



Serious trust deficit within school counselling system: Minister

Outreach programmes reveal students open up to outside experts instead of those stationed inhouse due to fear of disciplinary action.

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Malaysia steers Asean towards shared energy future

Chair of bloc turns long-discussed vision of regional power integration into concrete roadmap for action.

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Players defend video games against claims of link to violent behaviour

'Factors such as emotional stability, home environment and parental supervision play much greater role.'

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Nineteen power failures in less than a year point to deep-seated weaknesses that can no longer be treated as isolated technical glitches.
- AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

Aerotrains angst

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Frequent disruptions since its relaunch expose critical flaws in power resilience, major gaps in maintenance planning and asset management: Expert



Unite in shared pride over success of Asean Summit: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia's success in hosting the 47th Asean Summit should be a source of pride for all Malaysians, regardless of political affiliation and not a subject of criticism or division.

He said among the significant achievements during the summit were the admission of Timor-Leste as Asean's 11th member and the signing of the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord between Thailand and Cambodia, both milestones that should unite Malaysians in shared pride.

Anwar said international recognition of Malaysia's active role in promoting regional peace, including from major powers such as the United States (US), clearly demonstrates the growing confidence in the country's diplomatic capability.

"Today, Malaysia's name shines on the world stage, something that has rarely happened in our history. Let us seize this moment to strengthen our nation.

"Do not be resentful of our nation's success. This is the country's achievement. Prime ministers may come and go, rise and fall, but the nation must always be uplifted," he said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman (Muda-Muar) on Malaysia's efforts to balance its diplomatic and trade relations with major global powers.

Anwar said Malaysia's success was also reflected in its ability to bring together major powers, including the US, Russia and China, as well as representatives from the BRICS bloc, for a series of bilateral meetings at the summit.

"Imagine, within just a few days, we engaged with the US, Brazil, Africa, China and Russia, and all discussions were handled constructively.

"As a relatively small but developing nation we must continue strengthening trade and investment ties with everyone."

He added that Malaysia's growing global recognition should not be viewed as a personal success for the prime minister but the result of the collective efforts of tens of thousands of civil servants and volunteers.

Anwar extended his appreciation to all civil servants, uniformed personnel, students and private sector participants for their outstanding contributions to the summit's success. – Bernama

RM20b allocated to uplift low-income group

KUALA LUMPUR: The government allocated nearly RM20 billion this year for assistance programmes for the low-income group, helping to cut Malaysia's hardcore poverty rate to just 0.09%, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the allocation covers initiatives such as the Rahmah Cash Contribution, Rahmah Basic Contribution (Sara) and Social Welfare Department aid.

"From the data, the remaining 0.09% represents hardcore poverty. That was the figure at the beginning of the year. The cases listed were resolved not only through federal efforts but also through cooperation from state governments and Islamic councils," he said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to Datuk Iskandar Dzulqarnain Abdul Khalid (PN-Kuala Kangsar) who asked about the Madani government's progress in tackling poverty.

Anwar said eradicating hardcore poverty requires close cooperation with state governments, including Kelantan and Kedah, particularly to improve the tracking and coordination of aid.

He said the increase in the minimum wage



Anwar updating the King on the outcomes of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits at Istana Bukit Tunku yesterday. – PIC COURTESY OF SULTAN IBRAHIM SULTAN ISKANDAR FACEBOOK PAGE

King receives briefing from Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, granted an audience to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at Istana Bukit Tunku yesterday.

According to a post on Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar's Facebook page, His Majesty was briefed on the outcomes of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits held in the federal capital last week.

A total of 80 outcome documents were received and approved throughout the Asean Summit, said the Prime Minister's Office.

These documents include joint statements between Asean leaders and their counterparts from the United States, Japan, India, New Zealand and Australia.

The outcomes also stemmed from the Asean+3 Summit, the East Asia Summit, the Asian Zero Emission Community Leaders' Meeting and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership Summit.

Another significant achievement was the signing of the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord between Thailand and Cambodia, witnessed by the prime minister and US President Donald Trump.

Malaysia has officially handed over the Asean chairmanship to the Philippines, marking the ceremonial transition of leadership as Malaysia enters the final phase of its 2025 chairmanship. – Bernama

Vision of regional power grid to be reality soon

BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's Asean chairmanship has done more than host summits. It has powered the region's biggest step yet towards a shared energy future, turning years of talk about an Asean Power Grid into a real, funded plan to connect Southeast Asia's electricity networks.

Universiti Tenaga Nasional Institute of

➤ Asean chairmanship transforms concept of shared energy future into concrete roadmap: Academic

Energy Policy and Research director Dr Nora Yusma Mohammed Yusoff said Malaysia's leadership has transformed the long-discussed vision of regional energy integration into a concrete roadmap for action.

"The Asean Power Grid isn't just about building cables or power lines. It's about helping countries share energy more efficiently, reduce costs for consumers and attract greater investment in green energy."

Asean energy ministers agreed to update the Asean Plan of Action for Energy Cooperation 2026-2030, setting new regional targets. The plan aims for 45% of Asean's total power capacity to come from renewable sources, alongside major improvements in energy efficiency.

To support these goals, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank Group have launched the Asean Power Grid Financing Initiative, a RM48 billion fund to connect national power grids and develop cleaner, more reliable energy systems across Southeast Asia.

"This is a strong vote of confidence from global investors. It shows the world believes in Asean's potential to become a green and competitive energy hub."

Nora Yusma added that the initiative mirrors the European Union's cross-border energy projects which have saved Europe billions of euros annually by sharing power more efficiently.

She said Malaysia's clear policy direction and active regional cooperation have bolstered investor confidence.

She added that stronger energy links

among Asean countries could also enhance the region's global competitiveness.

"Europe saves billions each year by coordinating electricity flow across borders.

"If Asean can do the same by sharing power rather than maintaining large national reserves, we can lower costs and improve energy reliability."

Malaysia has already demonstrated what such cooperation can achieve.

"Through the Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project Malaysia helped channel renewable hydropower from Laos all the way to Singapore.

"Malaysia is ideally placed to lead – geographically central, with the experience and technical know-how to make cross-border energy trade work."

She added that new proposals, including the Peninsular Malaysia-Sarawak power link and a second Malaysia-Singapore interconnection, could advance Asean's long-term goal of a shared regional grid.

Nora Yusma said Malaysia's chairmanship has also focused on building collaboration among regional think tanks, universities and research institutions that shape Asean's clean energy strategies.

"The World Bank estimates Asean will need around RM3.82 trillion by 2045 to modernise its power systems, while the ADB projects that at least RM477 billion will be required for new transmission lines over the next two decades.

"These projects will not only create thousands of jobs but also bring in advanced technology and skills."

'Building projects faster than accountability'

PETALING JAYA: The KLIA Aerotrain frequent breakdowns have brought to light a bigger national problem – Malaysia builds major infrastructure projects faster than it builds accountability, leaving systems that look modern but fail under weak oversight and testing.

MY Mobility & Vehicle (MMV) chief strategy officer Rahman Hussin said Malaysia's current project delivery model is not effectively managing technical risks for complex transport systems.

"Our approach still treats these projects as construction contracts rather than as integrated engineering ecosystems that require continuous assurance from design to operation."

Rahman said globally, major transit systems undergo transparent, independently verified testing phases – from testing and commissioning (T&C), and site integration testing (SIT) to trial operations and a free fault run (FFR), during which the system must operate continuously without failure before certification.

"If any of the phases were shortened, combined, or handled by the same parties managing the project, technical risk rises sharply."

"The Aerotrain disruption shows that our assurance frameworks still prioritise completion deadlines over operational certainty."

Rahman said regulators must urgently tighten performance guarantees and require independent verification of reliability benchmarks for critical airport systems.

"Regulators need to go beyond defect-liability clauses and enforce measurable reliability, availability and maintainability (RAM) parameters."

Such standards, he added, should include system availability of at least 99.5% and defined mean time between failures – both verified by independent assessors.

Rahman urged the Transport Ministry and Land Public Transport Agency (APAD) to publicly disclose key performance metrics, including:

- ➔ duration of T&C;
- ➔ duration of SIT;
- ➔ duration of trial operations;
- ➔ whether the rolling stock passed the FFR; and
- ➔ promised RAM parameters.

"Transparency on these five would reveal whether the problem lies in the system itself or in governance oversight."

"Tightening frameworks isn't about blame – it's about giving passengers confidence that safety was proven, not assumed."

Rahman said MAHB responded swiftly to recent disruptions, but restoring trust requires more than quick fixes.

He urged MAHB to publish a simple technical chronology of the Aerotrain project – when each test phase occurred, who verified it, what reliability benchmarks were set and what corrective actions are now under way.

"Globally, airport operators like Heathrow and Changi regain public trust by releasing post-incident reviews and publishing real-time performance dashboards."

"Malaysia should embrace the same culture of transparency."

"The public doesn't expect perfection, they expect honesty."

Rahman stressed that the core lesson from global airports is that governance is infrastructure.

"Changi, Incheon and Heathrow rely on permanent technical regulators and independent safety assessors – not temporary contract teams."

He urged Malaysia to strengthen APAD's technical division or re-establish an independent Land Public Transport Commission (SPAD 2.0) with statutory authority, engineering continuity and autonomy from political cycles. – By **Kirtinee Ramesh**

Aerotrain breakdowns expose flaws in asset management

■ BY **KIRTINEE RAMESH**
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PETALING JAYA: Nineteen power failures in less than a year have turned the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) Aerotrain from a transport link into a symbol of systemic neglect, exposing critical flaws in power resilience and asset management, said an expert.

Universiti Putra Malaysia Road Safety Research Centre head Assoc Prof Dr Law Teik Hua said the frequency of disruptions points to deep-seated weaknesses that should not be treated as isolated technical glitches.

"It's not about one-off faults. It shows underlying vulnerabilities in Aerotrain's power systems and major gaps in maintenance planning and asset management."

He explained that the Aerotrain uses the same technology as the automated people movers (APM) operated successfully in major airports worldwide.

"The issue is not the train, but the supporting infrastructure and power resilience behind it."

He said systems such as the Phoenix Sky Train and Dallas-Fort Worth Skylink achieve more than 99% operational availability through robust maintenance regimes, long-term operations contracts and redundant power systems.

(Redundant power systems are backup or duplicate systems that ensure operations continue even if

➤ Expert says repeated failures show systemic neglect, urges forensic audit and predictive maintenance

one component fails).

"These airports treat reliability as a lifecycle commitment, not an afterthought," Law said.

On whether Malaysia should replace the Aerotrain, Law said any decision must be based on forensic audits and lifecycle cost analyses.

"Replacement is justified when lifecycle, reliability and safety economics no longer favour repair."

"If rehabilitation – such as installing new substations, modern control systems and performance-based maintenance contracts – offers long-term gains at lower cost, then upgrading makes more sense."

However, he cautioned that if the current system suffers from unfixable single points of failure or obsolete proprietary components, full replacement would be necessary.

He cited the Dallas-Fort Worth Airport (DFW) as an example where authorities opted for targeted modernisation – upgrading vehicles, wayside components and power systems while retaining the guideway – as a cost-effective approach that avoided major passenger disruption.

Law said KLIA's future APM, whether new or upgraded, must prioritise redundancy and resilience.

He recommended:

- ➔ dual, physically separated utility feeds and substations to prevent total shutdowns;
- ➔ automatic transfer switches for clean power switching;
- ➔ wayside energy storage to enable safe evacuation during blackouts;
- ➔ onboard batteries allowing trains to move to the nearest station;
- ➔ redundant current collection systems or third-rail arrangements; and
- ➔ predictive maintenance systems using IoT sensors and Scada (supervisory control and data acquisition) telemetry.

"These are not futuristic – they are proven resilience measures already in use at airports with high-availability APM systems."

Law identified several likely vulnerabilities in KLIA's power network, including a single-point dependency on one substation, limited surge protection, ageing electrical components and poor segregation between critical and non-critical loads.

He warned that even minor faults in maintenance or configuration could escalate into complete power failures.

"A passenger-facing system must never be designed to fail

completely. There should always be a degraded but safe mode of operation that allows evacuation and system recovery."

In the short term, Law urged Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) to adopt temporary contingency measures to sustain service and rebuild public confidence.

These include:

- ➔ deploying continuous shuttle bus loops between terminals;
- ➔ assigning roving 'wayfinding' staff to assist passengers;
- ➔ providing real-time updates via announcements and mobile notifications;
- ➔ reinforcing manpower at check-in and transfer counters to help with re-routing; and
- ➔ preparing clearly marked walking routes and trained guides for emergency evacuations.

He also called for an independent forensic review of the Aerotrain's installation, testing and maintenance, with the findings made public.

"A transparent remediation plan is critical to rebuild confidence," said Law.

He emphasised that how airports communicate during disruptions can make or break passenger trust.

"Airports that sustain credibility do three things right."

"They give frequent, honest updates, ensure visible staff presence and offer immediate alternatives for stranded passengers."



Smooth operations during Asean Summit

PUTRAJAYA: All arrival and departure movements for the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits were carried out smoothly across both terminals of KLIA and Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport (SZB). MAHB, in a statement yesterday, said more than 9,300 flight movements and 1.4 million passenger movements were recorded during the eight-day summit travel period from Oct 22 to 29.

A total of 60 special and chartered

flights were also handled through the Bunga Raya Complex at KLIA and SZB's business aviation terminal, coordinated with precise scheduling, secure handling and minimal impact on regular passenger operations.

"A team of about 70 officers from 24 units, comprising airport operations, aviation authorities and related government ministries and agencies, oversaw months of preparation covering logistics, ground handling

and emergency readiness, supported by hundreds more personnel deployed across the terminals during the summit period," the statement said.

MAHB said preparations involving emergency communication, evacuation procedures and compliance measures to ensure full readiness were carried out months ahead of the event.

It added that in the final week of October, the airport crisis management team was activated to

provide real-time operational oversight and coordination with key agencies to ensure safe, efficient and uninterrupted facilitation of high-security movements.

"Building on this momentum, the seamless management of Asean Summit operations demonstrates the strength of Malaysia's aviation ecosystem and the nation's readiness to host major international events safely and efficiently," it said. – Bernama

Travellers at the KLIA departure hall. More than 1.4 million passengers were handled during the eight-day Asean Summit travel period.

– **ADIB RAWI**
YAHYA/THE SUN



Students more comfortable with external counsellors

➤ Outreach efforts reveal need for early emotional intervention and parental involvement: Minister

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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KUALA LUMPUR: Students are more likely to seek emotional support from external counsellors than from those in their own schools due to fear of disciplinary action, said Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri.

She said outreach programmes have revealed that many students only open up when speaking to counsellors brought in from outside, pointing to a serious trust deficit within school counselling systems.

"During the *Gali Potensi Diri* programmes, students open up to external counsellors. They are afraid that if they speak to counsellors in their schools, action would be taken against them.

"This tells us that there are issues of trust we need to address," she said during the closing ceremony of National Counselling Month yesterday.

Nancy said the ministry's outreach efforts have uncovered troubling signs, including students as young as 13 engaging in sexual relationships, underscoring the need for early emotional intervention and parental involvement.

"This is not about blaming parents. Parenting today is incredibly challenging.

"But we cannot assume our children are too young to be exposed or affected. We must be present and attentive.

"If they do not have a safe channel to talk, they will look for answers elsewhere. That is when risky behaviour or unhealthy online influences could take over."



Nancy (centre) during the National Counselling Month closing ceremony. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

She warned that the growing demand for emotional and psychological support has led to a rise in unqualified individuals offering counselling services, putting public safety and professionalism at risk.

Nancy stressed that only counsellors registered with the Malaysian Board of Counsellors are legally recognised to practise, particularly when cases involve the courts.

"If someone claiming to be a counsellor is called to court, the judge would ask: 'Where is your proof of professionalism?'"

"Being trained to guide or handle people at work is not the same as being a registered counsellor.

"If you are practising counselling, make sure you are registered."

As of August, Malaysia had 12,583 registered counsellors, which is insufficient given the surge in mental health concerns, she said.

She cited Health Ministry data showing that one in three Malaysians experiences anxiety or depression, while police recorded over 1,100 suicide cases in 2021, a sharp rise from previous years.

Domestic violence cases also exceeded 7,000 reports in 2024.

Nancy cautioned against over-reliance on digital tools and artificial intelligence (AI) for mental health support.

"We must remember that AI is artificial. We are natural intelligence. Technology can assist, but it cannot replace human empathy.

"A counsellor needs a heart, feelings and emotional presence. A machine cannot provide that."

She reiterated that counselling services must remain ethical and accessible, particularly for rural and low-income communities, and urged those in need to contact Talian Kasih 15999 for immediate help.

Housing industry reforms to be revealed next month

KUALA LUMPUR: The Housing and Local Government Ministry will announce five housing industry reform measures on Nov 20 to eliminate abandoned private housing projects by 2030.

Its minister Nga Kor Ming said the reforms are part of a comprehensive plan to strengthen governance and financial management within the housing sector, as well as to enhance homebuyer rights protection.

He said the ministry has outlined an action plan to ensure a phased transition from the "sell then build" concept to a "build then sell" (BTS) model.

"The government advocates the BTS method in private housing development as it significantly reduces the risk of abandoned projects and the oversupply of unsold units.

"Under the 10:90 BTS scheme for private housing, developers would require a 10% down payment from the buyer. The remaining 90% is only payable upon the home's completion, once the Certificate of Completion and Compliance is issued and vacant possession is delivered," he said during a question-and-answer session in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Nga was responding to a question from Pang Hok Liong (PH-Labis), who asked if the ministry is prepared to make the BTS scheme mandatory nationwide to reduce abandoned housing projects, particularly condominiums, and protect buyers.

