week consecutive net buying streak, registering foreign purchases of US$117.9 million," it said.

Back home, MBSB IB said foreign investors extended their net selling streak to two consecutive weeks, with net outflows amounting to RM962.8 million.

It said foreign investors were net sellers on every trading day last week, with Monday seeing the highest net selling activity at RM393.5 million, followed by Tuesday (-RM320 million), Friday (-RM190.8 million) and Wednesday (-RM47.5 million).

"The smallest outflow occurred on Thursday, which saw a moderate withdrawal of -RM11 million," it said.

The investment bank noted that the only three sectors that recorded net foreign inflows last week were consumer products and services (RM518.9 million), technology (RM87.3 million), and construction (RM6.5 million).

It said the top three sectors that recorded net foreign outflows were financial services (-RM835.5 million), healthcare (-RM270.3 million), and utilities (-RM106.7 million).

MBSB IB also noted that local institutions extended to a two-week consecutive streak of net buying activity, recording purchases of RM1.32 billion, while local retailers extended to a six-week consecutive net selling streak, posting a net outflow of RM357.4 million. – Bernama



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SCAN ME

Ban on petrol-powered bikes in Hanoi hits Honda

Japanese officials and manufacturers warn of job losses, bankruptcies

HANOI: The Japanese government and some of the nation's top manufacturers have warned Vietnam that a planned ban on petrol-powered motorbikes in Hanoi could spark job losses and disrupt a US$4.6 billion (RM19.5 billion) market that is dominated by Honda, according to documents reviewed by Reuters and seven people familiar with the matter.

In July, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh issued a directive prohibiting petrol motorbikes from entering the centre of the capital from the middle of 2026, as the country seeks to reduce high levels of air pollution.

Broader restrictions are due in 2028 and bans are expected to spread to other parts of the country.

In response, the Japanese embassy in Hanoi sent a letter to Vietnamese authorities saying a sudden ban could "affect employment in supporting industries" such as motorcycle dealers and parts suppliers, according to a statement from the embassy summarising its letter.

The embassy declined to share the full contents of the letter, which is being reported for the first time.

The embassy also urged Vietnamese authorities to consider an "appropriate roadmap" for electrification that would include a preparation period and staged implementation of regulations.

The embassy declined to say when the letter was sent, although one Japanese government official said it was relayed in September.

Vietnam's two-wheeler market is one of the world's largest – worth an estimated US$4.6 billion this year, according to market research firm Mordor Intelligence – with the number of registered motorbikes last year approaching 80% of the country's population of 100 million, one of the highest ownership rates globally.

The main trade group for foreign motorcycle makers in Vietnam, which is led by Honda and includes Yamaha and Suzuki , sent its own letter to the government in July warning that the ban could result in "production interruptions and the risk of bankruptcy" for companies in the supply chain, according to a copy of the letter reviewed by Reuters.

The manufacturers said the ban could have "spillover effects" on hundreds of thousands of workers and cited potential disruptions for nearly 2,000 dealers and some 200 component suppliers.



Cars and motorbikes at an avenue decorated to welcome the National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in Hanoi. – ***REUTERSPIC***

They urged the implementation of a transitional period "with a minimum preparation time of two to three years" to allow time for them to adjust production lines while a network of charging stations and safety standards are expanded.

Vietnamese officials have thus far declined to act on the requests from the Japanese government and manufacturers, according to three people familiar with the discussions.

These people, like others who spoke to Reuters, declined to be identified.

The government has said the ban is necessary to tackle high air pollution levels in Hanoi.

Authorities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam's largest metropolis, have also signalled plans to restrict petrol-powered vehicles.

Addressing concerns about the switch to electric power, the prime minister told Japanese executives in August that reducing emissions is a global issue requiring joint efforts "to choose the most optimal solution with a suitable roadmap", according to the government's online portal.

Honda, which controls 80% of the two-wheeler market in Vietnam with 2.6 million vehicles sold last year, has led the charge to have authorities revise the directive, according to three of the people, all of whom attended or were briefed about meetings with the Vietnamese government and other officials in recent months.

In private, one Honda representative raised the possibility that the company could consider scaling back its production in Vietnam in response, according to one of the people.

Honda said it was closely monitoring the situation, but had no plan to close factories.

The Japanese manufacturer has four factories in Vietnam, where it is so dominant that its brand name has become a shorthand for "motorbike" in Vietnamese.

Almost all of the motorbikes it sells in Vietnam and elsewhere are powered by petrol.

But it does also offer the CUV e: and ICON e: battery-powered models in the country.

Honda's sales in Vietnam tumbled by almost 22% in August from July, the month the ban was unveiled, before recovering slightly in September.

The firm recorded double-digit sales declines from a year earlier in August and September.

As Honda's automotive business has been squeezed by heightened competition due to a global shift to electric cars, it has become more reliant on its motorcycle business as a profit driver.

Meanwhile, sales of electric motorbikes and e-bikes made by Nasdaq-listed Vietnamese firm VinFast rose 55% to nearly 70,000 in the second quarter of 2025 from the first quarter.

They are expected to surge following the ban, according to a consumer survey conducted by market research firm Asia Plus. – Reuters

Court clears Kakao founder of stock manipulation charges

SEOUL: A South Korean court yesterday cleared Kakao Corp's billionaire founder Kim Beom-su of stock manipulation charges, sending shares of the country's dominant chat app operator 5% higher.

The tech tycoon was arrested in July last year on charges of being involved in manipulation of the stock price of SM Entertainment in 2023 to hinder a competitor, Hybe, from acquiring it.

He was released on bail in October 2024.

In August, prosecutors had sought a 15-year jail term and a fine of 500 million won (RM1.5 million).

Kim thanked the court for the ruling and said: "I hope this serves as an opportunity for Kakao to move, even slightly, out of the shadow of (the allegations) of stock price and market manipulation."

Kim shot to fame in South Korea's digital industry for building Kakao's group of affiliates – worth 94 trillion Korean won by assets – from the ground up since launching the popular messaging app KakaoTalk in 2010.

Kakao is South Korea's biggest messaging app used by nearly 50 million Koreans, with businesses ranging from gaming, shopping to banking to taxi-hailing.

Kakao shares were trading up 5.1% after the court's ruling.

"The case will likely proceed to the Supreme Court, but today's ruling can be seen as easing legal risks to some extent as Kim was cleared of all charges," said Kim Dong-woo, an analyst at Kyobo Securities.

The outcome of the case against Kim could have jeopardised Kakao's control of online bank arm KakaoBank , since the country's financial rules restrict those convicted of financial crime from owning more than a 10% stake in a bank.

The high-profile technology entrepreneur is the largest shareholder of Kakao Corp, with a 24% stake that he and affiliated entities control.

Kakao was not immediately available for a comment on the ruling. – Reuters

Chipmaker CXMT said planning Shanghai listing with 300b yuan valuation

BEIJING: Chinese memory chipmaker ChangXin Memory Technologies (CXMT) plans an initial public offer in Shanghai as soon as the first quarter of next year, eyeing a valuation of up to 300 billion yuan (RM178 billion), two sources briefed on the matter said.

Founded in 2016 with government backing, CXMT leads China's strategic push to build a foothold in a global DRAM market long dominated by companies from Japan, South Korea and the United States.

China's leading manufacturer of dynamic random access memory (DRAM) aims to raise between 20 billion and 40 billion yuan from the offering, the two sources said.

A third source said it aimed to raise about 30 billion yuan and could unveil its prospectus to investors as early as November.

The sources, who sought anonymity because the plan is not yet public, cautioned that IPO details such as timeline, offer size, and valuation, could change depending on market demand.

The IPO plans come as China's semiconductor stocks have surged, with the benchmark CSI CN semiconductor index rallying about 49% year-to-date.

The company's parent kicked off preparations in July known as the "counselling process" for an initial public offer and hired state-owned investment banks China International Capital Corporation and CSC Financial.

However, that disclosure did not say where and when the company would go public.

CXMT did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Two of the sources said they expected CXMT's IPO to attract strong demand from domestic investors looking to throw their bets behind China's quest for self-sufficiency.

CXMT is investing heavily in catching up with market leaders such as South Korea's SK Hynix and Samsung , particularly on high bandwidth memory.

This is a specialised type of DRAM crucial to developing advanced processors such as Nvidia's graphics processing units that can be used for generative AI work.

CXMT's progress has become more crucial to China after the US curbed its access to HBM chips in December in a bid to hobble the country's AI progress.

The timing of its offering comes amid significant shifts in the global memory market.

US memory maker Micron Technology plans to exit China's server chip business two years after Beijing banned its products from critical infrastructure, Reuters reported last week.

The global rush to produce AI chips is tightening supply of memory chips used in smartphones, computers and servers, giving makers of such chips an unexpected boost.

CXMT's capital expenditure, or capex, was estimated at about US$6 billion to US$7 billion in 2023 and 2024, with an increase of 5% expected in 2025, should the United States impose no further curbs, Canadian research firm TechInsights said.

The firm is building an HBM back-end packaging fab in the commercial hub of Shanghai and aims to start production by the end of next year.

Initial monthly output capacity of HBM wafers will be about 30,000, or slightly less than a fifth of South Korean's SK Hynix, said the third source, and a fourth, familiar with the matter.

CXMT aims to start mass production of fourth-generation high bandwidth memory or HBM3 chips in 2026, two of the sources said. – Reuters

Unilever delays Magnum demerger timeline on US govt shutdown

NEW YORK: Unilever said yesterday the timeline for the planned demerger of The Magnum Ice Cream Company has been delayed due to the US federal government shutdown, with further updates on the revised schedule to be provided as soon as possible.

Unilever, the maker of Dove soap and Hellmann's mayonnaise, said the US Securities and Exchange Commission is currently unable to declare effective the registration statement required for shares of The Magnum Ice Cream Company NV to be listed and traded on the New York Stock Exchange.

The listing of the ice cream business in Amsterdam was originally scheduled for Nov 10.

The Magnum Ice Cream Company is also planned to have secondary listings in New York and London.

Unilever said the preparatory work for the demerger is on track and progressing well, and that it remains committed to completing the spin-off process this year.

Despite the delay, Unilever confirmed that the general meeting of shareholders to vote on the proposed consolidation of its share capital, which is related to the demerger, will still take place later in the day.

However, the implementation timeline for that consolidation will also be updated. – Reuters

Coca-Cola HBC bolsters African bottling ops

JOHANNESBURG: Bottler Coca-Cola HBC AG reached an agreement yesterday to acquire a controlling stake in Coca-Cola Beverages Africa (CCBA) from The Coca-Cola Company and Gutsche Family Investments in a deal worth US$3.4 billion (RM14.4 billion), creating the world's second-largest Coca-Cola bottling partner by volume.

Coca-Cola will sell about 42% of its stake in CCBA to Coca-Cola HBC, while the bottler is acquiring the entire 33.48% stake held by Gutsche Family Investments for a combined purchase price of US$2.6 billion.

The deal values 100% of CCBA at an equity value of US$3.4 billion.

CCH, which packages drinks such as Fanta, Sprite and Monster, intends to pursue a secondary listing on the Johannesburg Stock Exchange as part of the deal.

CCBA operates in 14 countries across Africa and accounts for about 40% of all Coca-Cola product volume sold on the continent.

The companies are targeting the transaction to close by the end of 2026 and have agreed to a separate option for Coca-Cola HBC to acquire Coca-Cola's remaining 25% stake within six years of closing. – Reuters

Amazon says AWS cloud service is back to normal

Outage affected major websites and apps globally

SAN FRANCISCO: Amazon.com cloud service returned to normal operations on Monday afternoon, the company said, after an internet outage that caused global turmoil among thousands of sites, including some of the web's most popular apps like Snapchat and Reddit.

Still, Amazon said some AWS services had a backlog of messages that would take a few hours to process.

AWS hosts applications and computer processes for companies around the world, and the disruption knocked workers from London to Tokyo offline and halted others from conducting normal everyday tasks like paying hairdressers or changing their airline tickets.

Users on Monday afternoon had complained of lingering difficulties using services such as digital wallet Venmo and video calling site Zoom.

It was the largest internet disruption since last year's CrowdStrike malfunction hobbled technology systems in hospitals, banks and airports, highlighting the vulnerability of the world's interconnected technologies.

It was at least the third time in five years that AWS's northern Virginia cluster, known as US-EAST-1, contributed to a major internet meltdown.

Amazon did not address a request for more clarity about why that particular data center keeps being impacted.

The problems stemmed from what is known as the Domain Name System, or DNS, which prevented applications from finding the correct address for AWS's DynamoDB API, a cloud database relied upon to store user information and other critical data.

Earlier, AWS said the root cause of the outage was an underlying subsystem that monitors the health of its network load balancers used to distribute traffic across several servers.

The issue, AWS said, originated from within the "EC2 internal network", Amazon's "Elastic Compute Cloud" service, which provides on-demand cloud capacity within AWS.

Shortly after 3pm PT (6am yesterday in Malaysia), Amazon said, "all AWS services returned to normal operations".

"Some services such as AWS Config, Redshift, and Connect continue to have a backlog of messages that they will finish processing over the next few hours."

Ken Birman, a computer science professor at Cornell University, said software developers need to build better fault tolerance.

He said AWS provides tools developers can use to protect themselves in the event of a problem at one of any of its sprawling network of data centres, and developers can also create backups with other cloud providers.

"When people cut costs and cut corners to try to get an application up, and then forget that they skipped that last step and didn't really protect against an outage, those companies are the ones who really ought to be scrutinised later," Birman told Reuters.

AWS provides computing power, data storage and other digital services to companies, governments and individuals and is the world's largest cloud provider, followed by Microsoft's Azure and Alphabet's Google Cloud.

Disruptions to its servers can cause outages across websites and platforms – ranging from food delivery apps to gaming platforms and airline systems – that rely on its cloud infrastructure.

AWS said on its status page that Monday's outage originated at its US-EAST-1 location, its oldest and largest for web services. The site suffered outages in 2021 and 2020.

According to documentation on the AWS website, the US-EAST-1 site is often the default region for many AWS services.

Ookla, which owns Downdetector, said over four million users reported issues due to the incident.

"For major businesses, hours of cloud downtime translate to millions in lost productivity and revenue," said Ryan Griffin, US cyber practice leader at insurance broker McGill and Partners.

Ookla said at least a thousand companies were affected by the outage.

Apps like Reddit, Roblox, Snapchat and Duolingo had all been affected.

Artificial intelligence startup Perplexity, cryptocurrency exchange Coinbase and trading app Robinhood all experienced platform disruptions and attributed them to AWS.

Amazon's own services, including its shopping website, Prime Video and Alexa, were also hit.

Fortnite, owned by Epic Games, Clash Royale and Clash of Clans were among the gaming platforms affected.

Uber rival Lyft was also knocked down in the United States. – Reuters



An aerial view of the Amazon Web Services data centre known as US-EAST-1 in Ashburn, Virginia. – ***REUTERSPIC***

Goldman Sachs flags disruption risk in supply of key minerals

NEW YORK: Goldman Sachs flagged mounting risks to global supply chains of rare earths and other critical minerals, emphasising China's dominance in mining and refining, and outlining challenges for nations seeking to build independent supply chains.

China expanded export curbs on rare earths on Oct 9, adding five new elements and extra scrutiny for semiconductor users ahead of an expected summit of leaders Donald Trump and Xi Jinping.

In a note on Monday, Goldman Sachs said China controls 69% of global rare earth mining, 92% of refining, and 98% of magnet manufacturing.

Rare earth elements (REEs) have become a flashpoint in geopolitics, as they are critical to high-tech industries and essential in uses from batteries to computer chips, artificial intelligence, and defence equipment.

While the rare earth market was valued at US$6 billion last year, just a fraction the size of the copper market, which is 33 times bigger, the bank warned that a disruption of 10% in industries reliant on REEs could result in US$150 billion in lost economic output, besides inflationary pressures fed by the shortages.

Goldman Sachs flagged samarium, graphite, lutetium, and terbium as particularly vulnerable to export curbs.

Samarium, used in heat-resistant samarium-cobalt magnets, is key for aerospace and defence.

Disruptions in supply of widely-used lutetium and terbium also pose risks of GDP losses.

The bank highlighted light rare earths, such as cerium and lanthanum, as future targets for curbs, since China has a dominant role in refining and mining.

Western producers like Lynas Rare Earths and Solvay could ease shortages, it added, but reliance on China remains substantial.

Countries are scrambling to build independent REE and magnet supply chains, but Goldman Sachs saw barriers from geological scarcity to technological complexity and environmental challenges.