He explained that the government is only encouraging developers to adopt the scheme voluntarily due to risks that could adversely affect buyers and stakeholders across the supply chain who may not have the capacity to meet the National Housing Department requirements.

He stressed that undertaking a BTS project requires a developer to have a very strong financial capacity.

He said to advance this effort, the ministry is drafting amendments to the Housing Development (Control and Licensing) Act 1966 to safeguard the rights and interests of all parties involved in housing development, and prevent abandoned projects.

"The proposed amendments aim to empower efficient governance and financial management in housing development, ensure the rights and interests of homebuyers are protected, and facilitate a shift in the private housing sector towards greater sustainability."

Nga reported that the Abandoned Private Housing Projects Taskforce has revived 1,600 projects involving 163,000 homebuyers nationwide.

"This achievement stems from our efforts in identification, resolution, prevention and proposing new models for the future," he said in response to a supplementary question from Pang on the best model to protect buyers and developers.

He added that the ministry is strengthening regulation through existing procedures under the Housing Development Account, which all licensed private developers in Peninsular Malaysia are required to open. – Bernama

Govt mulls licensing system for online games

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: The government is considering introducing a licensing system for online games, such as Roblox, if their content is found to negatively affect children, said Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil.

He said the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) is assessing the need for such a system while monitoring several other online games deemed unsuitable for users under the age of 16.

"We have not decided to license Roblox yet, but we are monitoring whether there is a need to do so.

"It is not just Roblox. There are about 10 other games that may not be appropriate for children aged under 16."

He also said the ministry is reviewing the best regulatory framework to safeguard online safety for children.

"Please give us a little more time before we make an announcement. But we cannot remain silent or passive. The mechanism is being studied."

He added that the ministry has met representatives of Roblox following an incident

in Kampung Parit Nipah Laut, Batu Pahat, in which a six-year-old boy was severely injured after being attacked by his nine-year-old brother who was allegedly influenced by online gaming.

"I met Roblox representatives and they were quite anxious because, on the same day, reports emerged of a nine-year-old who injured his younger brother and the case was linked to Roblox.

"I have banned my children from playing Roblox and deleted the app from all devices at home. However, the government has yet to make an official decision on the matter. I urge parents to monitor their children's online activities closely."

Fahmi was speaking when officiating at the state-level Safe Internet Campaign at Sekolah Kebangsaan Raub Indah yesterday.

He announced that the campaign would be expanded to 10,000 schools nationwide by the third quarter of next year, up from 6,000 this year.

"In Pahang, we have reached nearly 400 schools, but we are still short of the target. My hope is that by next year, all schools nationwide would be included," he told reporters after the launch.

Also present were Pahang Communications and Multimedia, Youth, Sports and NGO Committee chairman Fadzli Mohamad Kamal and Communications Ministry deputy secretary-general Mano Verabathran.

Fahmi added that the ministry would soon appoint Cadet Captain Icons to deliver short weekly updates on online safety during school assemblies.

The briefings would include information on current scams and government digital policies, such as the recent proposal to restrict social media access for individuals aged under 16.

He added that MCMC would implement the Point of Presence broadband connectivity project at 170 schools in Pahang, with work expected to begin in January after the tender process concludes.

"Previously, 17 schools were completed under the first phase," he said, adding that MCMC is also rolling out WiFi installation programmes at selected schools to enhance internet access for teachers and students.

He said discussions are underway with the education minister for the installation of CCTV cameras in schools, prioritising boarding schools in Pahang.

Correction

A NEWS article published on *theSun's* website on Tuesday inaccurately reported that the China Communications Construction Company has been selected to execute tunneling operations and construct mountain roadways for a Sarawak-Sabah highway.

We have since been informed that there is no official confirmation on this matter.

The report was therefore inaccurate and *theSun* has removed the article titled "China expert to build Sarawak-Sabah highway through mountains" from its website.

We deeply regret the error and any confusion it may have caused to our readers and the parties concerned.

'Video games not cause of violence among youth'

➤ Real issue linked to poor enforcement of age ratings, says gamer

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Gamers have defended video games against claims that they promote violent behaviour among youths, saying factors such as emotional stability, home environment and parental supervision play a much greater role.

Software engineer Ahmad Arif Hazman, 26, said young players are impressionable and may imitate what they see on screen if they lack maturity or adult guidance.

"Young people tend to absorb whatever they are exposed to in their entertainment.

"I once tried to mimic a dangerous stunt from a video game when I was much younger," he said.

Arif said with maturity, most players learn to distinguish virtual actions from real-world consequences.

"It comes with self-awareness. Whatever

happens in a video game stays in the game. Eventually, that becomes second nature."

He added that games are often unfairly targeted because they are deeply associated with youth culture.

"Any young person with access to a device will have played video games. That makes gaming the easiest scapegoat whenever something goes wrong."

Private sector employee Muhammad Imran Fahmi, 25, acknowledged that violent or realistic games could influence emotionally unstable players, but stressed that such cases are not representative of the wider gaming community.

"Violent games could affect young players who lack emotional control. They start seeing violence as normal.

"But some games actually reward empathy. In the Yakuza series, helping others is part of the story. There are games that teach moral choices."

He said the real issue is the poor enforcement of age ratings.

"Underage kids can easily buy games meant for adults. The Entertainment Software Rating Board system exists for a reason, but it is rarely enforced here."

Account executive Johan, 27, said the

impact of gaming largely depends on a person's emotional environment.

"Games do not necessarily make people violent, but they could cause dependency or addiction. For many, gaming is an escape as it is fun, immersive and fulfilling in ways real life sometimes is not.

"Games are controlled chaos. They let you test moral choices or live experiences you never could in reality. And honestly, games today are far less violent than those from the 1990s, such as Mortal Kombat or Doom."

Public concern over gaming influence resurfaced after a 14-year-old student was charged with murdering a schoolmate at SMK Bandar Utama Damansara (4) on Oct 14.

Police said the suspect left a handwritten note containing gaming-related phrases, such as "NPC" (non-player character) and "This world is fake", suggesting an apparent inability to distinguish reality from the virtual world.

In another case in Batu Pahat, Johor police are investigating whether online gaming influenced a nine-year-old boy who allegedly attacked his six-year-old brother over a dispute involving points in Roblox.

The younger child remains in hospital while the parents have been remanded under the Child Act 2001 as investigations continue.



Muhammad Imran acknowledged that violent or realistic games could influence emotionally unstable players, but stressed that such cases are not representative of the wider gaming community. – MASYR CHE ANI/THESUN

Police nab 2,000 in anti-fraud operations

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have cracked down on thousands of mule accounts being misused for online fraud, leading to more than 2,000 arrests in two large-scale operations conducted nationwide.

Bukit Aman Commercial Crime Investigation Department (CCID) director Datuk Rusdi Mohd Isa said 1,303 individuals suspected of involvement in mule account activities were arrested under Operasi Mule NSRC conducted from Sept 22 to 28.

He said the highest number of arrests was 272 in Sarawak, followed by 200 in Sabah, 137 in Kuala Lumpur and 115 in Selangor.

He also said 778 investigation papers were opened.

"Suspects in 270 of the investigation papers

have been charged in court under the Penal Code, including sections 420 and 424."

He said the operation, which was carried out in conjunction with the launch of the National Scam Response Centre, aimed to address commercial crimes involving the use of fake accounts to receive money from online fraud.

Meanwhile, Operation Merpati was conducted from Sept 2 to 12 and led to the arrest of 790 individuals for having bank accounts used for e-commerce fraud, while 30 were arrested for operating call centres for fraudulent activities nationwide.

"The individuals arrested consist of 475 men and 315 women, including four foreigners comprising Indonesians and

Bangladeshis," he said, adding that e-commerce fraud from January to May caused losses of more than RM54 million.

Rusdi said for Operation Merpati, 660 investigation papers were opened, involving losses of more than RM11 million, with 41.7% of the cases filed in court and the rest under investigation.

"The two operations demonstrate the CCID's commitment to addressing online fraud, which is becoming increasingly sophisticated and crossing state borders."

He reminded the public not to lend or sell bank accounts and ATM cards to other parties as such acts are offences that could be misused for criminal activities and money laundering. – Bernama

S'pore police identify scam suspects

PHNOM PENH: The Singapore Police Force (SPF) has revealed that 27 Singaporeans and seven Malaysians are suspected of involvement in a RM130 million cybercrime operation based in Cambodia.

It said a joint enforcement operation with Cambodian police was carried out on Sept 9 against an organised criminal group (OCG) involved in government official impersonation scams targeting victims in Singapore.

"The group is believed to be operating from a scam compound in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. It is believed to be responsible for at least 438 cases involving losses of at least SGD\$41 million (RM132 million)."

Following the initial enforcement operation in Cambodia, the SPF said 15 suspects, comprising 12 Singaporeans, two Malaysians and one Philippine national, were arrested in Singapore and charged on Sept 11 and 12 for being members of a locally linked OCG.

Through further investigations and evidence gathered in Cambodia, the SPF said it has identified 27 Singaporeans and seven Malaysians who are allegedly members of the OCG and believed to have operated out of the same scam compound in Cambodia.

"The suspects are out of Singapore. Warrants of arrest have been obtained against them and the SPF is working with our international counterparts to locate and arrest them."

Authorities have urged anyone with information on the whereabouts of the suspects to contact the SPF hotline at 1800-255-0000 (or +65 6255 0000 for overseas callers) or submit information via www.police.gov.sg/i-witness. All information will be kept strictly confidential. – Bernama

One dead, three hurt in road crash

MUAR: An elderly woman was killed while three others were injured in a crash involving two cars in Jalan Pintasan Bakri here on Wednesday.

Muar Fire and Rescue station senior fire officer I Mohd Fetry Mahat said they received a distress call at 9.47pm, after which a team of 12 personnel was despatched to the scene.

"A 19-year-old woman driver and her passenger, a 25-year-old man, suffered minor injuries and were assisted by the public. The other driver, a 44-year-old woman, was also injured, while her passenger, a 73-year-old woman, was found trapped in the car and unconscious."

He said the rescue team used special equipment to extricate the trapped victim, who was later confirmed dead at the scene by a Health Ministry medical officer.

He added that the victim's body was handed to police for further action while the injured were taken to hospital for treatment. – Bernama

Couple claim trial in robbery case

PASIR MAS: A couple was charged in the Magistrate's Court here yesterday in connection with a pawnshop robbery last week, involving jewellery worth RM5.75 million.

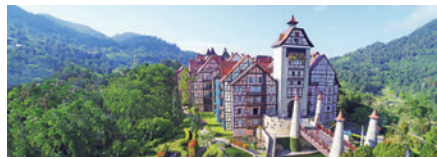
Wee Chin Ooi, 49, and Wee Fei Fang, 47, pleaded not guilty and claimed trial to the charges.

Chin Ooi was charged under Section 392 of the Penal Code, read together with Section 397 of the same law, for committing robbery while armed with a knife at Kedai Pajak Gadai Aik Lee Jaya Sdn Bhd at 1pm on Oct 21.

He faces up to 14 years' jail and caning or whipping upon conviction.

Fei Fang is charged with abetting Chin Ooi in committing the robbery.

The charge was framed under Section 392 of the Penal Code, read together with sections 397 and 109 of the same law. – Bernama



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Seven-decade evolution of MyKad

➤ From paper document in late 40s used for identification, current version features microchip to facilitate participation in govt initiatives

KUALA LUMPUR: Once a simple identity document, the MyKad has become the backbone of the nation's digital transformation, linking citizens to government services, daily conveniences and opportunities in a connected economy.

From a paper "rice card" issued in 1948 during the Emergency to the blue plastic card in 1960 and the colour-photo version in 1999, it has evolved into a multipurpose digital ID embedded with a microchip.

This evolution mirrors Malaysia's push to build a secure, inclusive digital economy under the Madani Economy framework, which promotes efficient subsidy delivery and better governance through programmes such as Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah (STR) and Sumbangan Asas Rahmah (Sara), Bernama reported.

Supporting that goal, the MyDigital ID initiative enhances aid delivery through secure verification, ensuring it reaches the right recipients, reducing leakage and reinforcing public trust in the digital ecosystem.

The National Tech Association of Malaysia (Pikom) said a strong digital



Among other applications, the MyKad is used to verify eligibility for 16 million Malaysian motorists to buy subsidised RON95 petrol. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

ID must rely on verified data, multi-factor authentication and privacy-by-design safeguards.

Its chairman Alex Liew said many countries now combine civil registry data, biometrics and cryptographic

verification to prevent identity theft and enable seamless access to services, a model Malaysia is adopting.

"This initiative will incorporate biometric verification and encrypted

credentials, enabling safe, consent-based access to government and financial services," he said.

The MyKad has already proven to be cost-effective in channelling subsidies.

Finance Minister II Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan said MyKad was used to distribute STR aid to nine million recipients, proving its reliability.

The same platform now verifies eligibility for 16 million Malaysian motorists to buy subsidised RON95 petrol at RM1.99 per litre, cementing the role of MyKad as the most trusted option for targeted aid and digital verification.

KSI Strategic Institute for Asia Pacific senior adviser Dr Anthony Dass said using MyKad for targeted subsidies such as the Budi Madani RON95 scheme signals a shift towards smarter, data-driven fiscal reform.

"Duplication and fraud can be eliminated by linking verified citizen data that include income, household and vehicle ownership directly to aid distribution," he said.

However, Dass said data security and the digital divide must be addressed. He called for a Public Data Protection Act, an Independent Digital Ombudsman and offline access via post offices and mobile counters to ensure rural and elderly inclusion.

While he envisions MyKad as a "public service passport" integrating aid, tax credits and healthcare, he raised concerns that poor implementation could risk exclusion.

National Registration Department (NRD) director-general Badrul Hisham Alias said the department is working with the Inland Revenue Board and Employees Provident Fund to enhance MyKad integration with financial and digital services.

"MyKad now supports the government digitalisation agenda, verifying access for programmes such as STR, e-Kasih and e-government systems that include MyDigital ID, MySejahtera, e-Tanah and MyGovUC," he said.

He added that each chip is protected by a Security Access Module and encryption keys issued exclusively by NRD.

"No data can be added, altered or deleted," he said, adding that AI is being explored to strengthen verification and prevent fraud.

Launched in 2001 as one of the Multimedia Super Corridor flagship projects, MyKad was envisioned as a unified digital platform for all Malaysians rather than just an identity document.

Now entering its fifth generation, NRD is finalising a new version with enhanced security, paving the way for the next leap in digital governance.

Siblings show resilience with dual graduation

SERI ISKANDAR: Two siblings who graduated together from Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP) have made their family proud while proving their resilience and determination to build a brighter future.

Intan Nur Dania Asrul Amir, 27, earned a Master of Science in Petroleum Geoscience while her younger brother, Muhammad Amir Danial, 24, graduated with a Bachelor of Computer Science (honours).

The siblings, originally from Ipoh in

Perak, lost their father at a young age. Their mother is a housewife.

For Intan Nur Dania, who has been studying at UTP since her foundation level, seven years of hard work have finally paid off.

"Studying always comes with challenges, no matter how passionate we are. The longer we study, the tougher it gets. But the lecturers and friends were always supportive. Their support is what enabled me to complete my studies," she told

Bernama after the UTP 25th convocation at the Chancellor Hall.

She said she chose UTP because its petroleum geoscience programme is among the best in the country, supported by well-equipped facilities such as laboratories, lecture halls and research infrastructure.

She received financial assistance from the National Higher Education Fund Corporation and the UTP Zakat Fund.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Amir

Danial said he seldom sought help from his sister due to her schedule.

"I learned to be independent throughout my studies and succeeded in graduating alongside my sister," said Amir Danial, who has been working as a software quality assurance engineer at a private company in Kuala Lumpur since completing his studies last December.

This year's convocation saw the Chancellor's Gold Award presented to Computer Science graduate

Haarinesh Selvaraju, while Electrical and Electronic Engineering graduate Ang Yi Hern and Chemical Engineering graduate Nur Rifhany Melissa Rozmi received the Chancellor's Silver and Bronze Awards respectively.

The two-day convocation, which began on Oct 26, involved 1,441 graduates comprising 1,031 bachelor's degree recipients, 326 master's graduates and 84 PhD holders. – Bernama

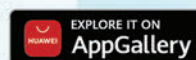
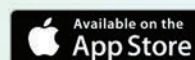


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Artistes arrested in Myanmar

YANGON: Myanmar authorities announced yesterday the arrest of three artistes for undermining the upcoming junta-organised election, wielding new speech laws that rights monitors say oppress dissent.

Myanmar's military snatched power in a 2021 coup, sparking a civil war, but is trumpeting elections scheduled to start in December as an opportunity for reconciliation.

Rebel groups have pledged to block the polls from their enclaves and numerous rights monitors have said voting cannot be free and fair under restrictions imposed in junta-controlled territory.

State media said three artistes were arrested at their homes on Monday under legislation introduced this year punishing speech deemed damaging to the election with up to a decade in prison.

The Global New Light of Myanmar said the men – a director, actor and a comedian – were detained “for making false and misleading criticism on social media” of other artistes who produced a pro-election film.

The movie, aired on repeat on state TV, contains scenes with a village doctor urging opposition fighters to lay down their weapons and endorse the election, due to start in phases on Dec 28.

The newspaper said the three arrested men “failed to contribute their artistic expertise towards the success of the upcoming election”.

“Instead, they criticised and attacked other artistes who were cooperating in the process.”

Legislation introduced in July forbids “any speech, organising, inciting, protesting or distributing leaflets in order to destroy a part of the electoral process”. – AFP

Singapore to use 'green' jet fuel

SINGAPORE: The Singapore Civil Aviation Authority announced yesterday the country will procure sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) through a new company set up by the government, as part of its efforts to reduce the costs of cutting flight emissions.

Singapore has set a target to raise the share of green fuel usage to 1% at its Changi and Seletar airports by next year, funding it through a levy that would be imposed on all passengers and cargo flying out of the country.

It aims to raise the share of SAF to 5% by 2030, subject to global developments and the wider availability and adoption of the fuel.

The new state company, known as SAFCo, would be responsible for collecting the levy and would use the proceeds to set up a fund to purchase the fuel and distribute it to passenger and cargo airlines.

Civil Aviation Authority director-general Han Kok Juan said suppliers would be invited to participate in a tender to offer their products at a fixed price.

Han added that SAFCo has already engaged with multinational corporations and received “tremendous interest”, adding that a large purchaser in Singapore would be able to secure economies of scale. – Reuters

Trump, Xi reach agreement

Tariffs on Chinese imports to be reduced in exchange for crackdown on fentanyl

BUSAN: United States President Donald Trump said yesterday he had agreed with Chinese President Xi Jinping to trim tariffs on China in exchange for Beijing cracking

down on the illicit fentanyl trade, resuming US soybean purchases and keeping rare earths exports flowing.

Trump's face-to-face talks with



Trump greeting Xi at Gimhae International Airport in South Korea. – REUTERS/SPIC

Xi in the South Korean city of Busan, their first since 2019, marked the finale of the US president's whirlwind Asia trip, on which he also touted trade breakthroughs with South Korea, Japan and Southeast Asian nations.

“I thought it was an amazing meeting,” Trump told reporters aboard *Air Force One* shortly after he departed Busan, ranking the talks a “12 out of 10”.

He said tariffs imposed on Chinese imports would be cut to 47% from 57% by halving the rate of tariffs related to trade in fentanyl precursor drugs to 10% from 20%.

Trump also said Xi would work “very hard to stop the flow” of fentanyl, a synthetic opioid that is the leading cause of American overdose deaths. He added that the tariff was reduced “because I believe they are really taking strong action”.

The cordial meeting, which took place on the sidelines of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit, lasted nearly two hours.

Trump repeatedly talked up the prospect of reaching agreement with Xi since US negotiators on Sunday said they had agreed a framework with China that would avoid 100% US tariffs on Chinese goods and achieve a deferral of China's export curbs on rare earths, a sector it dominates.

But with both countries increasingly willing to play hardball over areas of economic and geopolitical competition, many questions remain about how long any trade *detente* may last.

As they sat down to begin talks at a South Korean air base yesterday, Xi told Trump via a translator it was normal for the superpowers to have frictions now and then.

Xi added that a few days ago, trade negotiators for both

countries reached a “fundamental consensus on addressing each other's primary concerns”.

“I am willing to continue working with President Trump to lay a solid foundation for China-US relations.”

As well as trimming the fentanyl tariffs, Beijing had sought an easing of export controls on sensitive US technology and a rollback of new US port fees on Chinese vessels aimed at combating China's global dominance in shipbuilding, ocean freight and logistics.

Trump made no immediate comment on US concessions but said China would purchase “tremendous amounts” of US soybeans and other farm products “starting immediately”.

Previous trade deals, which brought down retaliatory tariffs on the US side and restarted the flow of rare earth magnets from China, are due to expire on Nov 10.

But Beijing dramatically expanded its controls on rare earths earlier this month, minerals used in everything from cars to fighter jets, on which they have a global stranglehold.

“They are not going to impose the rare earth controls,” Trump told reporters.

He also signed various pacts with Japan and Southeast Asian nations on diversifying supplies of rare earths during his trip, although blunting China's dominance in that area may take years.

He added that they did not discuss chipmaker Nvidia's state-of-art Blackwell artificial intelligence chip, walking back the previous day's remarks about potentially helping the company to export a scaled-down version of its current flagship GPU processor, a key component in the AI race. – Reuters

South Korea gets nod to build nuclear submarine

GYEONGJU: United States President Donald Trump said yesterday he has given approval for ally South Korea to build a nuclear powered submarine, a day after the two countries said they have reached a broad trade deal.

He met South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Wednesday in the southern town of Gyeongju, where the US leader arrived for a summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

Seoul's presidential aide said on Wednesday the two countries had reached a broad deal covering

investment and shipbuilding, while Trump said the agreement was “pretty much” finalised.

“I have given them approval to build a nuclear powered submarine, rather than the old fashioned, and far less nimble, diesel powered submarines that they have now,” Trump said on social media yesterday.

In a separate post, he wrote: “South Korea will be building its nuclear powered submarine in the Philadelphia shipyards, right here in the good ol' USA.”

“Shipbuilding in our country will soon be making a big comeback.”

On Wednesday, Lee asked Trump to “make a decision to allow us to receive fuel for nuclear-propelled submarines”.

“We are not proposing to build submarines armed with nuclear weapons. Rather, diesel submarines have inferior submerged endurance, which limits our ability to track North Korean or Chinese submarines,” Lee told Trump.

The dessert at a luncheon for Trump featured the word “peace”,

according to Seoul's presidential office, echoing the two leaders' first meeting, in which they pledged to act as a “peacemaker” and a “pacemaker” for peace on the Korean Peninsula.

But tensions with North Korea remain high after Pyongyang brushed aside Lee's outreach and instead continued deepening links with Russia. Trump said on Wednesday he was not able to arrange a meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un during his visit to the South, ending speculation over a possible summit. – AFP

Indonesia probes food poisoning cases involving 700 students

JAKARTA: An official said Indonesian authorities are investigating food poisoning cases involving about 700 children in Yogyakarta province this week, after students ate meals prepared under President Prabowo Subianto's key free school meal programme.

According to data from a local NGO, the school meal programme, rolled out in January, was a major election campaign promise from Prabowo, but some 15,000 children have fallen ill as of Oct 29.

The group has called for the programme to be suspended.

Authorities have said improper food storage and late delivery of cooked meals are often to blame for the issue.

Gunungkidul regional head Endah Subekti Kuntariningsih said on Wednesday about 660 students from two separate schools fell ill from food poisoning after eating free school meals.

National Nutrition Agency chief Dadan Hindayana, who is in charge

of running the programme, said authorities were investigating the Gunungkidul cases and had temporarily closed nearby kitchens.

There are 11,000 kitchens across the sprawling archipelago.

She also said earlier this month free meals are expected to reach some 70 million recipients by the end of the year, lower than the government's initial target of 83 million due to a lack of kitchens.

The agency said separately on Wednesday that it had instructed

kitchen staff to reduce portions of the food to maintain freshness and avoid poisoning.

The agency added that Prabowo on Wednesday formed a team of ministers, including the health minister and the agency chief, to better supervise the programme.

The government has earmarked 171 trillion *rupiah* (RM43.1 billion) for the programme this year, but the agency would only be able to spend 99 trillion *rupiah* (RM24.9 billion) by year-end. – Reuters



An aerial view of destroyed buildings in the aftermath of *Melissa* at Black River, St Elizabeth in Jamaica. — AFP/IC

Hurricane Melissa leaves 25 dead, 12 missing in Haiti

➤ More than 1,000 houses flooded, nearly 12,000 residents moved to shelters

HAVANA: Hurricane *Melissa* barreled through the northern Caribbean on Wednesday after thrashing Cuba's second-biggest city, isolating hundreds of rural communities, unleashing devastation in Jamaica and drenching Haiti, where at least 25 were killed.

Melissa struck Jamaica on Tuesday as the strongest-ever hurricane to directly hit its shores, with sustained winds of 298 km/h, well above the minimum strength for a Category 5, the strongest classification for hurricanes.

As of 8pm (0000 GMT), *Melissa* was a Category 1 hurricane bringing wind, rain and storm surges as it moved north-east through the Bahamas archipelago, whose government earlier flew out nearly 1,500 people in what it called one of its largest evacuation operations.

Residents in the Bahamas and nearby Turks and Caicos hunkered down, while some 1,440 km north-east, Bermudans prepared for hurricane conditions forecast yesterday.

US forecaster AccuWeather said *Melissa* was the Caribbean's third-most intense recorded hurricane, as well as its slowest-moving, which made it particularly destructive.

The storm did not directly hit Haiti, the Caribbean's most populous nation, but lashed it with days of rain. Authorities reported at least 25 deaths, largely due to floods in Petit-Goave, a coastal town 64 km west of the capital where a river burst its banks.

Haiti's disaster management agency said at least 10 children were killed and 12 people remain missing there, adding that nationwide

more than 1,000 houses have been flooded and nearly 12,000 people moved into emergency shelters.

An extended gang conflict has impoverished Haiti and displaced over 1.3 million. People living in makeshift camps said the flooding made it impossible to sit or sleep, and that the government and aid groups were slow to bring supplies.

Fortune Vital, a displaced man in Les Cayes, said he was separated from his family which already lacked sufficient food.

"If the hurricane comes on top of all the problems we already have, we'll simply die."

In Jamaica, AccuWeather estimated *Melissa* could cost US\$22 billion (RM93 billion) in damages and economic loss and that rebuilding could take a decade or more.

The capital Kingston was spared the worst damage and its main airport was set to reopen yesterday, but as of Wednesday morning authorities said about 77% of Jamaica was without electricity.

Melissa made landfall in southwestern Jamaica on Tuesday, devastating areas already battered by last year's Hurricane *Beryl*. Local authorities said flood waters had washed up four bodies in the agricultural hub of St. Elizabeth.

Prime Minister Andrew Holness visited Black River Hospital, the only public hospital in St. Elizabeth, where aerial footage showed the wrecks of buildings, roofs blown off, power cables knocked down and fields strewn with rubble.

Workers there told the prime minister they spent the night fearing for their own families while working by flashlight to care for patients.

"It was the most terrifying experience in all my life," a hospital worker said. "It is beyond imagining. At one point it was as if missiles were blowing through the glass."

Jamaica's government gave an "all clear" to

begin recovery efforts, but said it would keep emergency shelters open through the week as people kept coming in from devastated homes.

Melissa was a still major Category 3 when it hit Cuba overnight with winds of 193km/h, landing in rural, mountainous Guama, 40km west of Santiago de Cuba, the island's second-most populous city.

At least 241 communities remained isolated and without communications on Wednesday following the storm's passage across Santiago province, according to preliminary media reports, affecting as many as 140,000 residents.

Across eastern Cuba, authorities evacuated around 735,000 people as the storm approached.

No deaths were reported on Wednesday but President Miguel Diaz-Canel said the island had suffered extensive damage and warned of vigilance as rains continue to lash the region.

"A major hurricane landfall in the dark is incredibly dangerous," said AccuWeather lead hurricane expert Alex DaSilva.

"The storm lost wind intensity as it interacted with the mountains of southeast Cuba, but the forced upward motion of the air over the mountainous terrain is squeezing out tremendous amounts of rainfall."

Cuban officials also warned of severe impact on crops ahead of the Northern Hemisphere's winter growing season.

Cuba was already suffering from food, fuel, electricity and medicine shortages that have complicated life, prompting record-breaking emigration since 2021.

On Wednesday, the U.N. General Assembly again voted overwhelmingly for the U.S. to end its Cold War-era economic embargo on the communist-run country.

The devastation drew global support, with some countries pledging support in the form of cash, food aid and rescue teams. — Reuters

Consent-based rape law adopted in France

PARIS: French lawmakers on Wednesday adopted a bill defining rape as any non-consensual sexual act, making the country the latest European nation to pass a consent-based law.

The penal code will now enshrine the principle of consent into the definition of the crime of rape, after France's Senate backed the measure in the final vote of a lengthy legislative process.

Centrist lawmaker Veronique Riotton said the text signals a move "from a culture of rape to a culture of consent" after the bill, which she co-sponsored, passed the lower house last week.

The bill says consent must be "free and informed, specific, prior and revocable", and evaluated according to the circumstances, adding that it cannot be inferred from "silence or lack of reaction".

"There is no consent if the sexual act is committed through violence, coercion, threat or surprise, whatever their nature."

Advocacy groups have welcomed the reform, while adding that it must be accompanied by deeper societal change.

"This is a historic step forward, following in the footsteps of several other European countries," said Amnesty International France advocacy officer Lola Schulmann.

"But it is only one step, because we know that there is still a long way to go to end impunity for gender-based and sexual violence."

Women's rights group CIDFF called for the reform to be accompanied by improved sex education, training for justice and police officials and increased resources for support groups.

Consent-based rape laws already exist in other European countries including Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Sweden.

The bill comes after the case of Gisele Pelicot reignited a debate over consent in the country.

Her ex-husband was convicted of drugging her and inviting dozens of strangers to rape her during their marriage.

Only far-right lawmakers, who criticised the changing definition of consent as "subjective, shifting and difficult to grasp", opposed the bill.

National Rally lawmaker Sophie Blanc earlier said the change would put the focus on the victim's actions, "not the violence of the perpetrator".

But supporters of the reform say it would shift the burden onto offenders to prove there was consent. — AFP

Cop convicted of murdering woman

WASHINGTON: A former Illinois sheriff's deputy was convicted of murder on Wednesday for the shooting of an African-American woman inside her home, in a case that drew national attention and calls for police reform.

Sean Grayson, 31, who is Caucasian, was found guilty of second-degree murder by a jury after two days of deliberations.

Grayson was charged with first-degree murder and second-degree murder for the July 2024 shooting of Sonya Massey, 36, a mother of two, and the jury opted to convict him only of the lesser charge.

Civil rights attorney Ben Crump, who has been representing the Massey family, expressed disappointment that Grayson was not convicted of first-degree murder but said the "verdict is still a measure of justice for Sonya Massey".

"Accountability has begun, and we now hope the court will impose a meaningful sentence that reflects the severity of these crimes and the life that was lost."

First-degree murder carries a potential life sentence while punishment for second-degree murder is up to 20 years in prison.

Massey's shooting drew attention to police violence against African-Americans and prompted then-US president Joe Biden to say she "should be alive today". — AFP

Pentagon ordered to start nuclear weapons testing

WASHINGTON: United States President Donald Trump said yesterday he had ordered the Pentagon to start nuclear weapons testing on a level with China and Russia, just minutes before opening a high stakes summit with Chinese leader Xi Jinping.

The move comes after Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday Moscow had successfully tested a nuclear-capable, nuclear-powered underwater drone, in defiance

of Washington's warnings.

"Because of other countries testing programmes, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis," Trump wrote in a Truth Social post that specifically referenced Russia and China.

Trump added that the US has more nuclear weapons than any other country, praising his own efforts to do "a complete update and

renovation of existing weapons".

He added that "Russia is second, and China is a third, but will be even within five years".

He did not provide further details on the testing except that the "process will begin immediately."

The president was in South Korea to meet with Xi, as the leaders of the world's top two economies come face-to-face for the first time in the Republican president's second term. — AFP

Ukraine struggling to defend city

► Brigade-level force needed to block further Russian infiltration, say analysts

KYIV: Military and open-source analysts said on Wednesday Ukrainian forces are struggling to fend off intensifying Russian advances on the eastern city of Pokrovsk.

Moscow's troops have in recent weeks closed in on the key logistics hub after more than a year of grinding advances, which Kyiv says have come at a staggering human cost to Russia.

In a statement, Ukraine's 7th Corps said Russian forces had deployed about 11,000 troops in an

attempt to encircle the city.

It added that enemy groups that had already infiltrated the area were attempting to push further north and northwest.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, in his nightly video address, said the situation around Pokrovsk was "the most difficult" along the 1,250km frontline.

"As in previous weeks, this is the area with the most intensive combat activity, with a strong concentration of Russian forces," he said after a discussion with Ukraine's top

commander Oleksandr Syrskyi.

He also said the situation around the northeastern city of Kupiansk "remains difficult, but our forces have more control in recent days. We are continuing to defend our positions."

Zelensky this week said about 200 Russian troops were in various parts of Pokrovsk, adding that their capture would be critical for Moscow to demonstrate it has the upper hand on the battlefield.

Capturing Pokrovsk, as well as Kostiantynivka to its northeast, would give Moscow a platform to drive towards the two biggest remaining Ukrainian-controlled cities in Donetsk.

Ukrainian open-source group DeepState said on Wednesday Russia has been able to break a military

logistics route to the neighbouring city of Myrnohrad through infantry ambushes and drone attacks.

It added that Ukraine would need to deploy a brigade-level force, rather than smaller units, to block further Russian infiltration of Pokrovsk.

"The situation in Pokrovsk is on the verge of critical and continues to deteriorate to the point that fixing everything may be too late."

It also posted what it said was footage of Ukrainian forces destroying a Russian flag that had been briefly hoisted over the city gates.

In a later update, DeepState said Russian forces were trying to infiltrate Pokrovsk and a nearby village in small groups.

It added that troops had taken

advantage of bad weather and gaps in Ukrainian defences.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Wednesday Ukrainian forces were surrounded in Pokrovsk and in Kupiansk.

Ukraine's military rejected the claim about Kupiansk as "fantasies" and said Pokrovsk had not been blockaded, adding that supply lines in the area remained intact.

Moscow has stepped up a battlefield offensive amid a stalled US-led diplomatic effort to end the war, now well into its fourth year after Russia's February 2022 full-scale invasion.