It said heavy rare earth elements were particularly scarce outside China and Myanmar, with most known deposits being small, lower-grade, or radioactive, while developing new mines requires eight to 10 years.

Refining REEs requires advanced expertise and infrastructure, with builds typically taking five years, the bank said.

Additionally, magnet production outside China, though expanding in the US, Japan, and Germany, faces constraints because of China's control of critical inputs such as samarium.

The bank suggested equities as a way for investors to manage rare earth disruption risks, citing Iluka Resources, Lynas Rare Earths, and MP Materials Corp as key players.

Goldman Sachs forecast a deficit in supplies of Neodymium Praseodymium Oxide (NdPrO), critical for making magnets.

Beyond rare earths, Goldman Sachs warned that commodities such as cobalt, oil, and natural gas faced rising risks of supply disruptions due to geopolitical tension. – Reuters

SINGER Since 1851

UK borrowing overshoot keeps heat on Reeves

Finance minister planning tax increases in Nov 26 budget

LONDON: Britain's borrowing in the first half of the financial year was the highest on record except during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, keeping up the pressure on Finance Minister Rachel Reeves as she prepares next month's key budget.

The overshoot in the April to September period ran above official forecasts, although Reeves was able to take a crumb of comfort from a cut to the overshoot in recent months.

Government borrowing in the first six months of the tax year totalled £99.8 billion (RM566 billion), up 13% from a year earlier and £7.2 billion more than forecast by Britain's budget watchdog.

In September alone, the government borrowed £20.2 billion, pushed up by the costs of debt interest and providing public services which more than offset a rise in tax receipts including Reeves' from the social security hike for employers.

The September shortfall was only slightly above the projection from the Office for Budget Responsibility whose forecasts underpin government budgets.

It was lower than a median forecast of a £20.8 billion deficit in a Reuters poll of economists.

The borrowing in the first six months of the year was the second highest for the period since records began in 1993 and was only bigger in 2020 at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic.

However, the Office for National Statistics revised down government borrowing in the first five months of the financial year by £4.2 billion, around half of which it had previously announced.

Reeves has said she is looking at tax increases and spending cuts in her budget on Nov 26 to show investors that she can remain on track to meet her fiscal rules.

"The chancellor faces an increasingly difficult balancing act ahead of the autumn budget, with her fiscal headroom all but exhausted by a mix of weaker growth prospects, higher borrowing costs and rising spending pressures," Nabil Taleb, economist at PwC UK, said.

Reeves wants to balance day-to-day spending with tax revenues by the end of the decade.

Yesterday's data showed the current budget was £71.8 billion in deficit in the April-to-September period, 17% higher than a year earlier.

Reeves said last week she would like a bigger fiscal buffer for meeting her targets than the £9.9 billion of headroom that she previously gave herself, but creating one would involve tough trade-offs on tax and spending.

Sterling was little changed against the US dollar and the euro after the borrowing figures were released. – Reuters



A view of Argentina's Central Bank, as a pedestrian walks past it, in Buenos Aires. – ***REUTERSPIC***

Crisis-hit Argentina inks US$20b rescue with US

BUENOS AIRES: Argentina and the United States signed off on a US$20 billion (RM85 billion) financial lifeline on Monday, hoping to avert economic meltdown and boost President Javier Milei ahead of tough legislative elections.

President Donald Trump has plied Argentina with political and economic support ahead of the Oct 26 vote, which will decide whether his close ally Milei can force through labour, tax and pension reforms.

Milei, once a global poster boy for budget-slashing libertarian politics, is on the ropes as Argentines head to the polls.

Many of his reforms are languishing, his popularity is falling and he is battling to avoid devaluing Argentina's currency, the peso, before the vote, fearing that would drive up consumer prices.

But markets see the peso as substantially overvalued, forcing Buenos Aires to use scant foreign reserves to defend its value.

Now his friend in Washington has agreed to step in with a long-mooted US$20 billion plan.

Trump has also pledged another US$20 billion in public and private funds to help Argentina weather market turmoil, conditional on a strong electoral showing by Milei.

"If he loses, we are not going to be generous with Argentina," Trump said as he hosted Milei at the White House earlier this month.

Milei outlined details of the bailout in an interview with Channel 8 that aired on Monday, saying it would only be activated if needed.

Trump's support for Milei has raised eyebrows in Washington, where Argentina is seen as neither a vital trade nor security partner.

US exports to Argentina are worth about US$9 billion a year, versus US$28 billion worth of exports to Colombia.

In contrast to his support for Milei, Trump has vowed to cut aid and security support to Colombia because of a spat with leftist President Gustavo Petro.

Facing criticism in the United States, Trump snapped at a reporter on Sunday as he justified his largesse.

"They're fighting for their life. Do you understand what that means? They have no money. They have no anything."

Last week, the US Treasury intervened by buying up pesos, but failed to stop the currency's decline.

Argentina's opposition has also slammed Trump's intervention.

"The economy is being run by remote control from the United States," former president Cristina Kirchner said on Friday from her Buenos Aires apartment, where she is under house arrest for corruption.

US intervention has so far failed to halt the dollar's surge against the peso: the greenback broke through the upper band of the exchange rate on Monday, hitting 1,495 pesos.

Since Milei's allies were defeated in Buenos Aires province legislative elections in September the peso has lost seven percent of its value against the dollar.

Most economists expect the government to make moves toward devaluation after the election. – AFP

EU timber imports linked to deforestation in Indonesia: NGOs

JAKARTA: Timber imports by companies operating in the European Union can be traced to logging on Indonesia's Borneo island, a new report published yesterday showed, with NGOs calling for the bloc to stop delaying a ban on deforestation-linked products.

The EU last month said it will seek a new one-year postponement of sweeping anti-deforestation rules known as the European Union Deforestation Regulation (EUDR), legislation that was cheered by green groups but assailed by trading partners, including the US and Indonesia.

The report, published by Earthsight and Auriga Nusantara, traced the biggest Indonesian buyers of deforested wood in Borneo, showing that they all ship to clients in Europe with a high risk that such imports come from forest clearance.

"This report demonstrates why the EUDR is urgently needed in Europe's timber sector: to ensure buyers can be confident in where their wood came from; to stop the flow of deforestation wood into Europe; and to end European complicity in the destruction of tropical forests.

"It also serves as an urgent call to action for any company importing timber products from Indonesia to the EU: these firms must carefully examine their supply chains and eliminate risk that their imports may be tainted by deforestation wood," the NGOs said.

European customers of Indonesian companies handling deforested wood were mainly Dutch, Belgian and German firms, which placed orders for more than 23,000 cubic metres of wood products, such as garden decking and finished plywood from Indonesia in 2024.

Companies named in the report – Dekker Hout, International Plywood BV, Seiton BV, Kurz KG, Fepco International and Impan GmbH – did not respond to AFP comment requests.

Indonesia has one of the world's highest rates of deforestation linked to mining, farming and logging, and is accused of allowing firms to operate in Borneo with little oversight.

Borneo has one of the world's largest tracts of rainforest and hosts orangutans, long-nosed monkeys, clouded leopards, pig-tailed macaques, flying fox bats and the smallest rhinos on the planet.

Environmental groups reacted angrily to the prospect of postponing the EU bill, which was to ban imports of products driving deforestation from the end of 2025.

But the European Commission said the logistical infrastructure for implementing the law – already once pushed back a year – was not yet ready. – AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: OCT 21

21-Oct-2025 Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

	Net (in RM million):	Participation
Retail	-54.14	19.35%
Institutions	+123.04	39.80%
Foreign	-68.90	40.85%

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research
Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to www.bursamalaysia.com.

QR Code to register for 1-to-1 Coaching

Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn. Bhd. is now rebranded as **Berjaya Securities Sdn. Bhd.**

BERJAYA Berjaya Securities

Berjaya Securities (formerly known as Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd)

- Quick updates on market news, statistics & information
- Monthly Traders' Talk for directions & positioning
- Company coverage & trading insights
- One-to-One trading coaching (available upon request)

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

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

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

Bursa Indices

INDEX		CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,082.70	+77.79
FBMKLCI	1,616.83	+9.65
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	540.51	+6.70
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	171.38	+0.33
CONSTRUCTION	317.62	+5.41
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,253.40	+61.04
ENERGY	792.28	+3.35
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	501.62	+2.87
HEALTH CARE	1,674.05	+15.78
TRANSPORTATION	1,007.66	+9.71
PROPERTY	1,047.98	+11.17
PLANTATION	7,902.07	+41.21
FBMSHA	12,157.40	+100.18
FBMACE	5,311.43	+32.54
TECHNOLOGY	62.43	+1.45

TURNOVER: 3.686 bil **VALUE: RM2.549 bil**

Bursa catches up with regional gains after Deepavali break

BURSA Malaysia's key index closed higher yesterday as the local bourse played catch-up to the regional and global uptrend a day after returning from the Deepavali break.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI gained 9.65 points, or 0.60%, to 1,616.83 from Friday's close of 1,607.18.

The benchmark index opened 4.6 points firmer at 1,611.78 and moved between 1,609.02 and 1,617.15 throughout the trading session.

The broader market was positive with 779 gainers thumping 369 losers, while 496 counters were unchanged, 1,028 untraded, and 31 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng said key regional indices extended their gains from Monday as optimism grew over the potential easing of trade tensions between the US and China. This followed after US President Donald Trump expressed confidence that he could reach a fair trade agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping.

On the domestic front, he said the local market appeared to be catching up with regional peers.

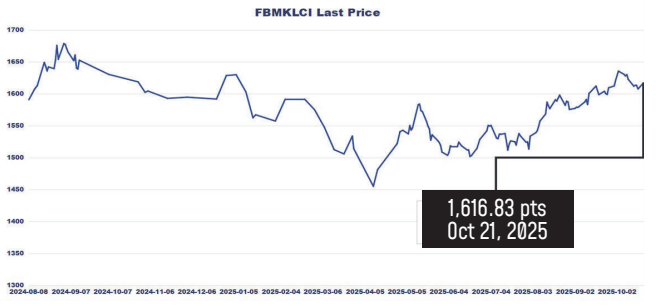
Among heavyweight counters, Maybank and CIMB added one sen each to RM9.90 and RM7.35, respectively. Public Bank gained seven sen to RM4.27, Tenaga Nasional was 14 sen firmer at RM13.24, while IHH Healthcare was flat at RM8.30.

On the most active list, Tanco and Velesto added one sen each to 87 sen and 26 sen, respectively, while both EA Holdings and TWL were flat at half-a-sen and 2.5 sen, and HHRG fell half-a-sen to seven sen.

Top gainers included Nestle, which jumped RM4.50 to RM109.50, while Malaysian Pacific Industries gained 92 sen to RM29.84, and Petronas Dagangan added 32 sen to RM22.54. KSL bounced 28 sen to RM3.11. – Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/-(RM)	+/-(%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWLQ	0.135	-0.050	-27.03	2,734,945
HSI-PWJ8	0.100	-0.075	-42.86	2,403,285
HSI-CWI2	0.085	+0.025	+41.67	2,076,353
HSI-PWJY	0.195	-0.120	-38.10	1,740,399
HSI-CWI8	0.150	+0.045	+42.86	837,859
TANCO	0.870	+0.010	+1.16	567,525
DNEX-WE	0.145	+0.030	+26.09	565,069
EAH	0.005	-	-	535,713
TWL	0.025	-	-	450,135
ZETRIX	0.850	+0.015	+1.80	418,248
ZETRIX-CAD	0.065	-	-	386,000
XOXTECH	0.085	+0.005	+6.25	334,748
VS	0.525	+0.015	+2.94	329,462
SCIB	0.275	+0.030	+12.25	327,641
CAPITALA	0.960	+0.050	+5.50	297,423
VELESTO	0.260	+0.010	+4.00	289,221
DNEX	0.280	+0.010	+3.70	283,974
HSI-CWI0	0.080	+0.030	+60.00	278,994
HHRG	0.070	-0.005	-6.67	270,702
GENM	2.330	-0.010	-0.43	251,796



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	109.500	+4.500	1,896
MPI	29.840	+0.920	4,442
HEIM	20.840	+0.500	2,714
PETDAG	22.540	+0.320	2,844
HSI-CWI4	0.825	+0.310	56
KSL	3.110	+0.280	69,849
KLK	20.760	+0.280	2,141
CATL-C2	0.675	+0.225	1
NIKKEI-CR	1.100	+0.220	20
HSI-CWIJ	0.615	+0.210	701
CHINAETF-MYR	5.940	+0.170	48
HSI-CWKG	0.735	+0.165	571
HSI-CWKX	0.565	+0.165	561
NIKKEI-CT	0.715	+0.165	289
HLIND	13.680	+0.160	445
UMSINT	4.640	+0.160	925
ALIBABA-C45	0.315	+0.150	220
HSI-CWKU	0.350	+0.150	1,150
MI	2.850	+0.150	25,333
KSL-CN	0.720	+0.145	2,400

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWI6	0.115	+155.56	1,482
HSI-PWLU	0.025	+150.00	3,858
HSI-CWG8	0.020	+100.00	360
NATGATE-CJ	0.010	+100.00	21
PARLO-WA	0.010	+100.00	17,457
YTL-C1F	0.010	+100.00	2,042
ALIBABA-C45	0.315	+90.91	220
HSI-CWIA	0.210	+90.91	22,547
HSI-CWI5	0.270	+80.00	16,216
HSI-CWKU	0.350	+75.00	1,150
HSI-CWKW	0.060	+71.43	700
HSTECH-C36	0.140	+64.71	280
HSI-CWI4	0.825	+60.19	56
HSI-CWI0	0.080	+60.00	278,994
ALIBABA-C46	0.230	+58.62	1,150
HSI-CWKL	0.115	+53.33	3,740
HSI-CWIJ	0.615	+51.85	701
CATL-C2	0.675	+50.00	1
GREATEC-C15	0.030	+50.00	6,896
HSI-CWKB	0.030	+50.00	1,400

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	46,706.58	515.97	1.12
S&P 500 (US)	6,735.13	71.12	1.07
NASDAQ (US)	22,990.54	310.57	1.37
NYSE (US)	21,598.17	186.71	0.87
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	5,675.04	-5.89	-0.1
FTSE 100 (UK)	9,419.88	16.31	0.17
DAX (GER)	24,227.65	-31.15	-0.13
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	49,316.06	130.56	0.27
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	3,249.50	1.05	0.03
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	26,027.55	168.72	0.65
CSI 300 (CHN)	4,607.87	69.65	1.53
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	226.29	4.33	1.95
SHANGHAI SE COM (CHN)	3,916.33	52.44	1.36
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	3,823.84	9.15	0.24
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	84,468.12	104.75	0.12
ASX 200 (AUS)	9,094.71	62.79	0.7
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	9,390.07	65.44	0.7
FBM KLCI	1,616.83	9.65	0.6
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	4,377.67	48.74	1.13
WTI (US$/BBL.)	57.66	0.14	0.24
BRENT (US$/BBL.)	61.11	0.1	0.16
GOLD (COMEX) (US$/T OZ)	4,280.50	-78.9	-1.81
SILVER (COMEX) (US$/T OZ)	48.76	-2.63	-5.16
PLATINUM (US$/T OZ)	1,577.39	-55.14	-3.37
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	497.7	-5.9	-1.17
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US$/MT)	10,691.50	-87	-0.82
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	424	0.75	0.18
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	504.25	-0.5	-0.1
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	51.24	-0.07	-0.14
COCOA (ICE) (US$/MT)	5,967.00	68	1.15
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	170.6	2.7	1.61

As at 6pm, Oct 21.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
DLADY	26.180	-0.380	410
HSI-CWKP	0.685	-0.200	20
SLVEST-CN	0.450	-0.200	1,000
HSI-CWKI	0.325	-0.195	400
HSI-PWLE	0.730	-0.190	2,132
NIKKEI-HT	0.675	-0.190	1,620
HSI-PWJU	0.185	-0.165	10,916
HSI-PWLC	0.345	-0.135	73,749
HSI-PWLN	0.475	-0.135	120
MCEMENT	6.570	-0.130	5,719
HSI-PWJY	0.195	-0.120	1,740,399
HSTECH-H39	0.415	-0.115	400
HSI-PWJ0	0.165	-0.110	169,429
HSI-PWLF	0.505	-0.105	400
YTLPOWR-C85	0.245	-0.105	100
BNASTRA	2.220	-0.100	21,609
HSI-PWLM	0.210	-0.100	6,606
CTOS-C25	0.060	-0.090	151
PCHEM-C1L	0.115	-0.090	100
CYBERE	0.780	-0.085	265

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWJ4	0.040	-63.64	829
CTOS-C25	0.060	-60.00	151
SDG-C33	0.070	-53.33	120
HSI-PWJZ	0.045	-52.63	7,880
BORNOIL	0.005	-50.00	34,148
HONGSENG	0.005	-50.00	15,462
HSI-PWH9	0.030	-50.00	3,700
MAXLAND-WB	0.005	-50.00	2,020
MSM-C5	0.005	-50.00	100
PHB	0.005	-50.00	38,320
HSI-PWJU	0.185	-47.14	10,916
PCHEM-C1L	0.115	-43.90	100
HSI-PWJ8	0.100	-42.86	2,403,285
HSI-PWLA	0.055	-42.11	2,300
HSI-PWLI	0.120	-41.46	2,100
HSI-PWJ0	0.165	-40.00	169,429
POPMART-C1	0.055	-38.89	83
HSI-PWJY	0.195	-38.10	1,740,399
HSI-CWKI	0.325	-37.50	400
HSI-PWJP	0.035	-36.36	209

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

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

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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IPPFA lifts 2025 GDP growth forecast to 4.8%, cites strong Q3

KUALA LUMPUR: IPP Financial Advisers Malaysia (IPPFA) has upgraded its 2025 real GDP growth forecast for Malaysia to 4.8% from 4.5%, driven by stronger-than-expected third quarter (Q3) data that signals accelerating domestic demand and export momentum.