The Kremlin has repeatedly demanded that Ukraine cede its entire Donbas region, in which Pokrovsk is located. - Reuters

Two Syrian soldiers killed in alleged missile attack

DAMASCUS: Syrian state media reported Kurdish forces in northern Syria killed two Syrian soldiers and wounded another in a missile attack on Wednesday, with the Kurds denying involvement and blaming landmines.

Citing the Syrian defence ministry, the Sana news agency reported that the two soldiers were killed and a third "seriously injured" when their position near Tishrin Dam was targeted by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) with a guided missile.

The SDF is the military of the Kurdish administration which controls swathes of north and northeast Syria, where it runs a *de facto* autonomous province.

The SDF denied any involvement in the deaths, saying in a statement "we categorically affirm that this information is incorrect" and blaming the incident on "landmine explosions".

Damascus accused the Kurdish forces of "violating the previous agreements".

In October, the SDF and the Damascus government agreed a ceasefire following deadly clashes in Aleppo.

The SDF said it reaffirmed its "commitment to the principle of de-escalation and maintaining stability along the contact lines".

Since the overthrow of long-time president Bashar al-Assad in December, the Kurdish administration has clashed with Damascus over the future of the Kurds in the new Syria. - AFP



AIRSTRIKE AFTERMATH

... Red Cross personnel at the site of a dormitory building heavily damaged during an overnight Russian drone strike in Zaporizhzhia, Ukraine. - REUTERS/SPIC

US to reduce troops in Europe

BUCHAREST: The Romanian Defence Ministry said on Wednesday the United States plans to cut the number of troops present on Europe's eastern flank, including soldiers who were to be stationed at Romania's Mihail Kogalniceanu air base.

The ministry said the decision was expected given changes in Washington's priorities, and about 1,000 US troops would continue to be stationed in Romania, adding that between 1,000 and 1,200 US troops rotated out a month ago and would not be replaced.

Washington's European allies have been told previously by the administration of US President Donald Trump that they would need to take more responsibility for their own security as the US focuses more on its own borders and on the Indo-Pacific region.

The US military said the decision not to replace departing troops in Romania was not "an American withdrawal from Europe or a signal of lessened commitment to Nato".

Romanian Deputy Prime Minister Ionut Mosteanu told a news conference that the brigade had troops in Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary and Slovakia.

He added that Bucharest's ties with Washington remained strong and that the permanent allied presence remained "considerable", at around 3,500 Nato troops including US soldiers.

"It is enough for our needs. The expectation of having entire foreign armies here to defend us is unrealistic." - Reuters

Israel bans Red Cross access to detained Palestinians

TEL AVIV: Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz said on Wednesday the country banned the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) from visiting Palestinian prisoners detained under a law targeting "unlawful combatants".

"The opinions presented to me leave no doubt that Red Cross visits to terrorists in prisons would seriously harm the state's security. The safety of the state and our citizens comes first."

The order, which was issued just hours before the country's top court had a hearing on the issue, prohibits the ICRC from visiting thousands of detainees named in a list attached to it.

In practice, the order would make law of the *status quo* that has prevailed since the war in Gaza started after Hamas's unprecedented Oct 7, 2023 attack on Israel.

Under Israeli law, the category of "unlawful combatants" introduced in 2002 allows for

indefinite detention of individuals without charge in military detention centres.

The ICRC says it has not been allowed to visit detainees in jail since then, save for pre-release interviews conducted under Gaza ceasefire and prisoner exchange deals.

"The purpose of the ICRC visits to places of detention and those deprived of their liberty is purely humanitarian.

"We aim to assess the treatment and conditions of detainees and work with the detaining authorities on ensuring these conditions are according to international standards, as well as restoring contact between the detainees and their families."

According to several NGOs, the Israeli prison administration argues that such visits could be used to send or receive messages to and from Palestinian Islamist groups.

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel, which filed a petition to grant the ICRC access to Israeli prisons, said some of the combatants

are held in military detention centres, and others in regular Israeli jails.

It said before the ceasefire deal that began on Oct 10, the Israeli Prison Service "was holding 2,673 prisoners categorised as unlawful combatants".

It added that hundreds were released under the deal in exchange for hostages held in the Gaza Strip.

Hamas said the ban "constitutes a violation of a fundamental right of our prisoners".

"This adds to a series of systematic and criminal violations they are subjected to, including killing, torture, starvation, medical neglect and the withholding of information."

On Tuesday, the Israeli military accused Hamas of faking its search for the bodies of deceased hostages still in Gaza in order to stall the return process.

Providing drone footage as evidence, it said Hamas staged a body's discovery in front of ICRC staff. - AFP

Former energy firm chief detained

KYIV: A former Ukrainian state energy operator chief suspected of embezzlement was ordered to be kept in detention by a Kyiv court on Wednesday, stoking fears of political interference.

The ruling comes months after President Volodymyr Zelensky failed to curb the power of anti-corruption agencies, with critics saying the government may resort to more covert means of exerting pressure on political opponents.

Prosecutors said Volodymyr Kudrytsky, a former head of Ukraine's state energy company Ukrenergo, who had been sacked last year, is accused of misappropriating more than US\$1.6 million (RM6.7 million) of state funds in 2018.

The Pechersk District court in Kyiv on Wednesday ruled "to apply to Volodymyr Kudrytsky a preventive measure in the form of detention".

He will spend two months in detention unless he comes up with a \$300,000 (RM1.25 million) bail. - AFP

COMMENT by Dr Nahrizul Adib Kadri

Outsmart AI with better questions

LAST Thursday morning, as I sat alone with a cup of *kopi-C-kosong* at the Engineering Tower of Universiti Malaya, a quiet thought came to me: there is one future skill that everyone needs to master – the ability to ask the right question.

The idea came to me just before my 9am class. I had been thinking about how generative AI is now used in classrooms for almost everything – from problem-based learning and flipped classrooms to writing essay assignments.

It reminded me of a World Economic Forum report stating that 65% of future jobs have not yet been created. That figure once sounded like science fiction but now feels more like a warning.

In a world where machines can generate, translate and even imitate, the real skill will no longer be about producing quick answers; it will be about asking meaningful questions.

AI, after all, only knows what we ask of it. A good question is like a map; it guides, filters and connects. A weak question brings noise while a thoughtful one brings clarity. The better you are at asking, the better the answers we uncover. That, to me, is what separates users from thinkers. Anyone can click “generate” but to prompt meaningfully, connect ideas and see patterns others miss requires curiosity and care.

Rumi once wrote: “What you seek is seeking you.” The older I get, the more I think he was talking about questions. The right question has its own magnetism; it pulls the right answer towards it but you have to ask it first.

In my classes, I often tell students that

curiosity is a form of courage. It means being willing to look foolish for a moment so that you can understand for a lifetime. Many of us stay quiet out of fear of asking the wrong question, when in truth, the only wrong question is the one never asked.

When I first started teaching, I thought good answers were the goal but now I know that good questions are the real milestones. They show that a student is thinking, connecting and wondering. When someone asks, “What if?” or “Why not?” or even “How do you know?,” I know something is moving.

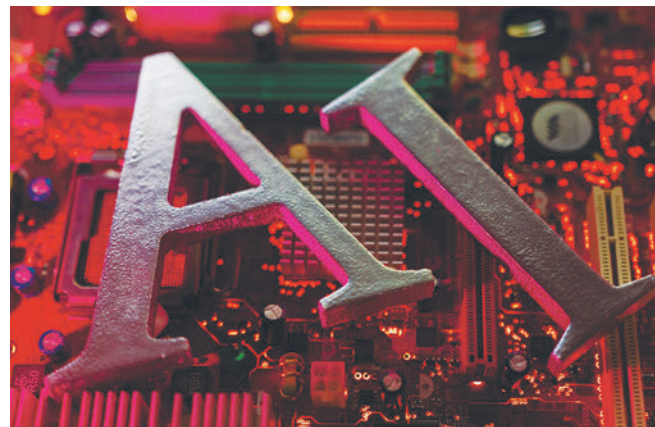
This is where AI becomes interesting – generative tools can summarise and simplify but they still depend on our curiosity to guide them. Without it, they are like powerful engines idling without direction. The human role is not to out-calculate the machine but to out-question it.

Coldplay once sang, *Questions of science, science and progress do not speak as loud as my heart*. I like this line from *The Scientist* because it reminds me that knowledge, at its best, is not cold logic; it begins with wonder. The scientist, the artist, the teacher, all of them start with a question that matters to them. The data and diagrams come later.

I think back to my school days, when the brave ones in class were not necessarily the top students but those who dared to raise their hands and ask “Why?” Sometimes the teacher had an answer, sometimes they didn’t. But the question always lingered, pushing us to look deeper.

The more I teach, the more I see that

“The machine can process but only we can wonder. The machine can simulate empathy but only we can feel it. The machine can predict patterns but only we can decide which ones are worth following.”



Generative tools can summarise and simplify but they still depend on our curiosity to guide them. Without it, they are like powerful engines idling without direction.
– REUTERS/PIC

learning is not about collecting facts; it is about developing a relationship with not knowing. To ask a good question is to admit that you do not yet understand and to be comfortable with that space.

There is a line in Rumi’s writing where he says, “Sell your cleverness and buy bewilderment”. That may be the best advice for our AI age. We have plenty of cleverness now but what we need is more genuine wonder.

So how do we nurture that?

To be honest, I don’t really know but what I do know is that slowing down helps. Curiosity grows in stillness because it needs time to notice details, form connections and to wonder why something is the way it is.

Perhaps the other way is to treat questions not as challenges but as bridges. When we ask with sincerity, we are not testing others; we are inviting them in. A good question carries respect.

It should say, “I value your perspective. Help me see what I can’t.”

If AI is to be our companion in the years ahead, then this human art of questioning will matter even more. The machine can process but only we can wonder. The machine can simulate empathy but only we can feel it. The machine can predict patterns but only we can decide which ones are worth following.

In a world full of quick answers, the rarest skill will be to pause, think and ask with sincerity because only then will we have the real answers.

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Under One Roof

Couples’ guide to ending money fights

Q: My wife and I keep arguing about money. We both hate fighting over finances but it feels like we are stuck in the same pattern; it’s never enough and the tension keeps building. What would you suggest we do to break this cycle?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: Conflict over finances can put a real strain on a marriage. Research shows couples who argue about money are twice as likely to divorce as those who don’t.

As such, it is important to focus on strengthening your relationship rather than getting caught up in the details of accounting.

Once you both realise that you are on the same team, it becomes much easier to work together and put practical solutions in place.

The first step is to start living within your means. Take a closer look at the true cost of your lifestyle. Many couples struggling with debt have little idea how much they actually spend each month on groceries, car payments or entertainment. Without the willingness to live on what you earn, it’s not a question of if your finances will collapse, but when.

The second key step is to create a budget. There are plenty of resources available to guide you through the practical details but for now, remember this: a budget is a vital tool that helps you stay within your means

and build savings for a rainy day.

Budgets help you prioritise your spending, allocating more for necessities and less for non-essentials. Admittedly, budgeting often involves tough choices, which is why many people avoid it altogether.

But remember, the goal is to take control of your finances together, so you can reduce the money-related conflicts that put strain on your relationship.

If you need additional support, consider seeking guidance from a financial counsellor or other qualified professional.

Q: Should we be concerned about a child who avoids taking risks? For example, our eight-year-old consistently refuses to go on scary roller coasters. My husband believes we should push him to face his fears while I feel we should let him build confidence at his own pace. What is your perspective?

Focus on the Family Malaysia: Our first suggestion is that you and your husband work towards a mutually agreeable approach. Generally, as most parents can attest, fathers tend to be more adventurous while mums are naturally protective. This is usually an equitable balance between the two perspectives.

It is also important to remember that every child has a unique

personality. Some children are simply biologically wired to be more cautious. This isn’t necessarily a sign of cowardice or timidity; in some cases, it may actually be a sign of prudence and maturity beyond a child’s years. Birth order can also affect a child’s temperament.

It is also important to consider a child’s age and level of development. Just as many adults avoid towering “death-drop” roller coasters, some children naturally prefer to steer clear of such thrills. This suggests that it is often a matter of personal preference, not simply fear. Your son is still a child, and he thinks and behaves like one.

Keep in mind that he has his entire life ahead of him and his temperament may evolve as he grows. A cautious child today could very well become a thrill-seeking teenager tomorrow.

The best advice for both of you as parents is to unconditionally love and support your son as he develops into the person he is meant to be.

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

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Banning handphones in schools a smart move

THE recent stabbing of a 16-year-old schoolgirl by a schoolmate has shocked Malaysians.

In response, the government has proposed several measures to curb rising violence in schools, including a ban on smartphone use for those under 16.

Research has shown that the pervasive influence of social media and online gaming can lead to troubling and sometimes extreme behaviours.

Positive outcomes from phone bans have been observed in New South Wales, Australia, where feedback and research indicate that the government’s decision to prohibit mobile phones in all public schools has improved student learning and concentration, while also encouraging greater social interaction among students.

Interestingly, one year after the change, several positive outcomes from the ban were observed.

They include:
➔ **Reduced classroom distractions:** A 2024 survey of 1,000 principals by the NSW Department of Education found that 87% reported students were

less distracted in the classroom.

➔ **Improved learning focus:** 81% of principals reported that student learning had improved.

➔ **Increased student socialisation:** 86% of principals agreed that students were socialising more. School staff noted that students were engaging in more traditional activities during breaks, such as playing games, sports and talking face-to-face.

The phone ban was a win-win for the schools, teachers, students and parents.

Our Education Ministry should introduce programmes for teachers that explicitly address respectful relationships, online safety, cyberbullying, consent and online harassment, and abuse.

In short, banning mobile phones in schools can lead to more productive classrooms, students who are less distracted and more ready to learn, and a greater sense of empathy and interaction among students rather than preoccupation with their devices.

Sze Loong Steve Ngeow Kajang



Green discovery

New insect species found in Borneo - P12



- PIC FROM FREEPIK

WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY

Technology and social media

TUESDAY

Family and parenting

WEDNESDAY

Fashion and beauty

THURSDAY

Home and living

FRIDAY

Travel and leisure

SATURDAY

Food and beverage

- FREEPIK

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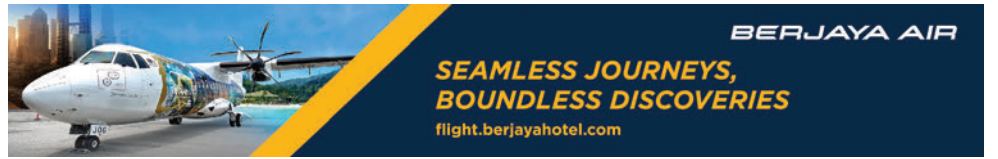
Langkawi resort offers charm of heritage homes

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Prepare for 48-hour adventure in Istanbul

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Spider brings back 90s pop rock nostalgia



New leaf-like insects discovered in Borneo

➤ Sabah's new bush crickets: *Tapiena dimidia*, *Tapiena munae*

BY AMEEN HAZIZI

IN Malaysia's dense rainforests, where the hum of insects never truly fades, scientists have found two new species of leaf-like creatures hiding in plain sight.

Deep in Sabah's Maliau Basin and the Meligan highlands near Long

Pasia, researchers have identified two previously unknown bush crickets, also called katydids. These grasshopper-like insects are famous for their night songs and ability to blend seamlessly into the forest canopy. The discovery adds to Malaysia's growing list of new species found in 2025, offering fresh proof that the country's wilderness still holds secrets yet to be revealed.

Secrets of canopy

The new species, *Tapiena dimidia* and *Tapiena munae*, were discovered during a field study led by entomologist Dr Ming Kai Tan of the National University of Singapore in

collaboration with the Sabah Forestry Department. Both were found during night surveys when their soft calls echoed through the forest.

Katydid belongs to the same family as crickets and grasshoppers. They are known for their delicate wings that resemble leaves and for their rhythmic chirping used to attract mates. Their calls are often too high-pitched for human ears, but in the quiet of the forest, their songs fill the night air with faint pulses of sound.

What makes this discovery remarkable is the remote landscape that these insects call home. Maliau Basin, often known as Sabah's "Lost World", and the rugged Meligan highlands are among Borneo's least explored regions. Their isolation has allowed wildlife to evolve in unique and unexpected ways, creating small worlds within the wider forest ecosystem.

Meet *Tapiena dimidia* and *Tapiena munae*

Tapiena dimidia is a bright green insect with red markings along its legs and wings. Its name comes from the Latin word for "half", a reference to the pattern of fine ridges on its wings that create sound.

The second species *Tapiena munae* was named in memory of the researcher's late pet dog Munchie. This species has a red-tinted face and strong, bent appendages tipped with tiny spines. Both were discovered near light traps used to attract nocturnal insects, where the team



Leaf-mimicking *Tapiena munae*, discovered at night in Sabah's Sinipung Hill forest.

recorded their songs and documented their features before releasing them back into the wild.

Voices in the night

The researchers also recorded the calls of several other species from the same areas. Each insect has its own distinct rhythm and tone, creating a layered soundscape that helps scientists identify them. These recordings offer new insight into how species communicate and coexist in the dense rainforest.

The sound of a katydid may seem small and fleeting, yet it tells a much larger story. Each pulse and chirp marks the presence of a species that has survived in isolation, adapting to its environment through shape, colour and song.

Why it matters

Though small, these discoveries carry major ecological significance. Katydid plays a vital role in the food chain, serving as prey for birds, bats and reptiles while also helping to pollinate forest plants. Their

discovery shows Malaysia's forests remain rich in life, even as many areas face pressure from logging and development.

Each new species adds another piece to the puzzle of how Borneo's ecosystems function and why they must be protected. For researchers, these findings are a triumph and a reminder of how much remains unseen beneath the canopy.

Still full of surprises

From rediscovered fireflies in Kuala Lumpur to new frogs and fish in Borneo, 2025 has already been a remarkable year for Malaysia's biodiversity. The addition of *Tapiena dimidia* and *Tapiena munae* continues that story, highlighting the incredible variety of life that thrives in the nation's forests.

In the stillness of the night, somewhere in Sabah's hidden valleys, the faint song of a katydid continues to rise and fall. It is a sound that speaks of survival, mystery and the enduring beauty of Malaysia's wild heart.



Green and red katydid *Tapiena dimidia*, found deep in Maliau Basin's rainforest. - PICS FROM ZOOTAXA

Malacca to roll out seven 'Pay Less, See More' initiatives next year

THE state government will introduce seven new initiatives under the "Pay Less, See More" concept next year, marking a more progressive phase in conjunction with Visit Melaka Year and Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh said the first initiative, the Melaka Integrated Tourism Package, offers visitors the opportunity to experience five of the state's key attractions, namely the Melaka River Cruise, Menara Taming Sari, Flor de la Mar Maritime Museum, Melaka Sultanate Palace Museum and a cultural performance at Panggung Bangsawan, all at a single, affordable price.

The second initiative is the introduction of the Melaka Smart Tourist Card that allows visitors to enjoy exclusive discounts at various locations and major attractions throughout the state.

"In addition, we will introduce the Hop On Hop Off Cruise package, which allows visitors to park their vehicles at designated areas and conveniently board or disembark at any jetty along the Melaka River Cruise route.

"However, visitors are required to purchase a one-day or three-day cruise pass, offered at an affordable rate and

valid from morning until night. They are also encouraged to stay at hotels or homestays located along Sungai Melaka," he told reporters after officiating the Melaka Straits Art Festival 2025 and Melaka River Festival 2025 recently.

Ab Rauf said the Cruise and Cultural Pass, which includes tickets for the Melaka River Cruise and visits to Kampung Morten or Panggung Bangsawan to enjoy traditional cultural performances, will also be introduced.

He added that under the Taste of Melaka Trail @ Sungai Melaka initiative, vouchers worth between RM20 and RM30 will be offered, giving visitors the chance to savour Malacca's iconic dishes such as *asam pedas*, *cendol*, *kuih keria* and other local heritage delicacies.

"For tourists staying in Malacca for three days and two nights, we will introduce a special hotel and accommodation initiative that offers complimentary tickets to selected attractions, including the Melaka River Cruise, Sungai Linggi Eco Cruise, Tasik Chin Chin Eco Cruise or Menara Taming Sari.

"In addition, special discounts for school and university students to visit historical sites will be introduced



Christ Church, Malacca is an 18th-century Dutch-built Anglican church. - 123RFPIIC

under the heritage and education initiative called the Cultural Pass for Students," he said.

According to him, all the initiatives are part of the state government's efforts to establish Malacca as a model

state and a benchmark for excellence in Malaysia's tourism landscape, not merely a minor player in the country's cultural and tourism agenda.

Meanwhile, he said Malacca recorded 13.5 million tourist arrivals

between Jan 1 and Sept 30 this year, a 25% increase compared with the same period last year, significantly boosting the state's economy, social development and overall image. - Bernama



BY DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia is fast emerging as a powerhouse in the global business services (GBS) sector, with the government pledging stronger collaboration with industry and academia to propel the nation towards its goal of becoming an AI Nation by 2030.

Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo who officiated the GBS Asean Summit 2025 yesterday, said Malaysia must "be AI-ready" by building an ecosystem that can swiftly adapt to evolving technologies.

"Technology is evolving very, very quickly. We have to look ahead and ensure our infrastructure is ready so that when that technology arrives, Malaysian companies can immediately adopt it and benefit from it," he said.

"The ministry is fully committed to supporting and collaborating with the industry to achieve our vision to become an AI Nation by 2030. Our strategy rests on three pillars: world-class digital infrastructure, robust trust frameworks in data and cybersecurity, and future-ready talent," he added.

Gobind highlighted that Malaysia's GBS industry has reached an economic potential of US\$6.7 billion (RM28 billion) this year, growing 6.2% annually, with 749 companies established over the last four years.

He stressed that such growth reflects how technology and AI are transforming service performance and economic value.

"This industry plays a vital role in ensuring that we transform digitally and deliver services more efficiently. The government will continue to work closely with the industry to overcome challenges and accelerate digital transformation," he said.

Gobind reiterated that Malaysia cannot afford to delay digital adoption if it aims to capture Asean's booming digital economy, which is projected to reach US\$2 trillion by 2030.

"If we don't take this effort seriously, we risk losing up to US\$1 trillion in potential economic value over the next five years," he warned.

"We have no time to lose. To meet our prime minister's bold vision of AI Nation 2030 where the digital economy contributes 30% of GDP, we must move with urgency."

The minister said the Madani government remains committed to listening to industry needs

Malaysia emerging as global business services powerhouse

➤ Gobind: Govt will strengthen collaboration with industry, academia to propel country towards AI Nation status by 2030



Gobind (third, left) witnessing the memorandum of agreement exchange between GBS Malaysia and UKM. Others from left are Liew, GBS Malaysia chair Anthony Raja Devadoss, UKM Qatar president Prof Dr Aini Aman, UKM deputy dean, faculty of economy and management Assoc Prof Dr Muhammad Hakimi Mohd Shafiai and GBS Malaysia committee member Jusri Ong.

and facilitating growth through enabling policies, digital infrastructure, and public-private partnerships.

"This government is here to listen and support initiatives that make things better for the industry. If we can strengthen every sector and expand regionally, Malaysia can be positioned as an Asean economic powerhouse," he said.

A key highlight of the summit was the memorandum of agreement exchange between the Digital Global Business Services Council

Malaysia (GBS Malaysia) and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM). The partnership aims to build a robust talent pipeline by aligning university curricula with industry demands in areas such as artificial intelligence, data analytics and digital operations.

GBS Malaysia chairman Adjunct Practice Prof Alex Liew, who also chairs the National Technology Association of Malaysia, described the collaboration as "a definitive blueprint for future-proofing the industry's human capital."

"The GBS sector's growth is directly tied to a future-ready talent pipeline. By aligning university curricula with high-value skills like AI and data analytics, Malaysia remains not just cost-effective but a talent-led digital powerhouse in Asean," he said.

The event also marked the launch of the GBS Malaysia Mid-Term Report 2025, providing an in-depth review of the industry's trajectory since the national GBS strategy was introduced in 2022.

The report highlighted a 66.8% increase in GBS companies since 2022, totaling 749 entities, and a 13.5-fold surge in investments from RM0.73 billion in 2021 to RM9.87 billion in 2024. The expansion has created over 36,000 high-value jobs and is projected to push GBS revenue to RM28.14 billion in 2025.

Malaysia currently ranks third globally in the Global Services Location Index and remains among the top three in Asean for digital competitiveness and innovation.

Raymond Davadass, research chair of GBS Malaysia, said the report underscores Malaysia's evolution toward a more integrated, high-value digital economy.

"Our success will depend on how effectively we integrate technology, knowledge, and human capital into one cohesive, future-ready ecosystem," he said.

"By bridging talent gaps and advancing collaboration, Malaysia is poised to become a global center of excellence for digital innovation, service delivery and sustainable growth."

Dr Mandy Sim, associate professor at the University of Nottingham Malaysia and research lead for the report, said the findings represent a milestone in evidence-based policymaking. "The mid-term report is a testament to the powerful synergy between industry, academia, and government. It provides a robust framework to guide Malaysia's ascent as a leading global GBS hub."

Capital A restructuring in last chapter, next growth phase set to take off

BY JOHN GILBERT
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KUALA LUMPUR: Capital A Bhd has completed all requirements for the disposal of its airline business to AirAsia X Bhd, and the sale and purchase agreements with AirAsia X are now unconditional.

This achievement marks the final phase in consolidating all AirAsia airline operations under a single airline group as Capital A moves into a diversified travel and digital services company.

AirAsia Group will comprise AirAsia's operations in Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Cambodia, and AirAsia X.

The milestone follows the successful fulfilment of all key requirements, including the receipt of stakeholder consent letters, the securing of RM1 billion in private placement commitment letters for AirAsia X, and the resolution of a critical regulatory exemption from Thailand on Oct 17.

With these conditions satisfied, both companies are now ready to proceed with the remaining procedural steps.

These include Capital A's capital reduction and distribution exercise, the allotment and listing of AirAsia X shares, and other regulatory processes. Completion is targeted for December, to be followed by the Practive Note 17 (PN17) uplift application within the same month.

This development not only completes the

restructuring of Capital A's airline operations but also represents the beginning of a new growth chapter.

Moving forward, Capital A will focus on building a robust, multi-platform travel and lifestyle ecosystem driven by technology, innovation, and data – strengthening its position as a next-generation aviation and digital powerhouse in the region.

Capital A CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said the idea behind AirAsia Group going forward is simple – to operate under one unified brand.

"There will no longer be separate entities like AirAsia X; everything will be merged into a single airline group. This marks the next phase in AirAsia's journey. Our focus now is to move beyond survival mode and return to growth, growing the airline sustainably and cash-positive.

"We want to invest wisely, ensuring that every step we take contributes to healthy, long-term growth rather than losses.

"Our target over the next 10 years is clear – we are currently operating with 255 aircraft, and we target to have over 600 aircraft, and this is just the beginning of our next growth chapter," he said at a special presentation attended by senior management and staff from Capital A, AirAsia Group and subsidiaries.

Fernandes said Capital A expects to return to flying 90 million passengers next year, matching

its pre-Covid pandemic levels last achieved in 2019.

The group ended the recent year with 68.8 million passengers, not due to lower demand, but because a portion of its fleet had not yet returned to service.

Over the past year, AirAsia has been progressively reactivating its 255 aircraft, and by 2026, the airline will have its entire fleet fully operational for the first time since before Covid-19.

Moving on, Fernandes said once the airline consolidation is completed, AirAsia Group will operate as a single, unified airline. Its new strategy focuses on building multiple major hubs across Asia rather than relying on a single home market.

The group's long-term vision is to become the world's first narrowbody low-cost network carrier, an airline that connects key cities efficiently with a fleet of single-aisle aircraft. This approach will enhance regional connectivity for passengers, improve aircraft efficiency, reduce operating costs, and open new opportunities for growth.

The plan centres on the next-generation Airbus A321neo and A321XLR aircraft, which offer greater range and flexibility to serve more destinations while maintaining AirAsia's hallmark low-cost model.

Meanwhile, Capital A's five remaining companies represent the next chapter of the

group's evolution beyond aviation.

Each business – ADE (engineering), Teleport (logistics), AirAsia MOVE (travel platform), Santan (F&B business), and its brand licensing and IP business Abc, which will be renamed to AirAsia NEXT.

Fernandes said that together, these brands have the potential to become market leaders in their respective industries and redefine the Asean business landscape.

"It's quite remarkable that KLIA is now ranked the number one mega-hub in Asia and the fourth in the world, a recognition that reflects its growing global importance. AirAsia is proud to be the largest contributor to this success.

"For years, we have played second to Singapore, but today, KLIA stands ahead of some of the biggest airports in the region, from China and Bangkok to Seoul and Tokyo.

"It is an impressive achievement that shows how far we have come in building the most connected network in Asia. And we are not stopping here – we plan to double down on this momentum and continue strengthening our position as the region's leading hub," Fernandes said.

Capital A's announcement yesterday marks the beginning of the final phase of its restructuring, signalling that the company is now gearing up for its next chapter beyond PN17.

LPC Group soars in LEAP Market debut, opens at 40 sen for 300% premium

PETALING JAYA: LPC Group Bhd, a construction group specialising in infrastructure and building works based in Malacca, made a stunning debut on the LEAP Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities by way of introduction yesterday, opening at 40 sen per share, representing a 300% premium over its listing reference price of 10 sen.

Incorporated in 1987, the company's wholly owned subsidiary, Lai Pau Construction Sdn Bhd, is a CIDB Grade G7 main contractor who undertake projects of unlimited contract value in Malaysia.

Over the years, LPC Group has completed more than 400 projects with a cumulative contract value exceeding RM900 million, comprising residential, commercial and industrial buildings as well as infrastructure works, primarily in Malacca.

As at Aug 31, 2025, the group's unbilled order book stood at RM42.6 million, providing earnings visibility for the coming financial year. Moving forward, LPC intends to expand its geographical footprint beyond Malacca, targeting Johor and the Klang Valley; the two regions expected to benefit from ongoing infrastructure investments and robust private development activities.

As LPC's listing was carried out by way of introduction, no new shares were issued or allotted in conjunction with the listing. Nevertheless, LPC raised RM3.8 million from pre-listing investors through a private placement at 10 sen per share prior to the listing. The proceeds are earmarked primarily for working capital to support project execution and to cover listing-related expenses.

The listing provides LPC with an enhanced corporate platform to strengthen its brand visibility, attract strategic partners, and position the group for future growth opportunities within Malaysia's evolving construction sector.

Eco Asia Capital Advisory Sdn Bhd is the adviser for LPC's LEAP Market listing.

Bursa Malaysia posts Q3 profit before tax of RM86.3m

➤ Driven by higher average daily volume for on-market securities trades

PETALING JAYA: Bursa Malaysia Bhd posted RM86.3 million profit before tax (PBT) for the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2025 (Q3'25), driven by a 13.1% rise in securities market average daily volume (ADV) for on-market trades to RM2.6 billion, from RM2.3 billion in the second quarter ended June 30, 2025 (Q2'25).

Overall, Bursa Malaysia registered profit after tax, *zakat* and minority interest (Patami) of RM189.3 million for the nine months ended Sept 30, 2025 (9M'25), a decline of 21.5% from RM241.2 million in the nine months ended Sept 30, 2024 (9M24). The lower Patami was primarily attributed to a 10.4% decrease in operating revenue to RM518.1 million in 9M'25, from RM578.5 million in 9M'24.

The moderation in Bursa Malaysia's financial performance in 9M'25 was mainly due to a 25% decline in the securities market's trading revenue, which decreased to RM225.2 million from RM300.3 million in 9M'24. This was attributable to a 25.6% drop in ADV for on-market trades to RM2.5 billion, from RM3.4 billion during the period under review.

Total operating expenses rose by 3.5% to RM282.8 million in 9M'25, compared to RM273.4 million in 9M'24. The increase was primarily driven by higher IT maintenance costs and other operating expenses, which was partially offset by lower staff costs.

"Global developments impacting market sentiment led to a decline in

ADV in 9M2025; however, we are beginning to see improvement as greater clarity emerged from the United States tariff negotiations, with securities market trading revenue rising 13.3% quarter-on-quarter.

"Profit before tax grew quarter-on-quarter by 13.5%, rising to RM86.3 million in 3Q2025, compared to RM76 million in 2Q2025. In 9M2025, our derivatives and BSAS (Bursa Suq Al-Sila commodity trading platform) trading, as well as other trading and non-trading revenue sources, continued to see growth, providing resilience and demonstrating the value of the exchange's strategy of broadening offerings across multiple asset classes," said Bursa Malaysia CEO Datuk Fad'l Mohamed.

"Looking ahead, our efforts are underpinned by Malaysia's robust economic fundamentals and capital market ecosystem, alongside accommodative monetary policy and clear government policies aimed at strengthening priority sectors."

Bursa Malaysia continues to play a vital role in supporting the growth of Malaysian companies through its fundraising platform. In 9M'25, the exchange welcomed 41 listings, collectively raising RM4.4 billion and adding RM22.3 billion to overall market capitalisation.

In addition, the exchange continues efforts to attract companies listed on other bourses to pursue secondary listings on Bursa Malaysia, to broaden their investor base and enhance trading liquidity.

On Aug 1, Bursa Malaysia achieved a significant milestone by welcoming UMS Integration Ltd to the Main Market, marking the first Singapore Exchange-listed company to have a secondary listing on Bursa Malaysia.

As for the derivatives market, its trading revenue increased by 2.8% to RM83.1 million in 9M'25, from RM80.9 million in 9M'24, mainly due to higher volumes of crude palm oil futures contracts traded. The increase was primarily attri-

butable to the delayed implementation of Indonesia's B40 bio-diesel policy and lower crude palm oil production in Malaysia, which spurred hedging activity among commercial participants.

On the Islamic market front, operating revenue recorded a 30.0% increase to RM16.9 million in 9M'25, from RM13 million in 9M'24, primarily driven by higher Bursa Suq Al-Sila' (a commodity trading platform) revenue of RM15 million in 9M'25, from RM12.3 million in 9M'24. Additionally, trading revenue from Bursa Gold Dinar more than doubled to RM1.9 million in 9M'25, from RM0.7 million in 9M'24, mainly from higher volume of gold transactions.

In view of the shifting global developments and its influence on market sentiment - particularly on the equity market during the first half of 2025 - Bursa Malaysia has made revisions to its headline Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for 2025, specifically PBT and total initial public offering (IPO) market capitalisation.

The KPI for PBT is now set between RM314 million and RM347 million, compared to the previous range of RM369 million to RM408 million. The KPI for total IPO market capitalisation has been revised to RM25.2 billion, from RM40.2 billion previously.

All other headline KPI remain unchanged. Notably, the exchange has maintained its lead in the Asean region in terms of number of IPOs.