The revision, it said is based on a Bayesian vector autoregression (BVAR) model incorporating high-frequency indicators, implies a 0.3 percentage point uplift from mining rebounds and net external contributions, positioning the economy above potential output at a time of heightened global uncertainties.

IPPFA said in a statement yesterday that the model assumes a strengthened USD/MYR exchange rate RM4.15/USD for year end 2025, reflecting anticipated currency dynamics.

The update follows the Department of Statistics Malaysia's (DoSM) advance estimates released on Oct 17, showing Q3 GDP growth at 5.2% year-on-year – the fastest since mid-2023 – up from 4.4% in Q2. Seasonally adjusted, the economy expanded 5.5% quarter-on-quarter annualised, with 9M cumulative growth at 4.7%, aligning with IPPFA's upper 95% confidence interval of 4.6-5%.

"The Q3 pulse validates our data-driven view of sustained expansion, with low-probability downsides from trade volatility mitigated by diversified elasticities," said Mohd Sedek Jantan, IPPFA's country economist. "Our BVAR framework, calibrated on DoSM vintages, highlights

Malaysia's edge in Asean amid Fed easing and commodity tailwinds, adjusted for a stronger MYR at RM4.15/USD.

IPPFA said the OPR remains at 2.75% and inflation at 1.8%, supporting steady growth, while easing PMI input costs help shield consumers.

Ringgit down against dollar, up against other major currencies

THE ringgit ended marginally lower against the US dollar yesterday as the greenback strengthened amid renewed optimism that the US and China may reach a trade deal soon, said an economist.

At 6pm, the local note eased to 4.2280/2315 against the US dollar from 4.2240/2275 at Friday's close.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the upcoming meeting between US President Donald Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping in South Korea next week has become the main focus for investors.

"So far, President Trump has indicated that his administration is aiming to reach a fair deal with China, suggesting that a more amicable trade outcome could be in sight. Such a development appears to be dollar-positive for now," he told Bernama.

He added that the ringgit hovered around RM4.2200 to RM4.2288 against the US dollar yesterday, following the generally stronger performance of the greenback.

At the close, the ringgit traded higher against major currencies.

It advanced against the British pound 5.6592/6639 from 5.6741/6788, gained against the euro to 4.9134/9174 from 4.9421/9462, and strengthened against the Japanese yen to 2.7851/7875 from 2.8218/8244 at Friday's close.

The local note was mixed against Asean currencies.

It appreciated against the Singapore dollar at 3.2598/2628 from 3.2635/2665, and improved versus the Thai baht to 12.9048/9218 from 12.9301/9471, previously.

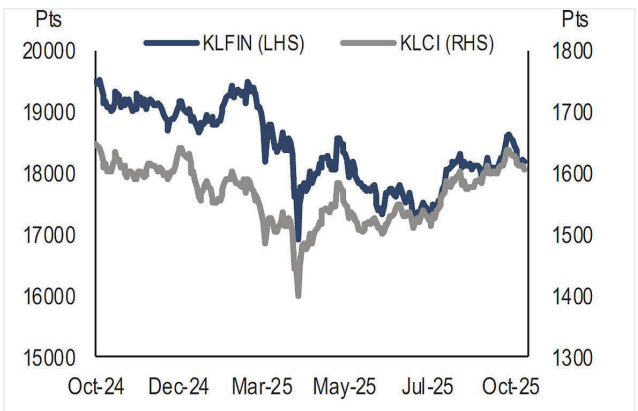
However, it slipped against the Indonesian rupiah to 254.8/255.2 from 254.6/254.9, and was flat against the Philippine peso at 7.26/7.27 at last week's close.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.2930	4.1480	4.1380
1 Australian Dollar	2.8070	2.6940	2.6780
1 Brunei Dollar	3.3140	3.2120	3.2040
1 Canadian Dollar	3.0520	2.9670	2.9550
1 Euro	4.9960	4.8360	4.8160
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.4700	2.3800	2.3640
1 Singapore Dollar	3.3140	3.2120	3.2040
1 Sterling Pound	5.7490	5.5700	5.5500
1 Swiss Franc	5.4460	5.2140	5.1990
100 UAE Dirham	118.0200	111.9100	111.7100
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.5740	3.3530	3.1530
100 Chinese Renminbi	60.5700	58.0300	58.0300
100 Danish Krone	68.5800	63.1200	62.9200
100 Hongkong Dollar	55.7300	52.9700	52.7700
100 Indian Rupee	4.9500	4.6500	4.4500
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0267	0.0242	0.0192
100 Japanese Yen	2.8520	2.7500	2.7400
100 New Taiwan Dollar	15.1000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.7500	40.2500	40.0500
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5500	1.4400	1.2400
100 Philippine Peso	7.4800	7.0500	6.8500
100 Qatar Riyal	118.8400	112.8200	112.6200
100 Saudi Riyal	115.5000	109.6500	109.4500
100 South Africa Rand	25.8000	23.3000	23.1000
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4500	1.3400	1.1400
100 Swedish Krona	46.9300	42.7500	42.5500
100 Thai Baht	13.7400	12.1800	11.7800

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Banking
Overweight



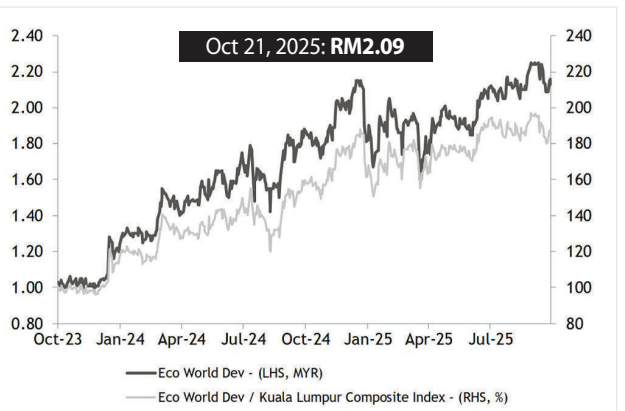
Source: HLIB Research

THE banking system continues to be sound and highly supportive of financial intermediation activities. This resilience is underpinned by healthy capital and liquidity buffers: (i) steady CET1 ratio of 14.7% (2024: 15.1%), (ii) robust LCR of 161% (2024: 161%), and (iii) NSFR of 116% (2024: 116%). Risks to financial stability (encompassing credit, market, liquidity, and contagion channels) remained well-contained in 1H'25. Further illustrating system strength, the banking system's LLC ratio (including regulatory reserves) has been stabilised at level of 130.4% vs 2024: 129.6% and 2015-19 average: 114%.

The overall quality of Household (HH) debt remains healthy. Total household (HH) debt-to-GDP inched up to 84.8% (2024: 84.1%), which was mainly driven by housing and car loans. Indications confirm HH borrowers' debt-servicing capacity remained healthy, where the median debt service ratio for outstanding and new lending was 33% and 41%, respectively (2024: 34% and 41%). The median debt-to-income ratio remained stable at 1.4x (2024: 1.4x). Furthermore, the aggregate financial asset-to-debt ratio stood firm at 2.1x (2024: 2.1x). Considering only liquid financial assets, the debt coverage is still a reassuring 1.3x (2024: 1.3x).

For businesses (Biz), the interest coverage ratio slid to 6.2x (2024: 6.5x), while the cash-to-short-term debt ratio remained stable at 1.5x (2024: 1.5x). Meanwhile, the debt-to-equity (D/E) ratio improved by 1ppt to 21.4% (2024: 22.4%). We believe this may reflect a cautious deleveraging trend across the board, likely driven by global trade uncertainties and a wait-and-see approach. Separately, the share of firms-at-risk declined to 24.4% (2024: 25.7%), remaining below the Q3'20 peak of 30.3%, although still elevated relative to the pre-pandemic average of 20.3% (2015–2019). – ***HLIB Research, Oct 21***

Eco World Development Group Bhd
Hold. Target price: RM2.23



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

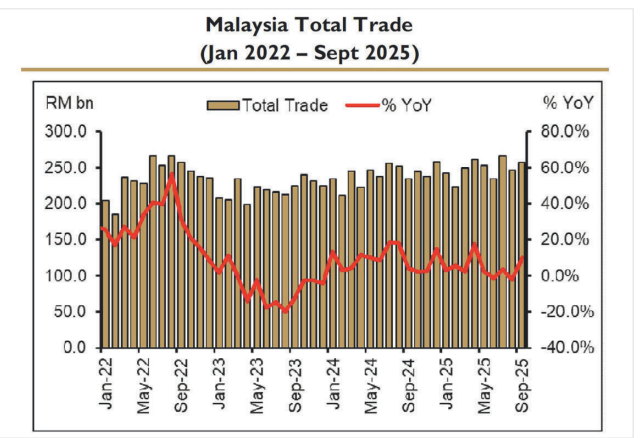
ECW'S 81%-owned subsidiary Mutiara Balau S/B (MBSB), has entered into a conditional SPA with Boustead Balau S/B (a wholly owned subsidiary of Boustead Properties Bhd [BPB]) to acquire 22.7 acres of freehold commercial land in Semenyih for RM82.2 million cash (or RM83 psf). BPB currently owns the remaining 19% stake in MBSB. The land, which is adjacent to ECW's upcoming Eco Radiance township, is expected to see the acquisition completed by Q1'26.

We are positive on the latest land purchase, given its fair pricing of RM83psf compared to RM78-270psf asking prices in the Semenyih area. The higher asking prices elsewhere are likely due to smaller parcel sizes. In our view, the new land, which is earmarked for the development of commercial shops and serviced apartments, will strengthen the appeal of the upcoming Eco Radiance township, a strategy similar to the commercial components of Eco Ardence and Eco Grandeur. The estimated GDV for the new land is RM560 million, bringing total GDV for Eco Radiance to RM5.2 billion (+12%).

We adjust our FY27 earnings by +0.5% to incorporate the new Semenyih land, assuming a pretax margin of 18% and an 8-year development period. The commercial project is slated for launch by mid-2026. The new land is expected to lift our RNAV by +1 sen to RM3.19/sh. ECW continues to explore new landbank opportunities, particularly industrial land in JSSEZ. Every additional RM500 million in GDV is estimated to raise our RNAV per share by +1.3 sen, assuming a 20% pretax margin.

Hold with RM2.23 TP. – ***Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 21***

Economy
Trade bounces back in September



Source: DOSM, TA Research

MALAYSIA'S total trade strengthened markedly in September 2025, defying global trade uncertainties, rising 9.8% YoY to RM257.51 billion. On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, total trade expanded 4.3% from RM246.79 billion in August. The rebound was largely driven by robust export growth alongside a recovery in imports, reflecting improving external demand.

Exports surged 12.2% YoY to RM138.68 billion, a sharp acceleration from the 1.7% YoY increase in August 2025. On a MoM basis, exports rose 5.6% from RM131.32 billion, underscoring resilient demand for Malaysia's key manufactured and commodity products despite persistent global headwinds.

By destination, Malaysia's exports in September 2025 were broadly stronger across major markets.

Asean remained the largest regional market (29.2% share; RM40.5 billion, +19.2% YoY), led by Singapore (RM23.4 billion, +28.0% YoY) on robust E&E demand. Shipments to the US rose sharply (RM20.1 billion, +24.4% YoY) on higher exports of E&E, optical equipment, and metal products, while exports to China grew modestly (RM16.6 billion, +2.9% YoY) amid firmer commodity shipments.

Exports to the EU continued their uptrend (RM11.9 billion, +19.7% YoY) driven by E&E and palm oil products, and to Taiwan surged (RM7.1 billion, +32.7% YoY). However, demand from Hong Kong (-5.5% YoY to RM6.6 billion) and Japan (-15.4% YoY to RM5.9 billion) softened.

Malaysia's trade surplus widened sharply by 54.7% YoY to RM19.86 billion in September 2025, as exports continued to outpace imports. – ***TA Research, Oct 21***

SCAN ME

theSun LYFE

WEDNESDAY | OCT 22, 2025

Editorial
T: 03-7784 6688
F: 03-7785 2625
E: *lifestyle@thesundaily.com*

Advertising
T: 03-7784 8888
E: *advertise@thesundaily.com*



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Cult of consumerism

cultural cost of overconsumption. ***– P22***

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SCAN ME

Anatomy of hype machine

BY **YASMIN ZULRAEZ**

Malaysia's cult of consumerism reveals deeper strains on nation's working class, youth





Online shopping has become entertainment for many youths, blurring the line between necessity and indulgence.



The middle class often feels the squeeze, caught between aspiration and rising costs of living.

A shopper weighed down by multiple bags, symbolising the pressure to keep up with Malaysia's consumerism cult.

A pop-up store, a viral TikTok video, a celebrity sighting, that is all it takes these days to send Malaysians queuing for hours, sometimes overnight, to buy a bag, a toy, or a limited-edition sneaker.

When the homegrown brand Brïk launched its Chroma handbag series at a Kuala Lumpur event earlier this year, over 700 people reportedly waited up to 15 hours just to step inside. Not long after, plush toy maker Pop Mart saw similar frenzy when its Labubu collectables went viral, thanks in part to K-pop star Lisa casually showing one off.

These are not isolated cases. They are examples of a wider phenomenon where scarcity marketing and influencer amplification push ordinary Malaysians into situations of near-ritual consumption. The objects are tangible, but the real commodity being sold is exclusivity, social validation and the fleeting thrill of ownership.

Overconsumption as identity

Consumerism in Malaysia has increasingly become tied to identity. Owning a coveted item, whether it is a handbag or a vinyl figurine, signals belonging to a particular tribe. Youths especially see these products as markers of personal taste and status. In a society where wages are often stagnant and the cost of living continues to rise, these markers become even more attractive because they offer immediate, visible returns, likes, shares and recognition, at a price that feels more accessible than global luxury brands.

But the trade-off is real. Many are willing to spend entire paychecks or rack up instalment payments through "Buy Now, Pay Later" services. Over time, this habit normalises debt and financial instability among working-class youth who already face housing unaffordability, student loans and precarious job markets. The cult of consumption disguises itself as empowerment but often leaves behind stress and insecurity.

Malaysian middle class and illusion of access

For the middle and working classes, consumerism often takes the form of "accessible luxury". Brïk's handbags retail between RM199 and RM499, a fraction of the cost of a European luxury bag, but still significant for many households. Similarly, art toys like Labubu or Molly may cost under RM100 at retail, but limited runs and resale mark-ups push prices into the thousands.

This strategy creates the illusion of access. By offering exclusivity at a "local" price point, brands can tap into national pride while sustaining cycles of repeat purchases. Yet, when demand vastly outstrips supply, as seen at Brïk's chaotic February pop-up at Semua House, the very people meant to feel included are left excluded. Those who can afford to resell, or who have the flexibility to queue for hours, win. The rest lose out, despite being the intended audience.

Consumerism and youth culture

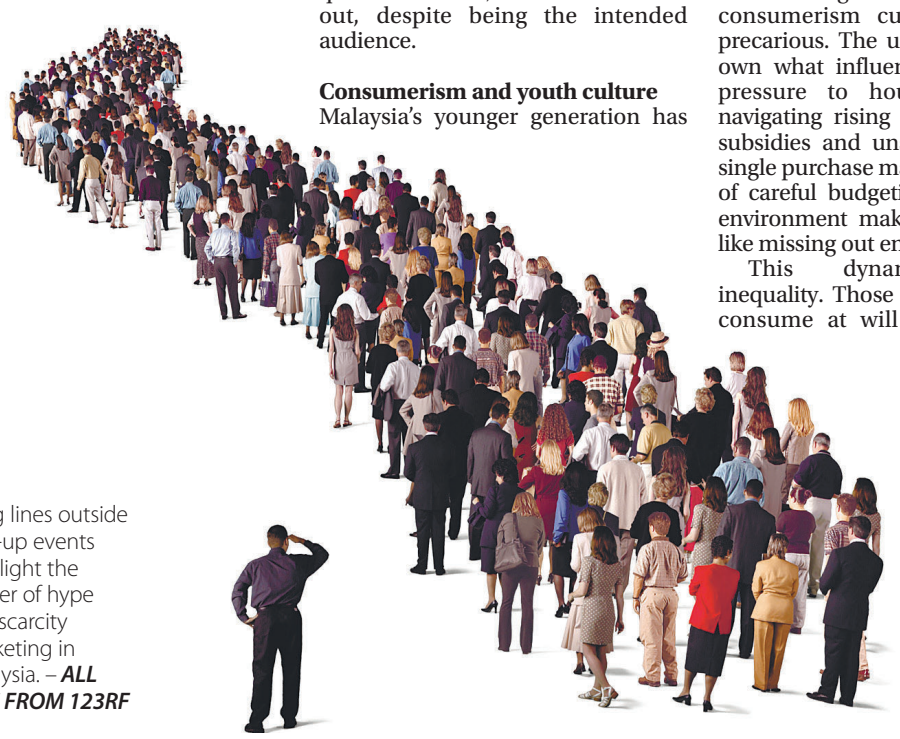
Malaysia's younger generation has grown up in an ecosystem saturated with online shopping, flash sales and algorithm-driven recommendations. The normalisation of buying as entertainment, through livestream auctions, TikTok Shop discounts and "9.9" or "11.11" mega-sales, creates a culture where consumption is continuous rather than occasional.

Youth are particularly vulnerable to this cycle because they are digital natives. Social media platforms reward conspicuous consumption: the unboxing video, the outfit post featuring a new bag, the TikTok skit with the latest collectable. Peer-to-peer validation becomes inseparable from ownership, making restraint difficult. While past generations equated saving with maturity, today's youth often see experiences and purchases as investments in social capital.

Working-class struggles behind the glamour

For working-class Malaysians, the consumerism cult is even more precarious. The urge to keep up, to own what influencers flaunt, adds pressure to households already navigating rising food costs, petrol subsidies and unstable incomes. A single purchase may represent weeks of careful budgeting, yet the social environment makes abstaining feel like missing out entirely.

This dynamic reinforces inequality. Those who can afford to consume at will strengthen their social visibility, while those who cannot are pushed further into the shadows. Overconsumption, then, is not just an individual choice but a systemic issue that magnifies class divisions.



Long lines outside pop-up events highlight the power of hype and scarcity marketing in Malaysia. – ***ALL PICS FROM 123RF***

Other recent frenzies

The consumerism cult is not limited to Brïk bags or Labubu plushies. Malaysia has seen waves of similar frenzies:

- Blind boxes from Pop Mart, now firmly embedded in Malaysian malls, where fans spend hundreds on sealed "mystery" toys for a chance at a rare Labubu or Skullpanda. The thrill of unpredictability keeps people coming back, with some reselling rare figures for thousands of ringgit. Events like the Labubu Wacky Mart pop-up at Sunway Pyramid this month even enforce 10-minute shopping windows and purchase caps to control crowds.
- Fast-fashion chains like Uniqlo or Zara drawing snaking queues for limited collaborations.
- Food crazes, from bubble tea to Korean fried chicken, where new outlets see lines stretching down malls in their first weeks.
- Tech gadgets, such as smartphones, where midnight launches still attract hundreds despite pre-order options.

In each case, the logic is the same – limited access, amplified online, triggers a collective urgency to buy before it is too late.

Cultural cost of overconsumption

What is lost in this frenzy is reflection. Products are bought not for long-term utility but for the thrill of acquisition. Handbags are flipped, toys resold and fast-fashion items discarded in months. The environmental cost, waste, unsustainable manufacturing, endless packaging are immense.

For Malaysia, which already struggles with landfill overflow and e-waste, the cultural normalisation of disposable consumption deepens the crisis.

Worse still, overconsumption erodes local creativity. When the focus is on hype cycles, smaller designers and artisans producing sustainable, slower goods are overshadowed. Their work cannot compete with the virality of a limited drop or celebrity endorsement. As a result, Malaysia risks hollowing out its creative economy by prioritising hype over heritage.

Towards more sustainable mindset

Breaking the consumerism cult will not be easy, especially when algorithms and influencers thrive on it. But cultural shifts are possible. Some Malaysians are already pushing back, turning to thrift stores, preloved markets and "slow fashion" communities that emphasise reuse and mindful spending. Movements around sustainability and financial literacy are growing, challenging the assumption that happiness equals purchase.

Brands themselves must also shoulder responsibility. Marketing built solely on scarcity and Fomo (fear of missing out) may deliver short-term profits but risks long-term backlash, as Brïk's pop-up chaos demonstrated. By creating more transparent sales models, fairer access and sustainable production, they can build lasting loyalty without exploiting overconsumption.

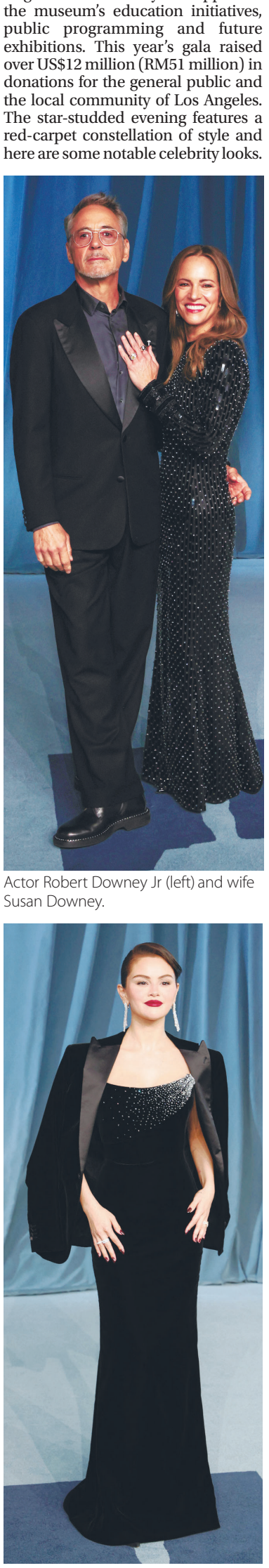
Malaysia's consumerism cult is not just about handbags or toys, it is about how the nation's youth and working class navigate identity, inequality and aspiration through consumption.

The frenzy reflects deeper anxieties in an era of rising costs and uncertain futures. Owning something exclusive may feel like control, but too often it only deepens precarity. The question Malaysians must ask is not whether to buy the next hyped release, but whether the culture of endless buying is truly worth the cost, financial, social and environmental. Until then, the queues will keep forming and the cycle will continue.

LYFE'S LOOKBOOK

THE Academy Museum of Motion Pictures hosted its fifth annual gala at the Academy Museum in Los Angeles last Saturday in support of the museum's education initiatives, public programming and future exhibitions. This year's gala raised over US$12 million (RM51 million) in donations for the general public and the local community of Los Angeles. The star-studded evening features a red-carpet constellation of style and here are some notable celebrity looks.

Actor Robert Downey Jr (left) and wife Susan Downey.



Actress Selena Gomez in Armani.



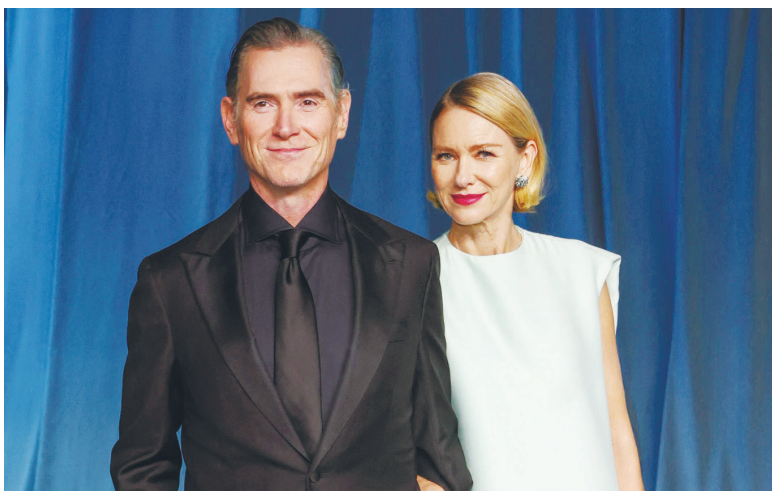
US actress Chase Infiniti in Louis Vuitton. – ***ALL PICS FROM AFP***



Canadian actor Simu Liu.



Actress Olivia Wilde.



Naomi Watts (right) wears Balenciaga alongside husband Billy Crudup.



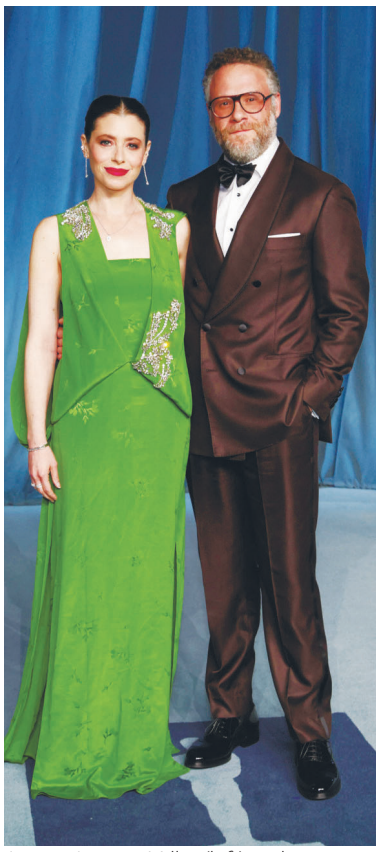
Actress Amanda Seyfried in Prada.



Socialite and reality TV star Kim Kardashian in Maison Margiela.



Social media personality Addison Rae in Versace.



Actress Lauren Miller (left) and husband Seth Rogen.



Actor Dwayne Johnson.



Actress Lucy Liu in Miss Sohee.

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Bollywood's favourite romance still going strong after 30 years

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge running daily



Moviegoers wait in a queue to purchase tickets for *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* at Maratha Mandir theatre in Mumbai.



A staff tears a ticket counterfoil for moviegoers during the screening of the film.



Moviegoers wait in a queue to purchase tickets for India's longest-running film.

INDIA'S longest-running film celebrates 30 years in the same cinema earlier this week, a Bollywood romance so beloved that fans know it simply by its acronym *DDLJ*.

First released on Oct 20, 1995, *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*, or *The Brave Hearted Will Take the Bride* has been running daily at Mumbai's Maratha Mandir theatre since its debut.

"I have seen it about 30 times... and I will continue watching it," said Mohammad Shakir, 60, smiling as he bought another 40 rupee (RM2) ticket.

The film, which catapulted Shah Rukh Khan to superstardom and redefined modern Hindi romance, still weaves its magic.

Every day at 11.30am, audiences gather for a nostalgic escape and to relive the story of young love defying tradition.

"The weekday crowd typically consists of college students and young couples. On Sundays, you will find around 500 people, even after 30 years," said cinema head Manoj Desai.

It has been running for more than 1,500 weeks, far outstripping the five-year run of action-thriller *Sholay*, or *Embers*, at another Mumbai theatre.

'Goosebumps'

The film explores the clash between liberal values of second-generation Indians abroad and the conservative values of their parents.

Its climax – when the heroine runs alongside a moving train into her lover's arms – still draws whistles, cheers and applause.

"This is the goosebump moment. The father letting his daughter go, saying she won't find a better partner to spend her life with," Manoj said.

Some fans have made *DDLJ* part of their lives – one woman has been coming for 20 years.

"We don't charge anything from her – we pay for the ticket," Manoj said. "Where will you get a patron like this?"

Even younger audiences remain captivated.

"In our generation today, we often see transactional relationships," said 23-year-old Omkar Saraf, who hadn't been born when the film was released.

"But in this film, the hero crosses all boundaries to win his love with no expectations. We have watched it on television, on our mobiles, but the big screen gives us goosebumps," he said.

DDLJ has even shaped real love stories for some.

One couple watched it while dating and invited Manoj to their wedding.

"They went abroad for their honeymoon – and came back to watch the movie," Manoj said.

'Cultural monument'

The film's screening was almost discontinued in 2015, but an uproar meant the fan favourite remained in its daily time slot at the Maratha Mandir, according to the *Hindustan Times*.

The theatre itself has also changed little, its vintage charm intact with counters serving steaming cups of tea and deep-fried samosa snacks.

Its location near Bombay Central Station adds to its story, as travellers often catch a show before heading to their destinations.

Those include visitors from abroad.

"The film is like *Romeo and Juliet*, with a happy ending. Even though we didn't understand the language, we enjoyed the music, dance and costumes," said Kelly Fernandez, a tourist from Spain who had wanted to see a Bollywood movie.

Film critic Baradwaj Rangan sees the film's endurance as a love letter to an India grappling with old and new values.

"It represents a certain point in Indian culture, and that is why it is still loved," Baradwaj said, saying it "perfectly captured" the friction between two generations.

"The film has become a kind of cultural monument. I think it is going to be playing forever," he said. – AFP



Moviegoers are frisked as they arrive for the screening of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.



An iconic scene is seen during the screening of *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge*.



Moviegoers take a selfie ahead of the screening of the popular Bollywood film. – ***ALL PICS FROM AFP***



Deepavali season is a peak period for Tamil film distribution in Malaysia. – ***BERNAMAPIC***

Murukku, movies

o Deepavali duo Indians cherish as 'cultural ritual'

AS Deepavali lights up homes across Malaysia, another kind of light draws the crowds – silver glow of the big screen.

For many Indians, Deepavali is not only about prayers, sweets and *murukku* but also about the joy of watching the latest Tamil blockbuster, surrounded by family, laughter and the unmistakable scent of popcorn.

Each year, major Kollywood studios time their biggest releases to coincide with Deepavali, while Malaysian cinemas brace for a surge of moviegoers eager for first-day screenings and this unique intersection of festival and film has become a vibrant tradition that reflects the evolving cultural identity of the Indian community.

Malik Streams Corporation production and distribution head Pravindrran Joel Panersilbam said watching a movie together with family on Deepavali day has become a cultural ritual for many Malaysian Indians.

He said that since the festival coincides with extended public holidays, it provides an ideal opportunity for families to spend quality time together, making it one of the most important and strategic seasons for Tamil film distribution in Malaysia.

"The festive spirit, coupled with a line-up of major new releases, naturally boosts cinema attendance during Deepavali," he said recently.

Pravindrran said the Deepavali season is also a peak period for Tamil film distribution in Malaysia, as multiple distributors often compete for the same titles, particularly those that are highly anticipated.

When selecting films for Deepavali, he said the cast plays the most crucial role, as big stars attract massive audiences, although directors, music composers and even bold storylines can also influence selection decisions.

"We always study current trends and audience sentiment before finalising a title. This year, we have about three Tamil movie releases for Deepavali and one of them is our own production *Dude* by Malik Streams, starring Pradeep Ranganathan and Mamitha Baiju," he said.

Meanwhile, fan club culture has played a vital role in amplifying the Deepavali movie tradition and for Malaysian Vijay Fan president and TVK Malaysia president Sharmanath Raman, Deepavali is not just the Festival of Lights but also a celebration of Tamil cinema.

"Watching a Tamil movie on Deepavali is like eating *murukku*, it is part of our culture. Apart from going temple and eating together, watching movies is also a time for family bonding and if we don't watch a movie, it feels like something is missing," he said.

Sharmanath, who was among the first to launch a dedicated actor fan club in the Malaysia in the late 2000s for actor Thalapathy Vijay, recalled a major milestone in 2017 when his club secured approval for the earliest Deepavali screening in the country with 7am show for the film *Mersal*.