Aquaria KLCC operator aims to raise up to RM114.3m from IPO

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Aquawalk Group Bhd, the developer and operator of Aquaria KLCC, seeks to raise up to RM114.3 million via ACE Market initial public offering (IPO) to fund expansion and upgrades across its regional aquarium network.

CEO Daryl Foong Chuen Hoe said the majority of the proceeds from the public issue are earmarked for financing the group's capital expenditures to upgrade and develop new and existing attractions (78.6%).

"This capital expenditure we intend to use for the upgrading and development of new attractions for Aquaria KLCC and Aquaria Phuket, as well as the construction of two new aquariums. One in East Malaysia and one in Java, Indonesia. We intend to utilise all this within 48 months," he said at the prospectus launch yesterday.

Aquawalk plans to spend RM12.2 million between 2025 and 2027 to upgrade and develop new attractions at Aquaria KLCC, including a new penguin tank. It will also allocate RM20.7 million for new attractions at Aquaria Phuket between 2026 and 2027.

Meanwhile, RM39.6 million will be channelled towards the construction of a new aquarium in Kota Kinabalu between 2026 and 2028, and RM17.3 million for another in Java, Indonesia, targeted for 2026. The rest of the proceeds are earmarked for IT improvements (2.6%), working capital (12.7%) and listing expenses (6.1%).

Aquaria KLCC recorded 1.29 million visitors in 2024, while its Jakarta Aquarium and Aquaria Phuket welcomed 530,000 and 290,000 visitors respectively.

Foong is confident that Aquawalk's business momentum in terms of visitor numbers, revenue, and regional footprint will keep expanding in the coming years.

"We expect our growth to continue. The expansion of tourism, improved accessibility, and the rise of free independent travellers as well as group tours across the region have increased significantly both in areas where we currently operate and those we plan to enter. We are very optimistic about our tourism prospects going forward," he said.

Foong added that Aquawalk has been operating for over two decades supported by a strong management team and extensive regional experience. "We are in an industry with high



Aquawalk will use proceeds from the IPO to fund expansion and upgrades across its regional aquarium network.

barriers to entry, but we've adapted and built a comprehensive ecosystem that covers everything from aquarium design and construction to operations and knowledge transfer. "We have solid growth prospects and play a key role in tourism across the Asean region, leading in ESG, marine conservation and education."

The group will undertake a public issue of 368.6 million new ordinary shares and an offer for sale of 368.6 million existing shares, representing a total of 40% of the enlarged issued share capital upon listing.

At the IPO price of 31 sen per share, Aquawalk Group would have a market capitalisation of RM571.3 million

based on total enlarged share capital of 1,843 billion shares upon listing.

M&A Securities Sdn Bhd is the adviser, sponsor, managing underwriter, joint underwriter and joint placement agent while CGS International Securities Malaysia is the joint underwriter and joint placement agent for the IPO.

Razorpay Curlec, NPCI bring UPI payments to M'sia

KUALA LUMPUR: Reinforcing Malaysia's position as a top destination for Indian travellers, Razorpay Curlec, the country's payment gateway, has partnered with NPCI International Payments Ltd to bring India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) to Malaysia.

This partnership, formally signed at India's Global Fintech Fest' 2025, will empower Malaysian businesses to receive instant payments from millions of Indian travellers through their preferred UPI apps, marking a major step towards seamless and instant cross-border commerce between the two countries.

In 2024, Malaysia welcomed one million Indian tourists, who spent RM6.11 billion – a 71.7% increase from the previous year. This growing travel corridor presents an opportunity to further simplify cross-border payments, enhancing convenience for Indian travellers and driving greater business for Malaysian merchants.

Through this partnership, Indian visitors will be able to pay instantly using UPI-enabled apps to Malaysian merchants, who will accept payments directly via Razorpay Curlec's platform – settled in ringgit, without the need for international cards or extra integration.

Razorpay Curlec country head and CEO Kevin Lee said, "UPI payments will make it easier for travellers to spend and for Malaysian businesses to earn – a step towards seamless payments and a stronger digital economy."

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian Technology Development Corporation (MTDC), proptech group Juwai IQI, and INNOVentures Global (IGPL) have partnered to create a global entrepreneurship programme that will bring talented startups from Pakistan and other countries where Juwai IQI operates, to Malaysia over the next three years.

The first of these initiatives is the Malaysia-Pakistan Innovation Corridor, which shall be a founders' exchange between Malaysian and Pakistani startups and SMEs enabled by IGPL, an innovation and startup entrepreneurship ecosystem enabler in Pakistan.

MTDC CEO Mohammad Hazani Hassan said: "This collaboration reflects MTDC's commitment to building a globally connected innovation ecosystem. Through initiatives such as the Malaysia-Pakistan Innovation Corridor, MTDC aims to strengthen cross-border linkages that foster knowledge exchange, entrepreneurship, and growth driven by technology and innovation."

By facilitating partnerships between local and international founders, he added, they are helping to create a more dynamic and inclusive startup landscape, one that supports national objectives under NIMP 2030 and enhances Malaysia's position as a hub for deep technology and innovation.

Juwai IQI co-founder and group CEO Kashif Ansari said: "Startups are a crucial part of the economic picture in Malaysia. They create more jobs, bring more new technologies to the market, and

Tripartite tie-up to boost local startups

► MTDC, Juwai IQI and INNOVentures Global collaborate to bring entrepreneurs from Pakistan and other countries into Malaysia

generate a greater return on investment than established companies. This year, Malaysia's startup ecosystem is attaining new success, and the number of jobs in the country has soared to a new record of 9.1 million."

"Funding for prospective startups hit RM14 billion between 2020 and 2024, which ranks us highly compared to other markets. Malaysia's startup ecosystem will be of great interest to founders from around the world," he added.

Juwai IQI co-founder and group managing director Daniel Ho said: "Malaysia has a significant domestic market and the even larger Asean



From left: Ho, Ansari, Mohammad Hazani and Athar.

market of 680 million consumers. That gives new startups the customers they need to expand and reach sustainable scale. Founders will build connections with counterparts all over the world, so they can truly think globally."

INNOVentures managing partner Dr Athar Osama said: "It is a great thrill to be working with the Malaysian Technology Development Corporation and Juwai IQI on this

entrepreneurship exchange initiative. It will give Pakistani entrepreneurs the opportunity to cross-pollinate with their counterparts in Malaysia and bring new ideas and connections back home with them. We believe the programme will have positive ripple effects on the whole innovation economy and encourage our founders to adopt an export orientation, scale, and obtain investment"

Biesse Malaysia joins DHL Express' GoGreen Plus to decarbonise via SAF

KUALA LUMPUR: Biesse Malaysia, part of Italian-owned Biesse Group, has entered into an agreement with DHL Express for the use of the GoGreen Plus service.

The partnership enables Biesse to leverage sustainable aviation fuel (SAF), aiming for a 30% reduction in carbon emissions associated with their inbound and outbound air freight between Europe and Southeast Asia.

This translates to projected annual savings of approximately 15 tonnes in Well-to-Wheel CO₂e, considering

estimated 50 tonnes emitted in 2024 for Biesse Malaysia.

"Biesse is addressing the climate reality head on and utilising solutions where they can make the most impact," said Biesse Asia chief financial officer Alessio Cadeddu, adding that the cross-border nature of supply chains today means there is a pressing need for the decarbonisation of air transport.

"SAF represents an effective and available step in this energy transition. Together with DHL Express, we can help expand its commercial adoption

and improve carbon outcomes across sectors," he said.

DHL Express Malaysia and Brunei managing director Julian Neo said that SAF is currently one of the most promising means of reducing emissions in air transport, and requires a collaborative effort from the entire ecosystem of partners in the industry to drive progress.

"We are delighted to welcome Biesse on board our GoGreen Plus offering, as their support contributes to boosting demand, production, and uptake of SAF. This reflects our

continued commitment to decarbonise the logistics industry by promoting SAF accessibility and affordability to more businesses."

Launched in 2023, GoGreen Plus products are based on true value chain decarbonisation. This is enabled by the 'book & claim' approach. Book & claim enables DHL to implement sustainable aviation fuel within the logistic company's network and allocate environmental benefits to paying customers, even when their shipments are not physically transported with the assets using these fuels.

SAF is produced from sustainable feedstocks, such as used cooking oil and other residues. In neat form and over the lifecycle, it significantly cuts greenhouse gas emissions by around 80% compared to conventional jet fuel.

GoGreen Plus is part of the DHL Group's measures to achieve net-zero GHG emissions by 2050. With around 70% of the company's carbon footprint coming from its air network, sustainable air transportation solutions are crucial for emission-reduced logistics.

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

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Trump-Xi trade deal fails to impress markets

➤ China stocks end lower, analyst wary of unresolved structural issues

HONG KONG: Chinese shares pulled back from a decade high yesterday as US President Donald Trump and China President Xi Jinping concluded a high-stakes meeting in South Korea with a trade-war truce that investors had broadly expected.

Investors appeared heartened by signs of cooling tensions between the world's top two economies after recent escalations, while also positioning defensively with a sense of déjà vu that the real deal may offer far less to celebrate.

Previous trade negotiations have seen promising starts followed by setbacks.

After a near two-hour meeting with Xi, Trump said he had struck a deal to trim tariffs on China in exchange for Beijing resuming US soybean purchases, keeping rare earths exports flowing and cracking down on the illicit trade of fentanyl.

The market reaction was choppy with traders trying to make sense of the information released so far.

China's yuan retreated from a near one-year high against the dollar after the meeting.

China's Commerce Ministry confirmed that the country and the US have agreed to extend their temporary trade truce for another year as part of an agreement they reached after top economic officials met in Malaysia last week.

The benchmark Shanghai Composite Index hit its highest level since 2015 at the start of the session but closed down 0.73%, inching away from the 10-year high it has been around this week. Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index fell 0.2%.

China's CSI Rare Earth Industry Index rose more than 2%, while defensive plays such as liquor and banking pared earlier gains. The AI sector index was down nearly 2%.

"The response from markets has been cautious in contrast to Trump's enthusiastic characterisation of the meeting with Xi as 'a 12 out of 10'" said Besa Deda, chief economist at advisory firm William Buck in Sydney.

"There are still some structural issues that have been left unresolved, which could be contributing to the market's response and takes some shine off the truce."

The stakes are particularly high given the breadth of this year's rally across Chinese markets.

Despite rollercoaster trade headlines, the Shanghai benchmark has surged nearly 20% this year, overturning the "uninvestable" narrative that had dominated global investor sentiment toward Chinese markets in recent years.

The Hang Seng has climbed over 30%, ranking it among the best performing markets globally.

"Managing to meet and de-escalate after recent tensions will help remove a major uncertainty, lowering the immediate risks to end the year," said Lynn Song, chief economist for Greater China at ING.

Though tariffs have throttled China's shipments to the US, its exports to other parts of the world have remained resilient, while Beijing's

push to advance artificial intelligence and develop better semiconductors and innovative drugs have also given comfort to global investors this year.

Asian and global emerging markets funds made significant increases in their exposure to mainland China in September, HSBC said in a note, pointing out positioning in mainland China for Asia funds that HSBC tracks is near a 5-year high.

The latest tit-for-tat escalations erupted earlier this month as Trump unveiled additional levies of 100% on China's US-bound exports by Nov 1, in a reprisal against China curbing its critical rare earth exports.

The meeting yesterday looked like an attempt to reset the US-China narrative by reopening selective trade channels to restore confidence, rather than a fundamental reset of geopolitical relations, analysts say.

"It's hard to call this a clean risk-on," said Charu Chanana, chief investment strategist at Saxo in Singapore.

"Equity traders have seen this playbook before - upbeat tone, little follow-through."

There are plenty of gaps still left, though, in the Trump-Xi headlines with no timeline on rare earths, soybeans not a huge win if China's crushers don't need imports, and no mention of Nvidia's Blackwell chips, she added.

Partial tariff rollbacks may also do little to help loss-making Chinese exporters and manufacturers, or reverse weak consumer demand at home.

"This looks like a tactical pause rather than a strategic breakthrough," said Tarek Horchani, head of prime brokerage dealing at Maybank Securities. - Reuters

Samsung posts 32% profit rise on-year in third quarter

SEOUL: South Korean tech giant Samsung Electronics posted yesterday a 32% rise in profits on-year for the third quarter, driven by AI-fuelled market demand for memory chips.

The artificial intelligence industry has provided a major boost to South Korea's Samsung and SK hynix, two of the world's leading memory chip makers, as their products have become indispensable for AI infrastructure.

Samsung's latest earnings report marks a sharp turnaround for the company, which saw its profits plunge more than 50% on-year in the second quarter due to the impact of US curbs on AI chip exports to China.

"Operating profit increased to 12.2 trillion won (RM35.7 billion). The Device Solutions (DS) Division reported a 19% increase in sales quarter-on-quarter, with the Memory Business setting an all-time high for quarterly sales," the company said in its earnings statement.

Its smartphone division logged an 11% rise quarter-on-quarter in revenue "due to the successful launch of new foldable phones and solid flagship sales", it added.

"Looking ahead to Q4, the rapid growth of the AI industry is expected to open up new market opportunities for both the DS and DX Divisions," it said, referring to its chips and smartphone units.

The current boom in AI has pushed up prices and shipments of conventional NAND and DRAM memory chips, alongside soaring demand for high-bandwidth memory (HBM) chips used in AI servers.

Samsung said it would invest 40.9 trillion won in its semiconductor facilities this year to meet this growing demand.

"The DS division will focus on transitioning to advanced processes and reinforcing existing production lines to meet demand for high-value products," the company said.

Following the earnings report, Samsung's shares broke a previous record, jumping more than 5% to 105,800 won in the first 30 minutes of trading. - AFP

Gold demand hit records as price soared: Industry data

LONDON: Demand for gold hit a record high in the third quarter as the precious metal's price hit all-time highs on geopolitical unrest, industry data showed yesterday.

Total demand grew 3% year-on-year in the July-September period to 1,313 tonnes, the World Gold Council said, as the metal perceived as a safe haven investment benefitted from the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israel-Gaza conflict.

That was the highest level of demand by volume since the WGC began compiling such records around 25 years ago.

"Various regional conflicts, the increasing rhetoric around trade conflicts, all of that combines really to just create this atmosphere of

heightened uncertainty" and boost demand for gold, WGC analyst Louise Street told AFP.

A surge in buying, driven by central banks, coincided with gold's price striking record after record this year.

However, since the metal struck an all-time peak in October of US\$4,381.52 an ounce, it has fallen heavily on profit taking.

Gold demand by value surged 44% year-on-year to a record US\$146 billion in the third quarter, the WGC added in its report.

The US government shutdown and expectations of more cuts to Federal Reserve interest rates, which is weighing on the dollar, have lent additional support to gold's price in

recent months according to analysts.

There has been strong demand for gold via Exchange-Traded Funds on stock markets.

ETFs allow investment without trading on the gold futures market.

The high-price environment has, however, dampened jewellery demand, according to WGC.

It dropped 23% to 419.2 tonnes in the July-September period, the lowest third quarter since 2020 when the Covid pandemic took hold around the world.

Street called gold's recent retreat to around US\$4,000 an ounce "a healthy correction ... that helps to wash out some of that more frothy, perhaps short-term speculative positioning". - AFP

Hyundai Motor retains earnings targets despite tariff hit

SEOUL: South Korea's Hyundai Motor posted a 29% decline in third-quarter operating profit yesterday as US tariffs weighed, but said it would maintain full-year targets after Seoul and Washington reached a trade deal.

The US is Hyundai's largest market and generates about 40% of revenue. The automaker's vehicles have been subject to a tariff of 25% since April.

On Wednesday, US President Donald Trump and his South Korean counterpart Lee Jae Myung agreed a deal that would see the rate come down to 15%.

Hyundai, which together with its affiliate Kia is the world's third-biggest automaking group by sales, said it would stick to its revenue and profit margin target for the year.

The company booked an operating profit of 2.5 trillion won (RM7.4 billion)

for the July-September period, down from 3.6 trillion won a year earlier.

The earnings were in line with the 2.5 trillion won from LSEG SmartEstimate, which is weighted towards analysts who are more consistently accurate.

The automaker said US tariffs cost the company 1.8 trillion won in the third quarter, up from 828 billion won in the previous quarter.

"Changes in the trade environment, including tariffs, would impact our profits and are a major risk factor for future business operations," Hyundai said in a statement.

It also forecast a continued slowdown in sales in emerging markets.

The group, which also includes affiliate Hyundai Mobis, welcomed Wednesday's trade breakthrough.

The South Korea-US deal has "resolved all of the uncertainty" over

automobile tariffs, a Hyundai executive told reporters during a call yesterday.

Hyundai Motor said its revenue rose 8.8% from a year earlier to 46.7 trillion won, versus an analysts' consensus of 45.8 trillion won.

Hyundai Motor shares, which rallied earlier after the trade deal, pared gains, and closed up 2.7% in Seoul.

Despite the US tariffs, Hyundai's US retail sales jumped 12.7% from a year earlier as the company focused on electric vehicles, which benefited from a tax break that expired at the end of September, and high-margin models.

Hybrid vehicles accounted for 20% of total US sales, Hyundai said, the highest ever.

In Europe, Hyundai's sales increased 3.2% year-on-year, driven by eco-friendly vehicles. - Reuters



Hyundai signage is seen at the New York International Auto Show. - REUTERS/SPIC

Tech leaders ramp up spending, but Alphabet's cash flow wins investor favour

SAN FRANCISCO: Three of the biggest US technology firms flagged plans on Wednesday to accelerate capital spending over the next year but investors were most accepting of Google-parent Alphabet's ability to fund its plans from its cash flow.