"There was concern about whether people would show up that early because it was the first of its kind in Malaysia but the crowd was huge and many came dressed in traditional attire. That moment proved how deep this culture runs," he shared.

Since then, early morning screenings have become a Deepavali tradition, especially for movies featuring top stars, such as Superstar Rajinikanth, Kamal Hassan, Vijay and Ajith Kumar.

He said fan clubs, often self-funded, take on responsibilities ranging from booking cinemas to organising events, adding to the festive atmosphere surrounding the screenings.

Despite digital disruption and the rise of over-the-top platforms, Sharmanath believes the tradition of watching Tamil films during Deepavali remains strong because the festive cinematic experience remains irreplaceable.

"Many still hold on to the tradition of watching movies in theatres during Deepavali because nothing truly matches the excitement and shared experience of watching a festive release on the big screen, even the fan club culture is also not fading – its growing," he said. – Bernama



Vanessa is living sustainably through simple actions, using small steps to reflect the future she hopes to build.



Tha says Top Ten is a platform that blends music with purpose, raising environmental awareness.



Cheah says performing in schools for the next generation makes it even more impactful.

Malaysian talents lend voices to raise RM15.1m in support of schools, students

FOR Malaysian artistes Vanessa Reynauld and Daniel Chezi (Daniel Cheah), performing on stage means more than just lights, sound and applause. It is about impact. This year, these homegrown talents are using their voices to do exactly that, as they headline Carlsberg Malaysia's 2025 Top Ten Charity Concert (Top Ten) alongside Fuying & Sam, Nicole Lai, Geraldine, Ribbon Ooi and Madison Lau.

Now in its 38th year, the Top Ten has become a national symbol of how entertainment can empower communities towards a better tomorrow. What began as a grassroots fundraising effort has evolved into Malaysia's longest-running and most impactful education charity campaign, raising more than RM587 million and uplifting 696 schools since 1987.

As Top Ten kicks off its 2025 tour with 10 concerts across Selangor, Malacca, Johor, Sabah and Pahang, artistes are bringing fresh energy to a timeless mission — combining rhythm, community and compassion in harmony. This year also marks the second consecutive year of support for Utar Kampar, which will once again receive funding for its education, medical and student welfare initiatives.

For rising star Cheah, joining Top Ten marks a full-circle moment.

"This is my first time joining Top Ten, and I'm finally a part of this platform alongside fellow artistes. While it's a new experience, this initiative is one I've known since childhood. It's a powerful cycle: when we all contribute, everyone benefits. I was fortunate enough to receive so much growing up, and now I feel a strong desire to pay it forward to those who come after us," said Cheah.

Seasoned performer Tha Jie Ying reflected on how far the platform has come since her time with Top Ten.

"Having been part of the Top Ten for three years, I've personally witnessed its evolution. The growth reflects our community's progress, expanding from classic music to a far more current and diverse range of performances."

And for Vanessa Reynauld, the cause strikes close to home.

"As someone who came from a Chinese education background, I truly understand how much support vernacular schools need from the community, which is why this charity concert resonates with me deeply. This is my second year performing, and being part of a cause that uplifts education and empowers the next generation feels incredibly meaningful."

Beyond the stage lights and music, Top Ten's heartbeat lies in its purpose – supporting education, fostering sustainability and building stronger communities.

Unic celebrates 20 years with live concert in December

MALAYSIA'S renowned *nasyid* group Unic is set to celebrate more than two decades of its musical journey with a special concert titled This Is Unic: Live In Concert, scheduled to take place on Dec 20 at Idea Live Arena, Kuala Lumpur.

Organised by Triple Am Global, the event marks Unic's first full solo concert since reuniting with its current line-up – Bazli Hazwan, Dr Fitri Haris and Fakhrul Radhi.

In a statement, Unic said the concert is a tribute to their loyal fans who have supported their mission since the group's inception.

"After more than two decades with our fans, this is the time to celebrate Unic's long journey with those who have been with us from the start. We want to revive the spirit of *nasyid* on a grand stage and prove that *dakwah*-inspired music remains relevant. The concert is also designed as a musical and spiritual journey, taking the audience through Unic's evolution from its early beginnings until today."

The group also emphasised the importance of vocal, mental and physical preparation to ensure the highest quality performance.

According to the statement, each segment of the show will highlight different phases of Unic's musical growth – from the classic melodies that shaped their identity to fresher, more dynamic modern arrangements.

Among the popular songs to be performed are *Demi Cinta Suci*, *Hanya Tuhan Yang Tahu* and *Ainul Mardhiah*, presented with new arrangements. The concert will also feature special guest appearances from several artistes who share memorable moments with the group.

Tickets are on sale now. – Bernama



From left: Fakhrul, Fitri and Bazli. – ***PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @UNICOFFICIALS***

STARBUCKS®

TV SHOW REVIEW

Back to *The Office* with *The Paper*

Legendary comedy series spinoff?

BY **AMEEN HAZIZI**

IT has been 12 years since *The Office* ended, and its creators have finally returned with a spinoff titled *The Paper*.

Shot in the same mockumentary style, the series exists within the same universe, this time focusing on a struggling newspaper company.

With *The Paper*, Greg Daniels reuses the tried-and-tested structure that made *The Office* and *Parks and Recreation* fan favourites.

The show begins with the in-universe documentary crew restarting their careers by chronicling the daily chaos of the Toledo Truth Teller. Ned Sampson (Domhnall Gleeson) joins the paper as its new editor-in-chief, sharing an uneasy leadership with the very Michael Scott-like Esmerelda Grand (Sabrina Impacciatore).

The only returning cast member is Oscar Martinez (Oscar Nunez), the accountant now heading the Truth Teller's finance department. Ned, a former toilet paper salesman for Softees, the paper's sister company, arrives with big dreams of restoring the publication's reputation. He is aided by a quirky team, though only one, Mare Pritti (Chelsea Frei), has any actual newsroom experience. Ned, as the central character, radiates a go-getter spirit, determined to prove himself and push his unmotivated, underworked team to take the job seriously. His unconventional leadership sees everyone at the Truth Teller, from sales to accounting, taking turns writing for the paper. True to its roots, the series explores the will-they-won't-they dynamic on a new level, with several possible office romances unfolding. Ned and Mare's slow-burn chemistry feels familiar, reminiscent of Jim and Pam from *The Office*.



Ned's (Gleeson) first day at the Toledo Truth Teller. – ***PICS FROM IMDB***



The Paper follows the staff of a struggling local newspaper as they try to revive its glory days.

The humour remains sharp but is less madcap than in Michael Scott's era, keeping pace with modern audiences. Fans of *The Office* will enjoy the many nods and references sprinkled throughout the series especially from Oscar whenever explaining the trauma caused by a previous boss (Michael).

Still, questions linger about whether *The Paper* was truly necessary. Should *The Office* universe continue so long after its finale? Even the original's later seasons struggled after Michael's departure. Whether *The Paper* is a worthy successor is debatable, but it stands well enough on its own and deserves time to grow.

With a second season already confirmed, viewers can expect more newsroom drama, budding romances and familiar comedic rhythms. *The Paper* may not reach *The Office*'s legacy, but it has what counts most – heart, laughter and moments that remind us why workplace comedies still resonate.

Sydney Sweeney brings boxer Christy Martin's battles to big screen

AMERICAN actress Sydney Sweeney transformed into former professional boxer Christy Martin for the biopic *Christy*, which chronicles her life in and outside the ring.

Directed and co-written by David Michod, the film tracks two decades of Martin's life. During that time, she stumbled into the sport and, by virtue of her raw talent, turned into one of the most successful female boxers of the 1990s.

The film also portrays her relationship with her coach-turned-husband Jim Martin, played by Ben Foster, who takes control of her career and her life, with harrowing consequences.

Martin went on to found Christy's Champs, a non-profit supporting family abuse victims, and telling her story came with responsibility, Sweeney said at the movie's premiere at the London Film Festival last Friday.

"Honestly, it's a really heavy weight to carry. I feel the importance of her story and what it means to other people. She's such a huge advocate and she inspires me to also be an advocate as well," she said.

Known for her aggressive fighting style and powerful punches, Martin, now 57, was the first woman to sign with boxing promoter Don King and competed from 1989 to 2012.

She was closely involved in the production and visited the set often during the film shoot.



Sweeney puts on 16kg for the role of a professional boxer in *Christy*. – ***PICS FROM REUTERS***



Sweeney (left) and Foster attend the premiere of *Christy* at the London Film Festival last week.

Euphoria and *Anyone But You* star Sweeney spent some three months preparing for the role, working with a boxing coach, a weight trainer and a nutritionist.

"I put on 35 pounds (around 16kg) and it was definitely a very intense physical transformation. But I felt so strong," she said, adding that the fighting scenes in the film were very realistic. "I got a concussion. I might have broken someone else's nose."

The movie celebrates Martin's boxing achievements and also touches on themes of domestic violence and sexual identity.

"We set out to make a film that's about many things, not just boxing," said co-writer Mirrah Foulkes.

"I realised there was a larger story to tell about how these kind of coercive-control relationships work, the one that she has in this film with her husband-slash-trainer. I wanted to understand how they function, because they function all too commonly all over the world and often with horrific consequences," added Michod.

Christy begins its global cinematic rollout on Nov 7. – Reuters

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43300 Seri Kembangan
Selangor

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu dalam Mahkamah Shah Alam dalam Writ Saman No. **BA-A72NCvC-1148-08/2025** oleh **LEMBAGA KUMPULAN WANG SIMPANAN PEKERJA** yang beralamat ibu pejabat di Seksyen Pendakwaan dan Litigasi, Jabatan Undang-Undang, Tingkat 4, Menara KWSP, No. 1, Persiaran Kwasa Utama, Kwasa Damansara, Seksyen U4, 40150 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan dalam mana tuntutan Plaintif adalah untuk suatu Penghakiman, termasuk tetapi tidak terhad kepada perintah-perintah seperti berikut:-

a) terhadap Defendan sebagai pengarah DMC PROPERTY SDN. BHD. [NO. SYARIKAT: 201501042044 (1167365-V)] tersebut, bayaran tunggakan dividen sebanyak **RM1,649.00** bagi tempoh **Mac 2018 sehingga Januari 2019** yang terakru ke atas tunggakan caruman bulanan KWSP dan bayaran tunggakan caj lewat bayar sebanyak **RM1,997.00** bagi tempoh **Mac 2018 sehingga Januari 2019** yang terakru ke atas tunggakan caruman bulanan KWSP, yang menjadikan jumlah keseluruhannya sebanyak **RM3,646.00**;
b) Kos bagi tindakan ini; dan
c) Lain-lain relif yang Mahkamah yang mulia ini fikir wajar dan suaimanfaat.

DAN TELAH DIPERINTAHKAN BAHAWA penyampaian Writ Saman dan Penyata Tuntutan bagi tindakan ini kepada kamu dilaksanakan secara penyampaian ganti melalui penampalan satu salinan Writ Saman bermeterai dan Pernyataan Tuntutan bermeterai masing-masing bertarikh 29.08.2025 dan Perintah Penyampaian Ganti bertarikh 06.10.2025 di alamat-alamat seperti yang dinyatakan di atas dan melalui pengiklanan dalam satu akhbar harian tempatan dan penyampaian seumpama itu hendaklah dianggapkan sebagai penyampaian yang baik sempurna dan cukup ke atas Defendan dalam tempoh penamatan tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh yang terakhir penampalan dan pengiklanan sedemikian itu dilaksanakan, dan kos permohonan ini hendaklah menjadi kos dalam kausa.

Kamu boleh mendapatkan Writ Saman dan Penyata Tuntutan ini dengan memohon di Mahkamah.

Bertarikh pada 17 Oktober 2025

t.t.

.....
Tetuan Ahmad Fuad Abi & Aidil
Peguamcara Plaintif

NOTIS IKLAN ini difailkan oleh Tetuan Ahmad Fuad Abi & Aidil, peguamcara Plaintif yang dinamakan dengan alamat penyampaian di I-91-1, Jalan Teknologi 3/9, Bistari "De" Kota, Kota Damansara, PJU5, 47810 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.
Tel: 03-2774 6324 |
Emel: officekd@afaa-law.com
[Ruj: AFAA/25/LIT/1157/KWSP(9)-6/AM]
[Ruj KWSP: 9/4/2-0395-04(L)/SHA/2025/0115]

INSIDE EDGE

Shaheen Afridi appointed Pakistan ODI captain

PAKISTAN yesterday named fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi *(pic)* as skipper for next month's three-match ODI series against South Africa, marking a third change in the format's captaincy in the past 12 months. The 25-year-old replaced Mohammad Rizwan who took over as ODI skipper last October following Babar Azam's resignation. Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said Shaheen's appointment came after a meeting in Islamabad. "A meeting of the selection committee, also attended by Pakistan's white-ball head coach Mike Hesson, decided that Shaheen will lead Pakistan's ODI side against South Africa," said a PCB release. The three-match ODI series will be played on Nov 4, 6 and 8 – all in Faisalabad.



'Door open' if Konstas wants advice: Smith

STEVE SMITH has offered to mentor embattled teammate Sam Konstas as the young opener fights for runs and his place in Australia's Ashes plans. Despite flashes of talent, Konstas' domestic form – marked by erratic shot choices and a lack of consistent runs – has intensified debate over Australia's opening options before the five-Test series against England starts in Perth on Nov 21. The New South Wales batter was bowled for 20 as he attempted to ramp Victoria paceman Cameron McClure in a one-day match on Monday, reviving concerns about his shot selection. Smith said Konstas had time to work out his game but he would be glad to help if the five-Test opener came to him for advice. "My door's always open, my phone's always on," Smith said yesterday. "Whenever he wants to chat batting, I love talking batting and I'm happy to help wherever I can."

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA
DI KUALA LUMPUR
DI WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
PETISYEN PENGGULUNGAN NO.:
WA-28NCC-645-06/2025

Dalam Perkara Seksyen 49 Akta Perkongsian Liabiliti Terhad 2012

Dan

Dalam Perkara Seksyen 465(1)(e) dan 466(1)(a) Akta Syarikat 2016

Dan

Dalam Perkara Wealthpeer PLT [No. Perkongsian Liabiliti Terhad: 202104001637(LLP0028267-LGN)]

ANTARA

MUHAMMAD SABRAN ASMA'I BIN OTHMAN
(No. K/P: 911231-08-6233)
berniaga di atas nama dan gaya
JFPC SE ENTERPRISE
[No. Daftar: 202103105579(003257520-K)]
…PEMPETISYEN

DAN

WEALTHPEER PLT
[No. Daftar LLP: 202104001637 (LLP0028267-LGN)]
…RESPONDEN

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a petition for the winding-up of the above-named company by the High Court at Kuala Lumpur was, on the 18th June 2025 presented to the said Court by Muhammad Sabran Asma'I Bin Othman trading in the name and style of JFPC SE ENTERPRISE. of Suite 11, Level 20, Tower A, Plaza 33, Jalan Kemajuan, Seksyen 13, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor. And that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at the High Court of Malaya at Kuala Lumpur at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon on the 10th November 2025; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at Suite 11, Level 20, Tower A, Plaza 33, Jalan Kemajuan, Seksyen 13, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor.

The Petitioner's Solicitors is Messrs Ng, Zainurul, Seke & Khoo of OT-9F-03A, 2, Rio Office Tower, Persiaran Rio, Bandar Puteri Puchong, 47100 Puchong, Selangor.

Dated this 7th October 2025.

T.T

.....
Messrs Ng, Zainurul, Seke & Khoo
Solicitors for the Petitioner abovenamed

NOTE:
Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said petition must serve on or send by post to the abovenamed Messrs Ng, Zainurul, Seke & Khoo of OT-9F-03A, 2, Rio Office Tower, Persiaran Rio, Bandar Puteri Puchong, 47100 Puchong, Selangor, a notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their solicitor (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than twelve o'clock noon on 9th November 2025.
[Ref: NZSK/2024/CIVIL/1746/JFPC/KHOO]

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DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA
DI SHAH ALAM
DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA
PENGGULUNGAN SYARIKAT NO:
BA-28NCC-604-09/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Akta Syarikat 2016 Seksyen 464(1), 465(1)(e), (h) dan 466(1)(a)

Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Victory Builders Sdn Bhd (No. Pendaftaran: 201801016982 (1278998-D))

Dan

Dalam perkara mengenai Kaedah-Kaedah (Penggulungan) Syarikat 1972

Antara

ALPACE ENGINEERING SDN BHD
(NO.PENDAFTARAN: 200201025901 (593564-D))
…Pempetisyen

Dan

VICTORY BUILDERS SDN BHD
(No.PENDAFTARAN: 201801016982 (1278998-D))
...responden

PENGIKLANAN PETISYEN

NOTIS adalah dengan ini diberikan bahawa suatu petisyen untuk penggulungan syarikat yang dinamakan di atas oleh Mahkamah Tinggi telah pada 10 September 2025 diserahkan oleh Alpace Engineering Sdn Bhd. Dan bahawa Petisyen tersebut adalah diarahkan untuk dibicarakan di hadapan Mahkamah Tinggi di Shah Alam pada **3 Disember 2025 pada jam 9.00 pagi**; dan pemiutang atau penyumbang syarikat tersebut yang berhasrat untuk menyokong atau membangkang pembuatan perintah sepertimana yang diminta dalam Petisyen bolehlah hadir sewaktu perbicaraan samada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara bagi tujuan tersebut; dan sesalinan petisyen akan diberikan kepada pemiutang atau penyumbang syarikat tersebut yang memintanya oleh penandatangan di bawah ini apabila bayaran yang ditetapkan dibuat untuknya.

Alamat Pempetisyen adalah di No. 38-B, Jalan BPU 9, Bandar Puchong Utama, 47100 Puchong, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Peguamcara Pempetisyen adalah Tetuan Yong Dan Rakan-Rakan di No. 12-1, Tingkat 1, Jalan Tiara 2D/KU1, Bandar Baru Klang, 41150 Klang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

t.t.

.....
T/n Yong Dan Rakan-Rakan
Peguamcara Pempetisyen

NOTA - Bahawa sesiapa yang bercadang untuk hadir di perbicaraan petisyen tersebut hendaklah menyerahkan atau mengirim secara pos kepada Tetuan Yong Dan Rakan-Rakan notis bertulis berkenaan niat tersebut. Notis tersebut hendaklah menyatakan nama dan alamat orang tersebut, atau jika sebuah firma, nama dan alamat firma tersebut, dan hendaklah ditandatangani oleh orang tersebut atau firma, atau peguamcaranya (jika ada) dan hendaklah diserahkan atau jika dikirim, hendaklah dikirim melalui pos dalam jangkamasa yang memadai untuk sampai ke alamat tersebut di atas tidak lewat dari jam 12.00 tengahari pada 2 Disember 2025.

Pengiklanan Petisyen ini dikeluarkan oleh Tetuan Yong Dan Rakan-Rakan peguamcara bagi Pempetisyen yang beralamat untuk penyampaian di No. 12-1, Tingkat 1, Jalan Tiara 2D/KU1, Bandar Baru Klang, 41150 Klang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.
Tel: 03-33427207/9
Fax: 03-33414202
AG/Peg/Lai
Ruj: AESB/VBSB/35266/2025/AG(WU)

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT SHAH ALAM
IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA

COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) PETITION NO:
BA-28NCC-610-09/2025

In the matter of Section 465(1)(e) and Section 466 of the Companies Act, 2016 and

In the matter of Kuarza Bumi Sdn Bhd (Company No: 201801040393 (1302424-U))

BETWEEN

7-ELEVEN MALAYSIA SDN BHD
(Company No: 198401008445 (120962-P))
…PETITIONER

AND

KUARZA BUMI SDN BHD
(Company No: 201801040393 (1302424-U))
...RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the abovementioned company by the High Court was, on the 19th day of September 2025 presented by the said company 7-Eleven Malaysia Sdn Bhd. And that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Shah Alam at 9:00 o'clock in the forenoon, on Monday, the 12th day of January 2026, and any creditor or contributory of the said company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at 12th Floor, Menara Symphony, No. 5, Jalan Prof. Khoo Kay Kim, Seksyen 13, 46200 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's solicitor is Messrs. Loh Chow Tet & Associates, of Unit No. B3-9 & B3-10, 3rd Floor (Lift No. 5), Megan Ambassy, No. 225, Jalan Ampang, 50450 Kuala Lumpur.

.....sgd.....
Messrs. Loh Chow Tet & Associates
Solicitor for the Petitioner

NOTE –

Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the above-named solicitor for the Petitioner, Messrs. Loh Chow Tet & Associates, notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their solicitor (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the above-named not later than 12:00 o'clock noon of the day 11th day of January 2026.

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR
(COMMERCIAL DIVISION)
COMPANY WINDING UP PETITION
NO.: WA-28NCC-964-09/2025

In the matter of BMG Global Sdn Bhd [Company No.: 200501020540 (702664-W)];

And

In the matter of sections 465(1)(e) and 466(1)(a) of Companies Act 2016;

And

In the matter of Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972.

BETWEEN

JUANG-ANTARA BINA SDN BHD
[COMPANY NO.: 199501016618 (345821-P)]
... PETITIONER

AND

BMG GLOBAL SDN BHD
[COMPANY NO.: 200501020540 (702664-W)]
... RESPONDENT

IKLAN PETISYEN

NOTIS ADALAH DENGAN INI DIBERI bahawa suatu Petisyen untuk Penggulungan Syarikat yang dinamakan di atas oleh Mahkamah Tinggi telah, pada 17 September 2025, dikemukakan oleh Juang-Antara Bina Sdn Bhd.

DAN bahawa Petisyen tersebut diarahkan supaya didengarkan di hadapan mahkamah yang bersidang di Mahkamah Tinggi Kuala Lumpur pada pukul 9.00 pagi pada 4 Disember 2025.

DAN mana-mana pihak pemiutang atau penyumbang syarikat tersebut yang ingin menyokong atau menentang suatu perintah mengikut Petisyen tersebut boleh hadir dengan tujuan itu secara peribadi atau melalui peguambelanya pada masa perbicaraan. Salinan Petisyen tersebut akan dibekalkan oleh pihak yang bertandatangan di bawah ini kepada mana-mana pemiutang atau penyumbang syarikat tersebut yang memintanya dengan membuat bayaran yang ditetapkan.

Alamat berdaftar Pempetisyen adalah di No.9 (Room 1), Jalan Damai Niaga, Alam Damai, Cheras, 56000 Kuala Lumpur, Wilayah Persekutuan dan alamat perniagaannya adalah di No. 5, Jalan Anggerik Vanilla U 31/U, Kota Kemuning Seksyen 31, 40460 Shah Alam, Selangor.

Peguamcara Pempetisyen ialah Tetuan Kheng Hoe & Lee Yuen yang mempunyai alamat penyampaian di A3-3-6, Solaris Dutamas, 1 Jalan Dutamas 1, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.

Kheng Hoe & Lee Yuen
.....
Tetuan Kheng Hoe & Lee Yuen
Peguamcara Pempetisyen

NOTA - Sesiapa yang ingin hadir pada perbicaraan Petisyen tersebut hendaklah menyampaikan, atau menghantar dengan pos, kepada peguamcara Pempetisyen yang dinamakan di atas suatu notis bertulis tentang niatnya sebegitu. Notis tersebut mestilah menyatakan nama dan alamat pihak berkenaan, atau jika ia sebuah firma, nama dan alamat firma, dan mestilah ditandatangani oleh pihak atau firma berkenaan atau peguamcaranya, jika ada. Notis hendaklah disampaikan, atau jika dihantar dengan pos, hendaklah dihantar dalam jangka masa mencukupi, supaya sampai kepada pihak yang dinamakan di atas sebelum pukul 12.00 tengah hari pada 3 Disember 2025 (sehari sebelum tarikh yang ditetapkan untuk perbicaraan Petisyen tersebut).

IKLAN PETISYEN ini difailkan oleh Tetuan Kheng Hoe & Lee Yuen, peguamcara Pempetisyen yang dinamakan di atas yang mempunyai alamat di A3-3-6, Block A3, Solaris Dutamas, 1 Jalan Dutamas 1, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
[Ruj: 25082213
Tel: 03-6205 3928
E-mel: ask@khly.law]

Sinner snubs Italy

The teams for Davis Cup Final 8 are out, and world No. 1 is the big omission

JANNIK SINNER will not play for Italy at the Davis Cup Final 8 after not making himself available for the knockout stage which begins in Bologna next month. Italy captain Filippo Volandri has instead called up Lorenzo Musetti, Flavio Cobolli, Matteo Berrettini, Simone Bolelli and Andrea Vavassor.

The host country enter as two-time defending champions, but Sinner was part of both those teams. He has been ever-present at the tournament since 2021, as Italy have gradually improved from exiting in the quarterfinals, to making the semifinals and then winning their first titles since 1976, back when that year's French Open champion Adriano Panatta led them to a maiden title.

Sinner is the only one of the world's top three players not partaking in the tournament. Carlos Alcaraz will represent Spain for the second straight year and Alexander Zverev is back in the Germany team after being absent last year.

Italy and Spain are on opposite sides of the draw, so an Alcaraz vs Sinner rematch could only have taken place in the final.

Alcaraz has never previously progressed past the quarterfinals when representing his country, despite both of his two appearances being when the tournament was held in Malaga.

Italy captain Volandri has said: "With our Italian players, we have built our recent successes on team spirit and mutual trust. This trust is based on hard work and the constant dedication of each member to the others.

"This is why we are confident that the group will meet in Bologna with even greater motivation to achieve a historic goal, a gift to the team and our fans.

"We will have to overcome tough opponents, starting with Austria, but I am fortunate to be able to count on a broad roster of players that will allow us to face this challenge with full conviction.

"(Jannik) Sinner has not confirmed his availability for 2025. The Davis Cup is, and will always be, his home, and I am certain that Jannik will soon return to the team.

"In the meantime, I can count on a group ready to fight and give everything for the Italian national team. In Bologna, it will once again be an exciting adventure. I know the value of these players, and I am confident that the future will bring us even greater satisfaction."

President of the Italian Tennis and Padel Federation Angelo Binaghi added: "We understand and respect Jannik's decision, which is deeply painful for us, and which comes at the end of a long and intense season, during which he once again demonstrated his extraordinary role model for the entire Italian tennis movement.

For him – and for all of us – the Davis Cup represents a symbol of pride and belonging, and we are certain he will soon return to wear the blue jersey with the same passion and determination as always.

"At the same time, I want to emphasize the great confidence we place in the group led by Filippo Volandri: a solid, united team, capable of turning every difficulty into further motivation.

"Our players have already demonstrated their ability to achieve extraordinary goals together, and I am confident that this time too they will be able to truly honor the colors of Italy." – Express Newspapers

Sabalenka, Swiatek stripped of ranking points

ARYNA SABALENKA and Iga Swiatek are among a group of top players who have been penalised for failing to play the required number of mandatory tournaments this season.

Players on the WTA Tour must compete in at least six WTA 500s in a single year, and neither woman met the threshold in 2025.

Coco Gauff, Amanda Ansimova, and Australian Open champion Madison Keys are also among those who had points stripped from their ranking this week.

Players who skip mandatory events have their ranking "zeroed out" – essentially meaning ranking points from other tournaments they have entered this year are removed as punishment.

When the weekly rankings updated on Monday (Oct 20), Sabalenka, Gauff and Anisimova all had 10 points removed, while Swiatek was docked 65, and Keys lost 54 points.

The zero-point rule caused chaos last year when Swiatek lost her world No. 1 position because she had ranking points removed for playing just two eligible WTA 500 events.

The Pole was docked 20 from her last 16 exit in Miami while Sabalenka only lost 10 points from her opening-round defeat in Dubai, meaning Sabalenka became the world No. 1. She's held that position ever since.

This time around, the penalties did not affect the rankings. But players are expected to be hit with another zero-pointer next week. Sabalenka, Swiatek, Gauff and Anisimova have only played in three WTA 500 events this year, while Keys has contested four.

Last week's Ningbo Open, which none of the players entered, was the penultimate WTA 500 of the season and one of their last chances to fulfil the requirements. Because they didn't play, they were docked ranking points to "apply" the zeroes for the missed WTA 500s.

Players have been outspoken about the demanding tennis calendar and the number of mandatory events. Swiatek recently admitted that she had to prioritise her health and fitness over meeting the requirements, even if it meant she was docked ranking points.

During the recent China Open in Beijing, the six-time Major winner said: "I don't think any top player will actually be able to achieve this, for example, playing the six 500 tournaments. It's just impossible to squeeze it in the schedule.

"But yeah, I think we have to be smart about it, not really unfortunately care about the rules and just think what's healthy for us. Yeah, it's tough." – Express Newspapers



Aryna Sabalenka *(right)* and Iga Swiatek – ***REUTERSPIC/AFPPIC***



Novak Djokovic reacts after retiring from his match against Taylor Fritz. – *REUTERSPIC*

Djoker explains retirement in Riyadh

BY **JAMIE BRAIDWOOD**

NOVAK DJOKOVIC apologised to the crowd after retiring from his Six Kings Slam third-place match against Taylor Fritz due to an injury.

The 38-year-old lost a physical, 75-minute first set against Fritz and shook hands with the American after he won the tiebreak 7-4.

Djokovic appeared to pull up with a left leg injury during the match and decided he could not continue playing in slow conditions.

The 24-time grand slam champion lost in straight sets to Jannik Sinner in the semifinals before he retired on Saturday.

"Not great, I want to apologise to everybody," Djokovic said as he spoke to the crowd before leaving the court.

"Sorry guys. Sorry you couldn't see the second set.

"It was one of the longest sets I've played.

"Credit to Taylor. We had some incredible games towards the end of that set, and it's one of the longest sets I've ever played, to be honest.

"It was an amazing visit to Riyadh for me once again.

"I want to thank everybody for really welcoming me.

"Hopefully I'll be back next year if you guys want me." – The Independent

Italian World No. 1 makes feelings crystal clear on 'special relationship' with Alcaraz

CARLOS ALCARAZ has confessed it is "not funny" to face Jannik Sinner following his defeat to the Italian in the Six Kings Slam final – but his rival insists the pair are good friends off the court. Sinner relied on an enhanced serve to produce a commanding display as he clinched a 6-2, 6-4 victory over Alcaraz in Riyadh on Sunday.

The triumph arrived after Novak Djokovic withdrew following just one set in the third-place playoff, forcing Taylor Fritz to select a winner for the subsequent final.

Whilst the Six Kings Slam is an exhibition event and will not contribute towards rankings or head-to-head statistics, Sinner remained determined to exact revenge after his loss to the Spaniard in the US Open final. He prevailed in impressive fashion to guarantee he arrives at the ATP Finals in excellent form.

The result proved crucial for Sinner, whose Wimbledon victory over Alcaraz represents his sole triumph against the world No. 1 in their previous eight official encounters.

Alcaraz heaped praise upon his opponent. The pair enjoy a cordial relationship, yet when questioned whether he relishes facing Sinner when the Italian performs at his peak, Alcaraz responded: "Not really. Sometimes it seems like he's playing ping pong. It's not funny being on the other side of the net."

Alcaraz continued: "I always say that when he plays such great tennis, it gives me motivation to go to the practice court, give my 100%, try to be better. It's kind of a mix. Sometimes he's annoying, but at the same time, he gives me extra motivation."

Sinner admitted his performance in the Six Kings Slam final was particularly impressive, expressing a desire to "could play like this everywhere." The 24-year-old confessed he contemplates how to enhance his game for future matches against Alcaraz. "You think a lot about that," Sinner revealed. "That's exactly why you need Carlos and many other players … to keep improving, to keep looking up to certain players.

"Especially for me, this is Carlos. Because especially this season, we played many times… I lost many times against Carlos.

"It's a tremendous pleasure and honour to share the court with him. At the same time, you want to improve as a tennis player. You need rivalries. It's wonderful to have a great rivalry, more importantly a great friendship off court. We have a very, very special friendship. It's very nice." – Express Newspapers

Red Bull name Verstappen replacement for Mexico GP

ARVID LINDBLAD will replace Max Verstappen in FP1 at the Mexican Grand Prix next weekend, making his second practice appearance of the campaign after his debut outing in F1 machinery at Silverstone earlier this year.

Lindblad, 18, is being touted for a quickfire promotion to F1 with Racing Bulls next year off the back of an impressive but inconsistent rookie Formula Two campaign. With two race weekends remaining in his season, the teenager sits seventh in the standings with two victories to his name, but also eight pointless results in his last 12 outings.