Alphabet, Microsoft and Meta all announced plans for higher annual capital expenditures as they pour money into chips and data centers.

Shares of all three have risen substantially this year on expectations that they will be winners in the AI race, but investors only cheered Alphabet's report as they calculated the costs to each firm of the investments.

All three reported stellar revenue growth in their key businesses, but investors pushed Alphabet shares up 7.3% while knocking down Microsoft by 3% and Meta by 7% in premarket trading.

A key reason for this, analysts say, is Alphabet's ability to balance its soaring expenses with strong cash flow.

"I would think that comes into play - to have capital spending be a lower percentage of revenue and cash flow.

"That maybe gives investors more comfort. All the players are ramping up spending pretty dramatically, and there's been a lot of concern about pressure on free cash flow," said Dave Heger, senior equity analyst Edward Jones.

Alphabet's capital expenditure of US\$23.95 billion in the September quarter was 49% of its cash generated from operations. The percentage for Meta, however, is 64.6%, with Microsoft even higher at 77.5%.

"Ongoing investments in data centres and AI infrastructure is a theme we've seen across Big Tech this earnings season. But unlike some of its peers, Alphabet is more than covering that spend with cash flow, and it's firing on all cylinders," said Josh Gilbert, market analyst at eToro.

Investors have become wary of AI spending but big tech companies are not detailing exactly how much AI contributes to revenue and profit.

With major deals being struck across the AI industry, investors are also growing cautious of a web of circular investments.

Still, executives were adamant that they had to spend to keep up with demand for AI computing power.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg said that in the worst-case scenario of over-investing in AI, the company would see "some loss and depreciation, but we'd grow into that and use it over time". - Reuters

Nvidia becomes world's first US\$5 trillion company

SAN FRANCISCO: Nvidia made history on Wednesday as the first company to reach US\$5 trillion (RM21 trillion) in market value, powered by a rally that has cemented its place at the center of the global artificial intelligence boom.

The Wall Street milestone underscores the company's swift transformation from a niche graphics-chip designer into the backbone of the global AI industry, turning CEO Jensen Huang into a Silicon Valley icon and making its advanced chips a flashpoint in the tech rivalry between the US and China.

Since the launch of ChatGPT in 2022, Nvidia's shares have climbed 12-fold as the AI frenzy propelled the S&P 500 to record highs, igniting a debate on whether frothy tech valuations could lead to the next big bubble.

The new milestone, coming just three months after Nvidia breached

Stock rallies after major deals, underscoring optimism about artificial intelligence

the US\$4 trillion mark, would surpass the total cryptocurrency market value.

"Nvidia hitting a US\$5 trillion market cap is more than a milestone; it's a statement, as Nvidia has gone from chip maker to industry creator," said Matt Britzman, senior equity analyst at Hargreaves Lansdown, which holds shares in the company.

"The market continues to underestimate the scale of the opportunity, and Nvidia remains one of the best ways to play the AI theme."

After a string of recent announcements solidified its dominance in the AI race, shares of the Santa Clara, California-based

company ended Wednesday's session up 3% at US\$207.04, giving it a stock market value of US\$5.03 trillion.

Huang announced US\$500 billion in AI chip orders on Tuesday and said he plans to build seven supercomputers for the US government.

At current prices, Huang's stake in Nvidia would be worth about US\$179.2 billion, according to regulatory filings and Reuters calculations.

He is the world's eighth-richest person, per *Forbes'* billionaire list.

Born in Taiwan and raised in the United States from age nine, Huang has led Nvidia since founding it in 1993.

Under his leadership, the company's H100 and Blackwell processors have become the engines behind large-language models powering tools such as ChatGPT and Elon Musk's xAI.

While Nvidia remains the clear front-runner in the AI race, Big Tech peers Apple and Microsoft have also reached US\$4 trillion in market value in recent months.

Analysts say the rally reflects investor confidence in unrelenting AI spending, though some warn valuations may be running hot.

"AI's current expansion relies on a few dominant players financing each other's capacity. The moment investors start demanding cash-flow returns instead of capacity announcements, some of these flywheels could seize," said Matthew Tuttle, CEO of Tuttle Capital Management.

Tech companies' heavy weighting in the S&P 500 and Nasdaq 100 gives them broad influence over global markets.

Nvidia is due to report quarterly results on Nov 19.

The company's dominance has drawn global regulatory scrutiny, with US export curbs on advanced chips making it a key pawn in Washington's strategy to limit China's access to AI technology.

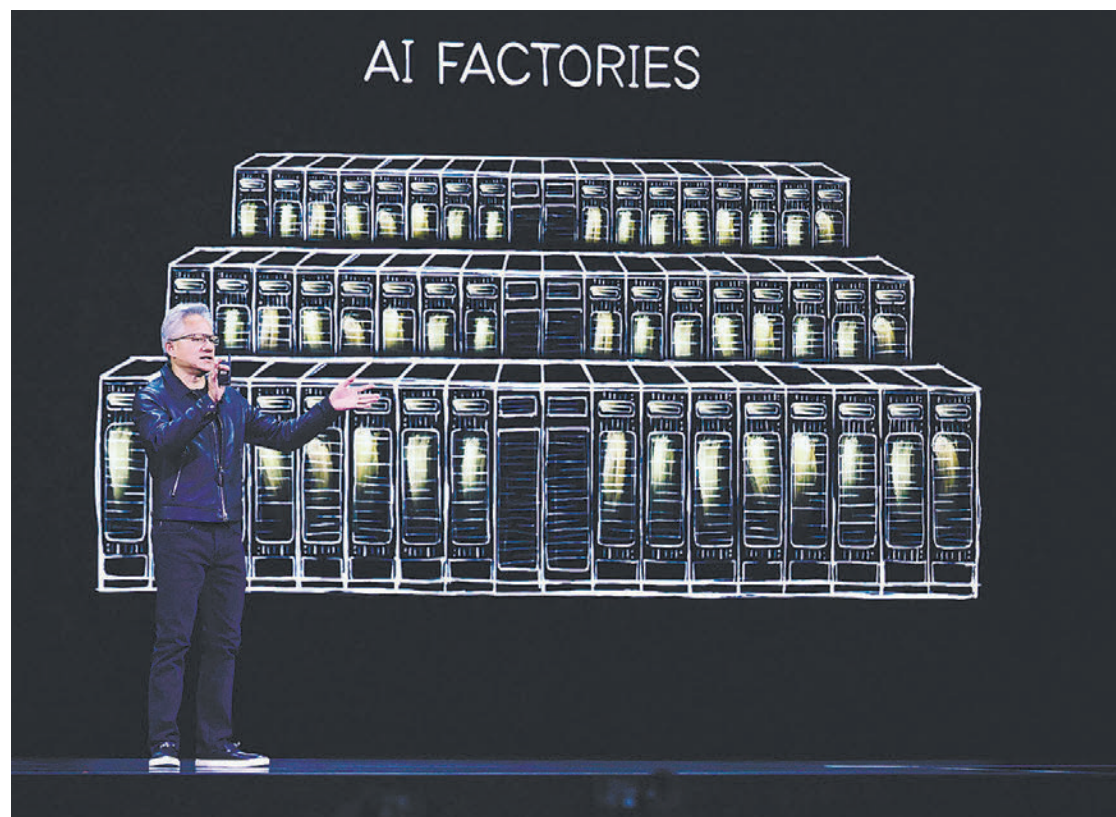
"Nvidia clearly brought their story to D.C. to both educate and gain favour with the US government," said Bob O'Donnell of TECHanalysis Research.

"They managed to hit most of the hottest and most influential topics in tech."

The developer conference on Tuesday also served as a platform for Huang to walk a geopolitical tightrope.

He praised Trump's "America First" policies for accelerating domestic tech investment, while warning that excluding China from Nvidia's ecosystem could limit US access to half of the world's AI developers.

Rivals including Advanced Micro Devices and several well-funded startups are seeking to challenge Nvidia's dominance in high-end AI chips, but it remains the industry's top choice. - Reuters



Huang speaks during the Live Keynote Pregame during the Nvidia GTC (GPU Technology Conference) in Washington. - AFP/IC

Character.AI to ban direct chat for minors

SAN FRANCISCO: Startup Character.AI announced on Wednesday it would eliminate chat capabilities for users under 18, a policy shift that follows the suicide of a 14-year-old who had become emotionally attached to one of its AI chatbots.

The company said it would transition younger users to alternative creative features such as video, story and stream creation with AI characters, while maintaining a complete ban on direct conversations that will start on Nov 25.

The platform will implement daily chat time limits of two hours for underage users during the

transition period, with restrictions tightening progressively until the November deadline.

"These are extraordinary steps for our company, and ones that, in many respects, are more conservative than our peers," Character.AI said in a statement.

"But we believe they are the right thing to do."

The Character.AI platform allows users - many of them young people - to interact with beloved characters as friends or to form romantic relationships with them.

Sewell Setzer III shot himself in February after months of intimate exchanges with a *Game of Thrones*-inspired chatbot based on

the character Daenerys Targaryen, according to a lawsuit filed by his mother, Megan Garcia.

Character.AI cited "recent news reports raising questions" from regulators and safety experts about content exposure and the broader impact of open-ended AI interactions on teenagers as driving factors behind its decision.

Setzer's case was the first in a series of reported suicides linked to AI chatbots that emerged this year, prompting ChatGPT-maker OpenAI and other artificial intelligence companies to face scrutiny over child safety.

Matthew Raines, a California father, filed suit against OpenAI in

August after his 16-year-old son died by suicide following conversations with ChatGPT that included advice on stealing alcohol and rope strength for self-harm.

OpenAI this week released data suggesting that more than one million people using its generative AI chatbot weekly have expressed suicidal ideation.

OpenAI has since increased parental controls for ChatGPT and introduced other guardrails. These include expanded access to crisis hotlines, automatic rerouting of sensitive conversations to safer models, and gentle reminders for users to take breaks during extended sessions.

As part of its overhaul, Character.AI announced the creation of the AI Safety Lab, an independent nonprofit focused on developing safety protocols for next-generation AI entertainment features.

The United States, like much of the world, lacks national regulations governing AI risks.

California Governor Gavin Newsom this month signed a law requiring platforms to remind users that they are interacting with a chatbot and not a human.

He vetoed, however, a bill that would have made tech companies legally liable for harm caused by AI models. - AFP

Volkswagen skids into the red with €1b quarterly loss

➤ German auto giant struggles with US tariffs and troubled electric shift at Porsche

FRANKFURT: Volkswagen reported its first quarterly loss for five years yesterday, as the German auto giant struggles with US tariffs and a troubled electric shift at subsidiary Porsche.

The loss in the July-to-September period amounted to €1.07 billion (RM5.2 billion) and was the first suffered by Europe's biggest carmaker since the second quarter of 2020, when it was hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

The 10-brand manufacturer, whose models range from Skoda to Seat and Audi, warned that US President Donald Trump's tariff blitz was costing it five billion euros on an annual basis.

"The result is much weaker compared to the same period last year," Volkswagen finance boss Arno Antlitz said.

"Higher tariffs, adjusting the product strategy at Porsche and write downs to Porsche's value cost €7.5 billion."

It is the latest bad news for VW and the

wider German auto industry, and reflects broader problems for traditional manufacturers in Europe's struggling top economy.

Beyond tariffs and the slower than expected shift to electric cars, fierce competition in key market China has hammered German manufacturers and their suppliers.

Long the jewel in Volkswagen's crown, Porsche in recent years has become a headache for the wider group amid intense pressure from local competitors in China and weak demand for electric sports cars that lack the thrill of noisy petrol engines.

Volkswagen in September warned of a bumper €5.1 billion hit to its core profit for the year after Porsche cut profit targets and said it would carry on selling petrol vehicles for longer than previously planned.

Volkswagen absorbed costs from Porsche's move and also wrote down the value of its shares in the Stuttgart-based sportscar-maker.

The automotive giant is also dealing with US tariffs on car exports from the European Union, subject to a tariff of 15% under an E U-US deal unveiled late July.

That is down from an earlier level of 27.5%, but still far higher than the 2.5% in force before Trump launched his trade war in April.

The carmaker - which has a plant in Tennessee - also has to grapple with US duties

on car parts imported from outside North America.

Antlitz said Volkswagen had achieved a "credible" result, excluding tariff and Porsche-related costs.

"But the burden of tariffs will remain.

"It is not really appropriate to exclude it from the calculation."

Despite the net loss, revenues grew by 2.3% to €80.3 billion, helped by a slight increase in vehicle sales globally.

Even before Trump unleashed his tariffs, VW was struggling.

The group struck a deal with unions last December to cut 35,000 jobs by 2030, mostly at its namesake brand, as part of wider plans to save €15 billion a year.

Group brands Audi and Porsche have also slashed thousands of jobs.

Porsche told workers in a July letter that further cost cuts lay ahead, warning that its business model "no longer works in its current form".

The firm this month named ex-McLaren boss Michael Leiters as its new CEO effective January 1, 2026, taking over from Oliver Blume - who also heads up the wider Volkswagen Group.

With both companies in crisis, some unions and investors had criticised Blume's dual role, accusing him of being a "part-time boss". - AFP

Saudi wealth fund to hit US\$1 tril, NEOM still priority: Official

RIYADH: Saudi Arabia's futuristic new city NEOM remains a priority for the Gulf kingdom's sovereign wealth fund under its new five-year plan, its chief said on Wednesday, following speculation about the project's future.

NEOM, the US\$500 billion flagship for oil-reliant Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 diversification programme, has reportedly been plagued by delays, personnel changes and design rethinks.

Yasir Al-Rumayyan, governor of the Public Investment Fund (PIF), said there would be six areas of focus, or "ecosystems", from 2026 to 2030, including tourism, urban development, innovation, clean energy and industry.

NEOM will be "its own ecosystem", he told business and political leaders at the Future Investment Initiative in Riyadh.

"This (plan) would help us in prioritising our capital deployment with the timelines," he said.

"We don't want to go to every investment with the same priority."

He added that PIF should hit US\$1 trillion in assets under management by the end of this year.

"We're very, very close to getting there."

NEOM was the only one of the Saudi "gigaprojects" - major lifestyle developments, which also include a Red Sea tourism project and Qiddiya, an entertainment city near Riyadh - named in the plan.

Reported problems at NEOM include a scaling-back of The Line, originally intended to be a mirrored pair of parallel skyscrapers as tall as New York's Empire State Building and originally designed to stretch for tens of kilometres through the desert.

Difficulties have also been reported at Trojena, the ski resort being built nearby whose scheduled hosting of the 2029 Asian Winter Games drew protests from environmentalists.

PIF's new, more streamlined plan came after it spent billions in recent years funding around 100 companies dealing in everything from AI to camel-milk products. - AFP



A Fonterra milk tanker drives past dairy cows as it arrives at Fonterra's Te Rapa plant near Hamilton, New Zealand. - REUTERS/SPIC

Farmers agree to sale of Fonterra's consumer brands

SYDNEY: Farmers who own New Zealand dairy cooperative Fonterra voted yesterday to sell its consumer business to French group Lactalis, a decision slammed by the country's foreign minister as "utter madness".

Final farmer votes were cast in a virtual meeting in the morning, with 88.5% of the total ballot cast in favour of the sale of Fonterra's global consumer and associated businesses, Fonterra said in a statement.

The total sale price is NZ\$4.2 billion (RM10 billion), after including the value of Bega Cheese licences worth NZ\$375 million, the company said.

Foreign Minister Winston Peters said the

vote meant "iconic" brands such as Anchor, Mainland and Kapiti were being sold off to the French firm.

"This is utter madness. It is economic self-sabotage," Peters said in a post on social media.

"This is an outrageous short-sighted sugar hit that is just giving away New Zealand's added value to a company from a major EU country."

Fonterra would lose the long-term security of its business, Peters warned.

"Three years after this deal starts, Lactalis can begin the three year notice to terminate the milk supply to these brands. Six years is

meaningless for a long-term exporter. When it's over, it really is over."

Fonterra chairman Peter McBride said the company was pleased to have received a "strong mandate" from the farmers who own the cooperative.

"We will be able to focus Fonterra's energy and efforts on where we do our best work. We will have a simplified and more focused business, the value of which cannot be overstated," he said.

Fonterra said it expected the deal to be completed in the first half of 2026 pending regulatory approvals and the process of separating the consumer operations from the rest of the coop. - AFP

French economy picks up pace despite political turmoil

PARIS: The French economy grew faster than expected in the third quarter despite a political crisis over the country's massive debt and deficit, official data showed yesterday.

Gross domestic product in the eurozone's second-largest economy grew by 0.5% between July and September compared to 0.3% growth in the previous quarter, according to data released by the INSEE statistics agency.

It was better than anticipated, with INSEE having forecast just 0.3% growth for the third quarter.

Finance Minister Roland Lescure said it was a "remarkable performance".

"Despite political upheavals and international uncertainties, our companies are investing, exporting, and are propelling the country," he said in a statement to AFP.

Despite an uncertain international environment and tensions with the United States under President Donald Trump, exports picked up in the third quarter, especially in the aeronautics field.

This overall quarter-on-quarter performance suggests the government could meet a desired goal of 0.7% year-on-year growth for this year.

The figures come as France's hung parliament is locked in debate over next year's budget, after the legislative chamber toppled two previous prime ministers over cost-cutting measures.