Nevertheless, Helmut Marko and Laurent Mekies see promise in the Surrey-born starlet, and he is reported to be in pole position to replace Isack Hadjar at Racing Bulls, should the rookie be called up to become Max Verstappen's teammate at Red Bull in 2026.

Now, Lindblad will get another chance to impress, driving the RB21 in place of Verstappen at the Autodromo Hermanos Rodriguez next weekend. The Dutchman will travel to Mexico City looking to score his fourth win in five races after reigniting the title fight in Austin.

Meanwhile, for Lindblad, a decision about his future is close. Marko has confirmed that the race in Mexico City will be the last one considered before Red Bull make decisions about the futures of Hadjar, Yuki Tsunoda and Liam Lawson.

For Red Bull, much of their decision centres around what to do with Tsunoda. With the RB21's return to prominence have come stronger results for the Japanese driver, who has scored points in three of the last five Grands Prix.

However, with Verstappen now in title contention and a regular attendee of podium ceremonies, those results look less flattering.

Another season with Red Bull seems out of the question, but Racing Bulls could still use the 25-year-old as an anchor from which to measure Lindblad's results.

Tsunoda's seventh-place finish in Austin was a commendable performance, but he left rival Oliver Bearman furious with an aggressive defence at Turn 15 midway through the race.

"No [I won't speak to him]," the Haas driver told *Sky Sports F1*. "I don't think it's the first time he's done something like that, and it's not going to be the last time.

"Clearly, with the way he's driving. We saw it in quali yesterday, complaining. He's trying really hard, and it's not working.

"Twice in Turn One, he divebombed on Lap One, taking incredible risks. I don't think it's worth even trying to make him understand my view." – Express Newspapers

'Lewis is back'

Vasseur heaps praise amid Hamilton's podium drought

FREDERIC VASSEUR declared "Lewis is back" as he heaped praise upon his seven-time Formula 1 champion driver. That was despite Lewis Hamilton claiming an unwanted Ferrari record at the United States Grand Prix as he is now the first driver in the Scuderia's history to fail to stand on the podium in any of his first 19 races.

Didier Pironi previously held that record, the Frenchman having ended his barren run with victory at the 1982 San Marino Grand Prix held at Imola. Hamilton has won a Sprint race with Ferrari this season but has yet to reach the top three in any full-distance race.

But there were signs of promise at the US Grand Prix as Ferrari found their groove. The race in Austin saw Hamilton put in one of his best performances yet since joining Ferrari and his improvement in recent weeks, even compared to his team-mate Charles Leclerc, has not gone unnoticed by his boss.

Team principal Vasseur said: "You need to have two cars. For us it's important, and if we want to maximise the number of points that we'll score until the end, we have to score with two cars for sure.

"Lewis is back – for two thirds of the weekend he was faster than Charles this weekend. It's good for the team."

Speaking after the race, Hamilton vowed to "keep trying" to end his podium drought as he reflected on what he described as "an amazing result for the team. He said: "Third and fourth, good points. It's great to finish ahead of the Mercedes team to get those points, and even ahead of one of the McLarens.

"So definitely a positive, and I went forward even after a bad start, so lots and lots of positives to take from here. I think naturally I want to be further up, but just got to keep working at it. But we're definitely on the right path.

"Considering we've not been upgrading the car, for us to be in the fight shows that the team has done a really, really great job this weekend, so I hope everyone back at the factory is happy.

"We're definitely on the right path.

"I'm so close, still not got that podium, but I'll keep trying."

As for Vasseur, the Ferrari chief hopes his team's execution in Austin will be a platform for them to hit the ground running in Mexico City this weekend. – Express Newspapers



Lewis Hamilton. – *REUTERSPIC*

Ekitike returns to face floundering Frankfurt

WHEN Liverpool striker Hugo Ekitike returns to face his former club Eintracht Frankfurt in the Champions League tomorrow (3am Malaysian time), he will find a side which bears little resemblance to the one he left in July.

Last year, Frankfurt qualified for the Champions League by finishing in the Bundesliga top four for the first time in their history.

Their third-placed finish was their best result since the 1992/93 season.

However, the Eagles have lacked any sort of consistency since the start of the current campaign and boast just one win in their past five games in all competitions.

Liverpool's misfiring forward line will be licking their lips looking at Frankfurt's defence, which has conceded 18 goals in that five-game run.

While Liverpool, on a four-game losing streak, have teething problems of their own, Frankfurt have struggled after once again losing their biggest star.

Last season, Ekitike was Frankfurt's principal attacking force, particularly after the winter departure of Omar Marmoush to Manchester City.

The Frenchman scored 22 goals and laid on 12 assists in 48 games in all competitions.

But Frankfurt have made a habit of selling their biggest talents for big profits in recent years.

While Frankfurt's scouts have shown a continued ability to unearth gems, the departure of key players always leads to a period of rebuilding.

And Frankfurt, as is often the case for a young team in such a phase, have shown strokes of brilliance and moments of pure chaos in equal measure this season.

Playing in the Champions League for just the second time in their history, Frankfurt opened their campaign with an incredible 5-1 home win over Galatasaray, with their youthful attackers running riot.

But next time out, the 2022 Europa League winners were humbled at Atletico Madrid by the same scoreline, with their chaotic defence an utter shambles.

In the Bundesliga, Frankfurt's hot-and-cold three wins, three losses and one draw has them seventh after seven matches.

Apart from league leaders Bayern Munich, Dino Toppmoeller's side have scored the most goals in the league this season.

But they have also conceded more than any other side.

Frankfurt's struggles may be a chance for Liverpool to revive their season, but the home side know the English champions will be vulnerable while they try to find their feet.

Sporting director Timmo Hardung said taking on the Reds could provide the spark to ignite Frankfurt's season.

"It will be a completely different game," Hardung told Frankfurt's website on Sunday.

"Starting Monday, things will move forward again. Liverpool. Champions League. There's nothing better in football. I'm incredibly excited about it." – AFP

Mourinho retains huge affection for the Magpies

BENFICA manager Jose Mourinho believes a long-awaited English League Cup triumph that ended Newcastle's trophy drought will spur the northeast side on to even greater success.

Mourinho has a great fondness for the Magpies given it was the club supported – and was subsequently coached – by the late Bobby Robson, his managerial mentor at Sporting Lisbon, Porto and Barcelona.

Asked how former England manager Robson would have responded to last season's League Cup final win over Liverpool, which ended a 70-year wait for Newcastle, one of the best-supported clubs in England, to win a major domestic trophy, Mourinho replied Monday: "Sir Bobby is a legend here.

"And in England if you're a legend, there are many reasons to be a legend."

Mourinho added: "He loved this club, he gave everything to this club. Of course he would be so happy with that victory in the (League) Cup. I was so happy with that victory.

"I know that it is not the target. I know that Newcastle and all the Geordies want a reward that is bigger than the League Cup, but the League Cup is the beginning.

"To play in the Champions League is another very important step and I think the club goes in the right direction."

Mourinho was intially Robson's interpreter at Sporting, a position that set him on the road to a hugely successful career in football management.

"He put a lot of trust in me and I consider that very important for my career.

"I tried to pay him back with everything I gave," Mourinho said.

"I don't know if I ever did, but I tried to give him everything that I had.

"That for me is enough."

The 62-year-old added: "I worked with Sir Bobby for two, four, six years and there was not a single day he did not show his passion for Newcastle, the city, the region and the football club, the pride and the passion he felt for it.

"Even when I was the manager of other English clubs, I've never hidden how dear Newcastle is to me because of the influence of a legendary person at this club." – AFP

Arsenal boss slams Gyokeres

Swede given warning, issues for Arteta to address at the Emirates

ARSENAL may be leading the Premier League by four points, but even the top-flight leaders have their problems. The Gunners secured a third consecutive league victory with a narrow 1-0 win over Fulham on Saturday.

Liverpool had the chance to reduce their lead to just one point but fell short, suffering a 2-1 home defeat to Manchester United. After eight matches, Mikel Arteta's team have only conceded three goals, but it's at the other end of the pitch where they're struggling to find the net.

Viktor Gyokeres has gone four league games without scoring, while Eberechi Eze is yet to score a league goal this season.

Arteta has given Gyokeres some advice during his goal drought, and a controversial moment in their match at Craven Cottage was highlighted by a former official.

The Swede boasted an outstanding record in Portugal with 97 goals in 102 matches but has thus far struggled to recreate that brilliance in front of goal for his new side.

Following another goalless display against Fulham, the 27-year-old's barren spell now extends to nine matches, including failing to find the net during the recent international break. Despite his struggles for goals, Arteta had already outlined expectations to him before the campaign began regarding how to handle such dry spells.

Speaking ahead of the clash at Craven Cottage, the Gunners manager revealed: "I told him before the first meeting, I said, 'the nine that I want is a nine that when he doesn't score for six or eight games, he can handle that.' If not, you have to go somewhere else because the expectation is going to be there.

"So, if you put on a nine shirt for Arsenal, you have to be able to say, 'OK, six games, if I don't score, I'm a different player? I start to act in a different way?.' No, I want much more of the same of what he's doing."

The Arsenal boss maintained that whilst goals are absent, Gyokeres continues to play a vital role and has made contributions in alternative ways.

Arteta continued: "You see the history of the number nines. You're going to have moments like this. He brings so much to the team. He creates space and solutions to a lot of the players around him. And with the talent that we have in the team, I'm sure that everybody, him included, will benefit from that."

Meanwhile, it has been a challenging beginning to his Arsenal career for Eze, who has yet to demonstrate the quality that prompted his £67.5 million (RM382m) move from Crystal Palace last month.

The 27-year-old has managed just one goal and two assists across 11 appearances in all competitions, with his solitary strike arriving during a 2-0 triumph over Port Vale in the EFL Cup.

The England international's goalscoring woes persisted during the Gunners' success against Fulham, with Eze withdrawn in the 62nd minute.

Despite his limited output, Arteta confessed he continues to be pleased with what he has witnessed from his deadline day acquisition and lauded his display against the Cottagers.

"He's more used to attacking open spaces and breaks and facing and carrying the ball with space in front of him, he's so good and comfortable doing that," the Spaniard said.

"He had his moments today, he put Viktor once or twice through in really good spaces and that maybe if it finished in a goal it would've looked a bit different. But I'm very happy with what he's doing and we can use him in different positions. Today we used him in that one and we can carry on trying to improve." – Express Newspapers

Liverpool return 'theoretically possible': Klopp

FORMER Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp says it is "theoretically possible" he could return to the Anfield hot seat one day, but he is convinced current boss Arne Slot will guide the club through the rough patch they are going through.

Klopp left Liverpool at the end of the 2023/24 season after leading the Merseyside club to almost every major honour during his nine-year spell, including Champions League and Premier League triumphs.

The 58-year-old German was succeeded by Slot, who became the first Dutch manager to win the Premier League.

"I said I will never coach a different team in England so that means if (I go back), then it's Liverpool. So yeah, theoretically it's possible," Klopp said on *The Diary of a CEO* podcast on Monday.

However, he said he is content in his current role as head of global football for Red Bull.

"I love what I do now. I don't miss coaching. I do coach but it's just different, it's not players," Klopp said.

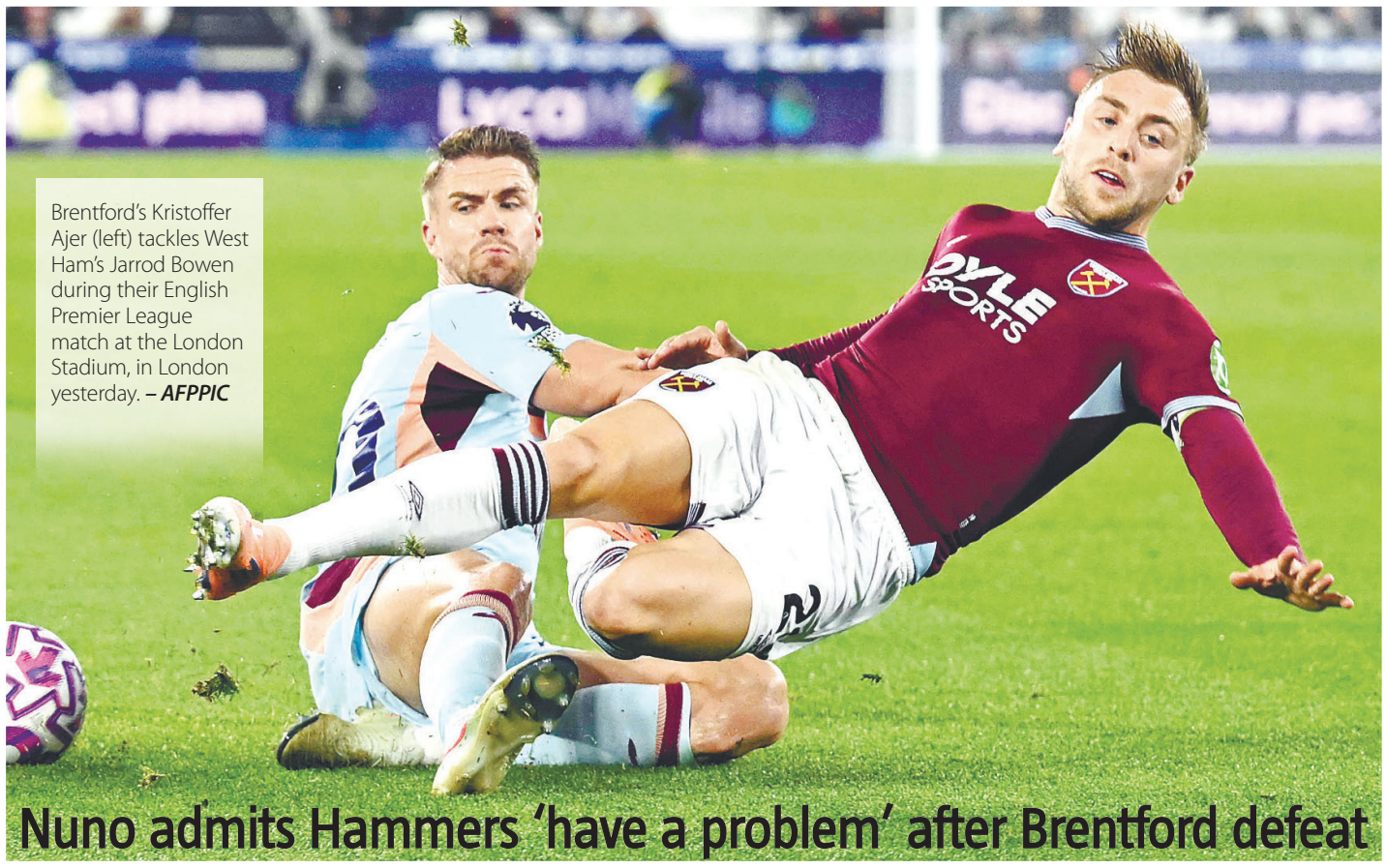
"I don't miss standing in the rain for two-and-a-half or three hours. I also don't miss going to press conferences three times a week… I don't miss being in the dressing room…

"I'm 58. From your perspective that might be old, but from other perspectives, it's not that old. That means I could make a decision in a few years. I don't know."

Liverpool have suffered four consecutive defeats for the first time since November 2014 following Sunday's 2-1 home loss to Manchester United but Klopp was confident Slot will turn things around with players like Florian Wirtz and Hugo Ekitike at his disposal.

"Wirtz, you all will eat your words if you use the wrong words. He's an incredible talent," he added. "Ekitike, incredible player. Just the offensive players… it's a really, really good squad.

"So you don't have to worry about Liverpool, they will be fine." – Reuters



Brentford's Kristoffer Ajer (left) tackles West Ham's Jarrod Bowen during their English Premier League match at the London Stadium, in London yesterday. – ***AFPPIC***

Nuno admits Hammers 'have a problem' after Brentford defeat

NUNO ESPIRITO SANTO admitted "we have a problem" after West Ham suffered a lacklustre 2-0 loss at home to Brentford yesterday.

A night that started with a boycott by one set of Hammers fans ended with those that remained at the London Stadium booing the home side off the field as goals from Igor Thiago and Mathias Jensen secured a first away win of the season for capital Brentford, who should have won this Premier League match by a larger scoreline.

Nuno's first home match in charge coincided with a planned stay-away organised by supporters' groups in protest against the club's board.

Defeat meant the Hammers had lost their opening four home matches of a season for the first time in their history, with this reverse coming on the same day as former boss Graham Potter, sacked by the club last month, was named as the new manager of Sweden.

"Not good enough. Poor," said Nuno after a defeat that left West Ham in 19th place in the Premier League, with only basement club Wolves below them in the table. "Fairly, Brentford won the game, they were the better team.

"I think we are all concerned. You can see our own fans are concerned. Concern becomes anxiety, becomes silence. We have a problem."

The Portuguese boss, previously in charge of Premier League Nottingham Forest, added: "It's understandable. It's up to us to change. The fans need to see something that pleases them and they can support us and give us energy."

The only surprise yesterday was that it took Brentford 43 minutes to open the scoring.

Maximilian Kilman's woeful effort at clearing a routine ball over the top allowed Kevin Schade to nip in behind and hook the ball to Thiago.

Hammers keeper Alphonse Areola got a hand to his shot but the ball spun away and settled inside the far post.

Thiago found the net again before halftime, only to be denied by VAR for offside. Brentford finally made the game safe in stoppage time when Keane Lewis-Potter cut the ball back for fellow substitute Jensen to fire into the roof of the net.

"Very pleased," said Brentford boss Keith Andrews. "We approached the game really well. I had a good feeling the last few days, the vibe, the energy around the place. I thought we produced a really good performance." – AFP

Forest hire ex-Everton boss Dyche to replace Postecoglou

NOTTINGHAM FOREST have appointed former Everton boss Sean Dyche as their new manager, the Premier League club announced yesterday, following the sacking of Ange Postecoglou.

"The former Forest youth player joins the club on a contract running until the summer of 2027 and will take charge of his first match on Thursday night as the Reds take on FC Porto in the Europa League," Forest said in a statement.

Forest sacked Postecoglou barely 20 minutes after the final whistle blew in their 3-0 home defeat to Chelsea on Saturday, a loss that left the Midlands side 18th in the league standings with five points from eight matches.

Postecoglou's Forest reign of just 39 days makes the Australian the shortest-serving permanent Premier League manager to be sacked mid-season.

"A respected and experienced Premier League manager, Dyche brings the perfect blend of character, tactical acumen and proven achievement to guide the club through its next chapter," Forest said.

"As a former Forest youth player who lives locally, Dyche also has a deep understanding of the values and pride of Forest and its supporters." Dyche, 54, has been out of work since January when he was sacked by Everton after a poor run of results.

The Englishman's most notable managerial achievements came during his decade-long tenure at Burnley from 2012 to 2022.

During that period, he guided them to promotion twice from the Championship, secured two top-half league finishes and led the club to European qualification for the first time in 51 years. – Reuters

TOUCHLINES

SPORTING'S Morten Hjulmand, 26, has emerged as Manchester United's prime target to strengthen their midfield and the Premier League club are optimistic of securing the Dane for about £50m (RM283m).

FULHAM'S owners have told head coach Marco Silva of their desire to renew his contract, which contains a release clause in the region of £15m (RM85m).

BARCELONA and Real Madrid are closely monitoring England centre-back Marc Guehi, 25, who will not extend his contract with Crystal Palace beyond the end of the season.

PORTO'S Spanish striker Samu Omorodion, 21, is on Tottenham's list of transfer targets.

ARSENAL are continuing their efforts to renew the contract of Netherlands defender Jurrien Timber, with the 24-year-old and the Gunners now in direct contact as both look to reach a breakthrough.

EVERTON'S Ukraine fullback Vitalii Mykolenko, 26, is attracting interest from clubs in Spain and Italy.

STRASBOURG fullback Guela Doue, 23, has been watched by Premier League clubs Chelsea, Aston Villa, Brighton and Brentford – though the French side might demand a transfer fee in excess of £26m (RM147m) for the Ivory Coast defender.

LEEDS are interested in signing Maccabi Tel Aviv's Malian midfielder Issouf Sissokho, 23, in January.

ASTON VILLA are closely monitoring Real Sociedad and Japan winger Takefusa Kubo, 24, who has decided he wants to leave La Liga in January.

Men's draw 'balanced', says Ahmad Jais

NATIONAL sepak takraw head coach Ahmad Jais Baharun has described the draw for the men's quadrant, regu and team regu events at the 2025 Thailand SEA Games as "balanced".

Although he does not expect the national squad to have any problems advancing to the knockout rounds, he was quick to remind them not to underestimate their opponents in the earlier rounds.

"For me, the draw this time can be considered balanced. Our focus is on clearing the group stages and making it to the final.

"So, we cannot look down on our opponents and must focus on getting our act right each time we play," he told *Bernama* yesterday.

In the draw held in Bangkok on Sunday (Oct 19), the men's team regu received a favourable draw when they were placed in Group A with Myanmar, the Philippines and Singapore.

For the regu event, Malaysia have been drawn in Group A with Laos and Vietnam.

As for the quadrant event, Malaysia are in Group B with Laos, Cambodia, Singapore, Brunei and Vietnam.

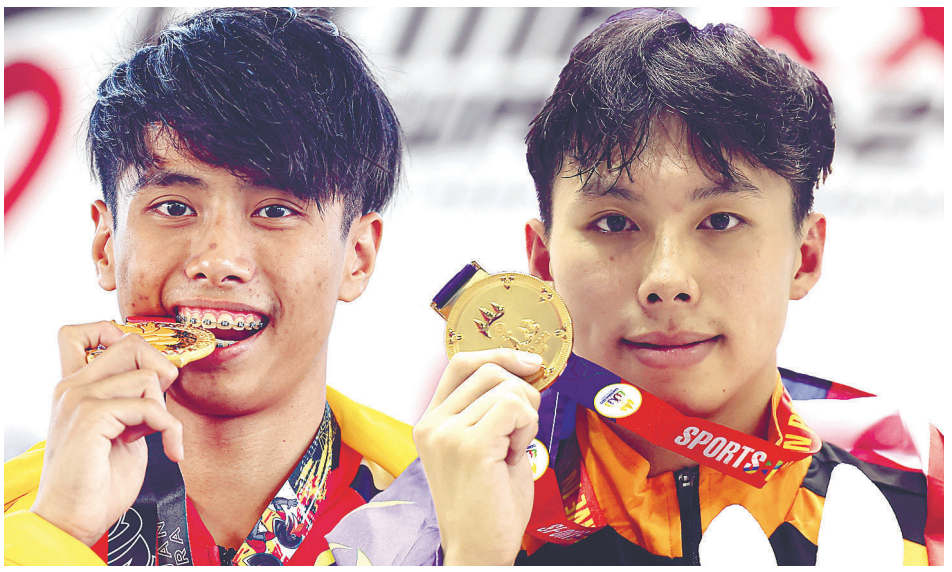
Commenting on the women's team, Ahmad Jais admitted that they will face a tougher task after being drawn with Thailand in the team regu and quadrant events.

However, he is confident they will not return home empty-handed, saying they should get at least a bronze medal.

At the 2023 edition in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the national sepak takraw squad bagged a total of four silver and four bronze medals. – Bernama

Athletes selected for sports award

Hoe Yean, Ariana Nur Dania frontrunners for FTSA 2023/24



Malaysian diver Nurqayyum Nazmi (left) and swimmer Khiew Hoe Yean. – ***BERNAMAPIC***



National archer Ariana Nur Dania. – *BERNAMAPIC*

NATIONAL swimmer Khiew Hoe Yean is the frontrunner for the Federal Territory Sportsman award at the Federal Territory Sports Award (FTSA) ceremony 2023/24, scheduled for tomorrow in Putrajaya.

The two-time SEA Games gold medallist has been shortlisted alongside two other athletes: national archer Alang Ariff Aqil Muhammad Ghazali and national diver Nurqayyum Nazmi Mohamad Nazim.

The Federal Territory Sportswoman category also features three nominees: elite national archer Ariana Nur Dania Mohamad Zairi, 2023 world lawn bowls champion Nur Ain Nabilah Tarmizi and young *wushu* athlete Kwan Yong Xin.

Meanwhile, the contest for the Federal Territory Promising Sportsman award will be among Muhammad Dhuha Zulfikry, the Best Male Athlete of the 2024 Sarawak Sukma from swimming, squash player Joachim Chuah and fencer Jesaiah Lyshant Rabindranath.

The title for Federal Territory Promising Sportswoman will be contested by rhythmic gymnast Cassidy Tan, swimmer Chong Xin Lin and diver Lee Yiat Qing.

The winners of the Federal Territory Sportsman and Sportswoman awards will each receive a cash prize of RM8,000 and a challenge trophy.

The recipients of the Federal Territory Promising Sportsman and Sportswoman titles will each be awarded RM5,000.

Federal Territory Sports Council director Nik Ahmad Zahiruddin Nik Saleh said the nominees were carefully selected by the FTSA Selection Panel Committee, which comprises professionals with extensive experience in various sporting fields.

"The Federal Territories are one of the main contributors to the nation's athletes, and this year's line-up of candidates is truly high quality and competitive.

"Their achievements are not just an acknowledgement of their performance, but a symbol of the fighting spirit and discipline of the Federal Territories' athletes. I hope this achievement spurs them on to bring further glory to the Federal Territories and the nation," he said in a statement yesterday. – Bernama

Sivasangari out of US Open

MALAYSIAN squash player S. Sivasangari's hopes of a deep run at the 2025 US Open have ended after she was defeated in the second round in Philadelphia yesterday.

The tournament's seventh seed suffered an upset, losing to Egypt's world No. 18, Sana Ibrahim, with a score of 11-13, 12-10, 9-11, 10-12 at the Arlen Specter Squash Centre.

This loss concludes the Malaysian campaign at the prestigious Professional Squash Association (PSA) Platinum-level event, following the first-round exits of compatriots Rachel Arnold and Aifa Azman.

The early exit comes just a day after the national squash ace celebrated a significant personal achievement, having risen two places to a career-high world No. 6 in the latest PSA rankings.

The 26-year-old from Kedah earned the prestigious position following her excellent form, which saw her finish as the runner-up at the Silicon Valley Open, a Gold-level tournament held in Redwood City, California, last week.

Sivasangari defeated Kenzy Ayman of Egypt, American Amanda Sobhy and Egypt's Salma Hany en route to the final before falling to top seed Olivia Weaver of the United States.

Her strong performance saw her overtake Japan's Satomi Watanabe and Belgium's Tinne Gilis to move into the world's top six for the first time.

Meanwhile, fellow Malaysian Rachel Arnold also improved her standing after moving up one spot to 19th position in the women's rankings. In the men's category, national number one Ng Eain Yow retained his 12th place. – Bernama

Kessie's double leads Al-Ahli to victory in Asian Champions League

DEFENDING CHAMPIONS Al-Ahli cruised to a 4-0 win over Qatar's Al-Gharafa in Jeddah on Monday to move to the top of the Asian Champions League Elite standings as fellow Saudi Pro League side Al-Ittihad picked up their first victory of the campaign.

Former Barcelona midfielder Franck Kessie scored twice after Enzo Millot had given Al-Ahli the lead at the King Abdullah Sports City Stadium in a devastating first half performance by Matthias Jaissle's side.

Millot put the hosts ahead in the 32nd minute when he hooked in a close-range volley via the underside of the crossbar and Kessie added the second six minutes later with a towering header.

The Ivorian scored the third before halftime when he charged through the defence to pick up a return pass from Riyad Mahrez and slotted in. Saleh Abu Al-Shamat rolled in the fourth 14 minutes from time.

Al-Ahli moved on to seven points from three games in the western league phase of the competition, with the top eight finishers advancing to March's knockout rounds.

Al-Ahli are level on seven points with Al-Wahda from the UAE, who fought back from a goal down to Qatar's Al-Duhail to pick up a 3-1 win in Abu Dhabi, with goals from Brahima Diarra and Ala Zouhir securing the points for the home side.

Saudi Arabia's Al-Hilal are third in the 12-team standings on six points from two games.

Meanwhile, Al-Ittihad won 4-1 despite going a goal behind to Iraq's Al-Shorta in Baghdad to secure their first victory of the campaign.

"It's very good to win," said Fabinho. "We came here with one objective in mind, to get the three points. It was tough to play here with the atmosphere with the fans and their team.

"Even though we didn't start well, the spirit was very good from the team, the attitude was very good. We knew to get the three points today we needed to fight and we got the win."

Albania international Regi Lushkja scored twice in the opening 11 minutes as Iran's Tractor FC picked up their first win of the campaign with a comfortable 5-0 victory over hosts Sharjah FC. – Reuters

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REUTERSPIC







The writing on the wall

Slot's biggest problem smacks Kop gaffer in the face after Liverpool were handed their fourth defeat in a row by United at Anfield

ARE Liverpool actually in a crisis? Judging by the standards set by Arne Slot, then potentially. They have lost their last four games, the latest coming in a 2-1 humbling at home by the hands of bitter rivals Manchester United. New big-money signings Alexander Isak and Florian Wirtz have failed to hit the ground running and frailties at the back are being exposed.

Questions are being raised, both externally and internally, with Virgil van Dijk unhappy with how his teammates went in search of a second goal against United.

But are Liverpool just suffering a blip, or are these warning signs of a bigger issue? *Express Sport* give their thoughts on a curious few weeks on Merseyside.

Jack MCEACHEN

Crisis? What crisis? Liverpool are fourth in the table and four points off leaders Arsenal.

But everything looked a bit rosier on Aug 31, when Slot was thought to be a Marc Guehi signing away from amassing a squad many believed would be the greatest in Premier League history in terms of pure quality.

The departure of Trent Alexander-Arnold is yet to really be dealt with, it's almost as if he's the most talented rightback to step foot in England.

What do his detractors make of Liverpool becoming a worse defensive team since his move to Real Madrid? Perhaps he will get a bit more credit now for those two titles and a Champions League win.

Isak and Wirtz have proven to be unnecessary splurges while Liverpool can no longer build their attacks in the same way they have over the past seven years.

Struggling Mohamed Salah lost his most trusted lieutenant and the rest of the squad have been unable to step up – yet. But over time this squad will learn how to get the best out of each other.

Archie GRIGGS

It's certainly not ideal for Liverpool right now but any talk of a 'crisis' is far-fetched to say the least. We're only eight games into the season!

Losing at home to their biggest rivals will undoubtedly be painful but there is still plenty of time to make amends. It always takes a while for a team to properly click after making so many summer signings.

Granted, some of their new arrivals haven't managed to hit the ground running, but there is absolutely no chance Liverpool won't be fighting for the title with the embarrassment of riches at their disposal.

Football has become far too reactionary these days.

Tom PARSONS

Liverpool are struggling for a myriad of reasons, with Slot being tested for the first time in his Anfield career.

Salah was never going to be able to maintain his world-class form for yet another season, with the winger turning 33 before the campaign got underway. His bumper contract would have done little to keep his hunger alive either.

Alexander-Arnold has proven to be a huge loss, with his creativity yet to be replaced. Rightback Conor Bradley will not be able to emulate the Madrid player's impact on Merseyside, while Milos Kerkez has hardly been an upgrade on Andy Robertson on the opposite flank.

Slot's choice of summer signings could well be hampering his side. Hugo Ekitike started the campaign in blistering form, but has now lost his place in the starting line-up after the Reds decided to sign Isak as well.

Liverpool didn't need to sign both players, but Slot should definitely not have dropped his best player from the early part of the season in favour of a man who arrived at the club lacking match fitness following his disrupted pre-season with Newcastle.

Isak will come good and the jury is still out on Wirtz, who hasn't had enough time to adapt to English football yet.

But momentum is key in football, and if Liverpool can't get themselves going in the coming weeks, their ambitions of retaining the Premier League title might be out of reach before Christmas.

Charlie MALAM

I actually do think Liverpool are in a crisis – because it's not just as simple as the players simply needing time to gel. The entire system is a mess, and almost every single player, whether a new signing or an Anfield veteran, is out of form because of it.

They're more Brendan Rodgers' final Liverpool team than last year's champions.

The build-up play is slow and dull, they don't control games and they're wide open defensively, the attack is wasteful and the decision-making is consistently poor.

There's no confidence and rhythm. Judging by his 'f*** it, let's just put all the forwards on' rounds of substitutions, Slot doesn't seem to know how to solve it – at least not right now.

That's a big problem for a man who got very little wrong last year. Wirtz has the look of a player who will long-term be a success.

Yet right now Liverpool are stuck between being built around Salah or Wirtz, and Salah has gone from the best player in the league to the Salah who Chelsea remember.

The biggest issue of all though is how badly they defend, and how easy it is to score goals against them. Slot must fix that urgently.

Then he must give this team some kind of identity in possession again because if this continues, Liverpool's only chance of qualifying for next season's Champions League will be winning it.

Express Newspapers







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