One sticking point is a wealth tax demanded by the Socialists, a swing group in the lower house, who have threatened to topple Prime Minister Sebastien Lecornu's Cabinet if their requests are not met. - AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: OCT 30

30-Oct-2025

Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

	Net (in RM million)	Participation
Retail	+29.05	17.3%
Institutions	+95.22	45.17%
Foreign	-124.27	37.53%

QR Code to register for i-to-i Coaching



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

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



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	12,051.30 -2.40
FBMKLCI	1,614.20 +2.66
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	534.19 +1.95
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	171.50 -0.67
CONSTRUCTION	314.79 -0.50
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,193.20 +23.65
ENERGY	768.43 -6.59
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	490.65 -0.79
HEALTH CARE	1,641.26 -3.64
TRANSPORTATION	1,008.41 -5.22
PROPERTY	1,034.50 -7.43
PLANTATION	8,020.17 +58.18
FBMSHA	12,125.10 -14.44
FBMACE	5,229.84 +4.28
TECHNOLOGY	63.08 -0.58

TURNOVER: 3.461 bil **VALUE: RM2.620 bil**

Bursa higher as investors digest corporate earnings

BURSA Malaysia closed slightly higher yesterday as investors digested corporate earnings releases and monitored regional market developments.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI added 2.66 points, or 0.17%, to 1,614.20 from Wednesday's close of 1,611.54.

The benchmark index opened 2.62 points higher at 1,614.16 and moved between 1,611.62 and 1,615.18 throughout the trading session.

Market breadth was negative with 607 losers trouncing 393 gainers, while 514 counters were unchanged, 1,196 untraded, and 101 suspended.

IPPPFA Sdn Bhd director of investment strategy and country economist Mohd Sedek Jantan said consumer and utilities counters led the gainers among key index constituents, reflecting continued optimism towards Malaysia's economic prospects and trade outlook.

Among heavyweights, Maybank and Tenaga Nasional rose two sen each to RM9.89 and RM13.32 respectively, Public Bank added three sen to RM4.22, while CIMB Group slipped seven sen to RM7.31, and IHH Healthcare eased five sen to RM8.20.

On the most actives list, Borneo Oil, Zetrix AI and TWL Holdings were all unchanged at half-a-sen, 81.5 sen, and 2.5 sen, respectively. Perak Transit eased two sen to 36.5 sen and Tanco added half-a-sen to 93 sen.

Top gainers included Nestle which surged RM1.30 to RM110.50, Chin Teck Plantations advanced 42 sen to RM11.74, LEAP Market debutant LPC Group soared 40 sen to 50 sen, and Petronas Dagangan climbed 38 sen to RM22.68.

Among the top losers, Malaysian Pacific Industries tumbled 86 sen to RM30.26, LTKM declined 12 sen to RM1.44, Oriental Holdings shed 10 sen to RM6.83, Heitech Padu slipped nine sen to RM1.91, and Southern Cable lost eight sen to RM2.04. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWLQ	0.090	+0.005	+5.88	2,777,219
HSI-CWKT	0.100	-0.015	-13.04	2,696,319
HSI-PWJY	0.120	+0.010	+9.09	2,289,335
HSI-CW18	0.115	-0.030	-20.69	1,988,208
BORNOIL	0.005	-	-	851,146
ZETRIX	0.815	-	-	735,994
PTRANS	0.365	-0.020	-5.20	719,000
TANCO	0.930	+0.005	+0.54	507,874
HSI-CWKL	0.090	-0.015	-14.29	504,413
TWL	0.025	-	-	476,807
TOPGLOV	0.635	-0.010	-1.55	425,775
IAB	0.710	+0.020	+2.90	265,686
SYSTECH	0.210	+0.005	+2.44	263,309
MEGAFB	0.810	-	-	246,340
ZETRIX-CAF	0.075	-	-	241,000
ZETRIX-CAC	0.050	-	-	240,000
SPSETIA	0.840	-0.040	-4.55	239,192
EKOVEST	0.350	-0.005	-1.41	217,751
CAPITALA	1.010	+0.010	+1.00	210,839
HENGYUAN-WA	0.205	+0.200	+4000.00	208,748



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	110.500	+1.300	2,509
CHINTEK	11.740	+0.420	594
LPCGRP	0.500	+0.400	1,020
PETDAG	22.680	+0.380	5,758
UTDPLT	24.640	+0.360	2,639
HENGYUAN-WA	0.205	+0.200	208,748
SPRITZER	3.010	+0.200	29,477
FAREAST	4.280	+0.180	9
GASMSIA	4.630	+0.140	5,456
KOBAY	1.470	+0.140	49,600
INFOM	1.530	+0.130	26,320
NSOP	5.500	+0.120	709
BAT	5.640	+0.110	2,674
ECOMATE	1.520	+0.110	17,115
AZAMJAYA	1.180	+0.100	22,818
HLBANK	20.800	+0.100	14,150
KGB	5.530	+0.100	36,897
KLK	20.880	+0.100	3,019
MCEMENT	6.850	+0.100	15,997
PPB	11.600	+0.100	4,544

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HENGYUAN-WA	0.205	+4000.00	208,748
LPCGRP	0.500	+400.00	1,020
COMFORT-WB	0.010	+100.00	1,014
HONGSENG	0.010	+100.00	16,424
SCBUILD	0.010	+100.00	1,594
TOPGLOV-C5F	0.010	+100.00	3,399
ECOSHOP-CH	0.015	+50.00	4,388
IJM-C1G	0.020	+33.33	12,500
PPB-CT	0.020	+33.33	5
SINARAN-WB	0.020	+33.33	1,220
YTLPOWER-C97	0.020	+33.33	501
IBHD	0.335	+26.42	159,168
ECOSHOP-CU	0.025	+25.00	1,004
HSI-PWJZ	0.025	+25.00	23,025
OCR-WE	0.025	+25.00	343
PLS-WA	0.100	+25.00	1
TRIVE	0.025	+25.00	17,885
PETDAG-C13	0.105	+23.53	9,404
MYTECH	0.350	+22.81	8,947
BAT-C37	0.115	+21.05	3,180

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	47,632.00	-74.37	-0.16
S&P 500 [US]	6,890.59	-0.3	0
NASDAQ [US]	23,958.47	130.98	0.55
NYSE [US]	21,525.93	-163.62	-0.75
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,704.04	-3.75	-0.07
FTSE 100 [UK]	9,708.01	-48.13	-0.49
DAX [GER]	24,155.07	30.86	0.13
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	51,325.61	17.96	0.04
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	3,300.79	22.55	0.69
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	26,282.69	-63.45	-0.24
CSI 300 [CHN]	4,709.91	-37.93	-0.8
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	230.07	1.28	0.56
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,986.90	-29.43	-0.73
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	4,086.89	5.74	0.14
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	84,487.20	-509.93	-0.6
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,885.50	-40.66	-0.46
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	9,178.93	-39.88	-0.43
FBM KLCI	1,614.20	2.66	0.17
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	4,434.54	-5.67	-0.13
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	60.12	-0.36	-0.6
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	64.53	-0.39	-0.6
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	3,996.90	-3.8	-0.09
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	47.96	0.04	0.11
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	1,615.55	20.6	1.29
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	521.05	-5.1	-0.97
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	11,183.50	145	1.31
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	430.75	-3.25	-0.75
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	526	-6.25	-1.17
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	49.53	-0.63	-1.26
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	6,044.00	42	0.7
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	173.6	-1.5	-0.86

As at 6pm, Oct 30.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MPI	30.260	-0.860	2,033
ORIENT	6.830	-0.300	1,036
HSI-PWNP	0.675	-0.175	5,202
IJM-C1Q	0.030	-0.120	3,000
LTKM	1.440	-0.120	100
HEIM	21.180	-0.100	1,145
HTPADU	1.910	-0.090	4,164
POPMART-C2	0.150	-0.090	4
SCGBHD-WA	1.760	-0.090	1,469
SCGBHD	2.040	-0.080	74,955
SUNWAY	5.400	-0.080	44,459
HSI-PWLN	0.400	-0.075	128
CIMB	7.310	-0.070	113,515
PICHEM	3.950	-0.070	28,923
VSTEC	3.990	-0.070	2,058
GAMUDA-C3K	0.195	-0.065	70
HSI-PWLL	0.075	-0.065	134
ALLIANZ	18.000	-0.060	262
F&N	28.340	-0.060	242
KIMLUN	1.320	-0.060	6,174

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
E&O-C20	0.005	-80.00	1
IJM-C1Q	0.030	-80.00	3,000
CYPARK-CM	0.020	-66.67	1,000
HIBISCS-C73	0.005	-50.00	1
SUPERMX-C4Y	0.005	-50.00	4,000
VS-C99	0.005	-50.00	2,000
HSI-PWLL	0.075	-46.43	134
NEXG-C69	0.055	-38.89	2,321
POPMART-C2	0.150	-37.50	4
TAFI-WA	0.045	-35.71	25
AHB-WC	0.010	-33.33	1,150
BPPAS-WA	0.020	-33.33	13
CTOS-C19	0.020	-33.33	2,000
DIALOG-C1W	0.010	-33.33	15,562
GCB-C27	0.010	-33.33	2,300
HSI-CW19	0.040	-33.33	1,000
KOSSAN-C82	0.010	-33.33	2,823
MTRONIC	0.010	-33.33	229
NATGATE-CT	0.010	-33.33	1,000
SG	0.010	-33.33	63

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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GoAsean BizMatch records RM150m in export sales

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), in collaboration with SME Corporation Malaysia (SME Corp Malaysia), recorded RM150.37 million in export sales through its International Sourcing Programme (INSP) recently.

The programme was part of the GoAsean BizMatch session, held in conjunction with the SME Venture@Asean 2025 exhibition at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre on Oct 17-18.

The initiative connected 31 international buyers from countries such as Cambodia, China, France, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Myanmar, the Philippines, Taiwan, Thailand, and Vietnam with over 200 Malaysian companies through more than 250 curated business meetings.

"The GoAsean BizMatch brought together Malaysian companies with buyers and industry stakeholders from across Asean, Asia, Europe, and Latin America, catalysing promising strategic partnerships across a broad spectrum of industries.

"Key sectors represented included aerospace and drones, electrical and electronics, oil and gas, medical devices, biotechnology, halal technology and smart agriculture, green economy, mobility, lifestyle and life sciences, and food and beverages," Matrade said in a statement yesterday.

The trade promotion agency said products and services sourced during the programme included aerospace, drones and robotics; railway technology, solutions and mechanical components; medical devices and equipment; machinery for food processing and packaging; and artificial intelligence and certification services. – Bernama

Ringgit's five-day rally ends after mixed signals from Fed

THE ringgit retreated against the US dollar at yesterday's close after a five-day rally as traders and investors locked in profits amid mixed signals from the US Federal Reserve (Fed) on the pace of future interest rate cuts.

At 6pm, the ringgit eased to 4.1935/1985 against the greenback from Wednesday's close of 4.1850/1900.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said although the Fed had delivered a 25-basis-point rate cut, the decision was not unanimous.

"One member voted to maintain the Fed Funds Rate, while another preferred a 50-basis-point reduction. It appears the ringgit has returned to its psychological level of RM4.20," he told Bernama.

He added that the precondition for further ringgit appreciation depends largely on how quickly the Fed proceeds with additional rate cuts.

At the closing, the ringgit traded higher against most major currencies.

It rose against the Japanese yen to 2.7266/7300 from 2.7493/7528 at Wednesday's close, strengthened against the British pound to 5.5304/5370 from 5.5326/5392 and climbed versus the euro to 4.8716/8774 from 4.8722/8780.

The local note also traded mostly higher against Asean currencies.

It improved against the Singapore dollar to 3.2285/2326 from 3.2324/2365 at Wednesday's close and inched up vis-a-vis the Thai baht to 12.9501/9723 from 12.9651/9858 but slipped against the Indonesian rupiah to 252.0/252.4 from 251.8/252.2, and was flat against the Philippine peso at 7.12/7.13 from 7.12/7.14 previously.

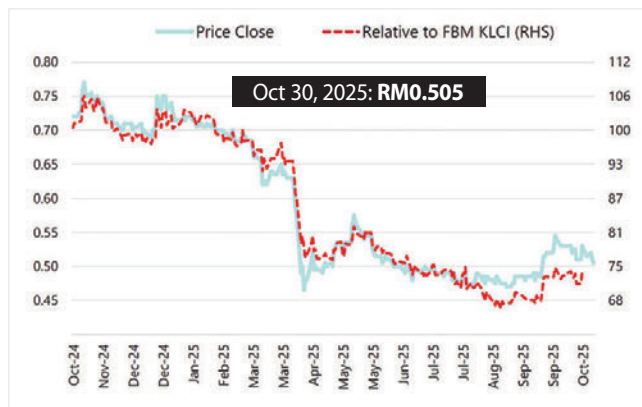
Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.2655	4.1185	4.1085
1 Australian Dollar	2.8190	2.7040	2.6880
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2850	3.1810	3.1730
1 Canadian Dollar	3.0540	2.9680	2.9560
1 Euro	4.9490	4.7880	4.7680
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.4670	2.3750	2.3590
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2850	3.1810	3.1730
1 Sterling Pound	5.6270	5.4470	5.4270
1 Swiss Franc	5.3590	5.1290	5.1140
100 UAE Dirham	117.2500	111.1300	110.9300
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.5430	3.3180	3.1180
100 Chinese Renminbi	60.3600	57.7900	N/A
100 Danish Krone	67.9300	62.4900	62.2900
100 Hongkong Dollar	55.3500	52.5800	52.3800
100 Indian Rupee	4.9000	4.5900	4.3900
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0265	0.0240	0.0190
100 Japanese Yen	2.8000	2.6980	2.6880
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	43.6900	40.1700	39.9700
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5400	1.4300	1.2300
100 Philippine Peso	7.3600	6.9300	6.7300
100 Qatar Riyal	118.0500	112.0600	111.8600
100 Saudi Riyal	114.7300	108.9100	108.7100
100 South Africa Rand	25.7100	23.2100	23.0100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4400	1.3200	1.1200
100 Swedish Krona	46.7100	42.5200	42.3200
100 Thai Baht	13.7400	12.1800	11.7800

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

TASCO Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM0.75



Source: Bloomberg

1H'26 core earnings came in below expectations, mainly due to a higher-than-expected effective tax rate (ETR) despite eligibility for the Integrated Logistics Services (ILS) incentive – this is coupled with weaker performances across TASCO's supply chain solutions (SCS), cold supply chain (CSC), and trucking divisions. The results underscore continued challenges in the transport & logistics sector amid muted trade volumes and lingering geopolitical headwinds that cloud near-term earnings visibility.

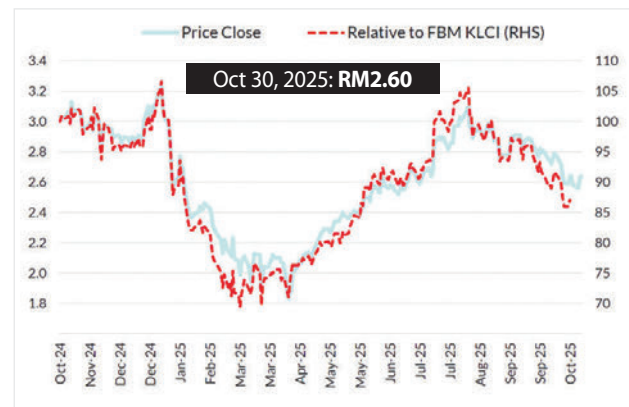
Q2'26 revenue rose 4% QoQ to RM231.6 million (-21.7% YoY), bringing 1H'26 revenue to RM454.2 million (-16.8% YoY). Core profit stood at RM8.9 million (-13.1% QoQ, -34.5% YoY) – this lifted 1H'26 core earnings to RM19.1 million (-22.6% YoY), which represents only 36-41% of our and consensus' full-year estimates, reflecting shortfalls in both tax and segmental margins. The ETR rose to 20.6% from 16.5% in 1H'25, while contributions from both international business solutions and domestic business solutions underperformed.

IBS recorded Q2'26 revenue of RM100.6 million (+1% QoQ, -28% YoY), with PBT at RM4.1 million (-47% QoQ, -30% YoY). For 1H'26, revenue fell 16% YoY, mainly dragged by weaker air freight forwarding (AFF) (-61% YoY) amid lower shipment volumes from key customers in the fast-moving consumer goods or FMCG, aerospace, and E&E sectors. Nonetheless, 1H'26 PBT rose 37% YoY, driven by stronger performances in AFF (+18% YoY), as air freight rates have been recovering since June, alongside stronger performances from the SCS division (+99% YoY).

Buy with RM0.75 TP. – RHB Research, Oct 30

IJM Corp Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM3.62



Source: Bloomberg

IJM Corp has secured a RM874 million job from Pearl Computing Malaysia for mechanical and electrical (M&E) fit-out works for a hyperscale data centre (DC) at Elmina Business Park (EBP). This award follows IJM's earlier announcement on Oct 23, about the RM1.3 billion core-and-shell package awarded by a subsidiary of Sime Darby Property – both form part of the same hyperscale DC in EBP.

The M&E scope covers the supply and installation of mechanical, electrical, security and telecommunication systems, together with the coordination, commissioning and integration of all related systems and owner-furnished equipment. Works are scheduled to begin in Q3'26, and targeted for completion in Q1'28. We expect the job's PBT margin to be 5-8%. Assuming a construction cost of RM25 million per MW, this DC worth RM2.1 billion could have a capacity of 84MW.

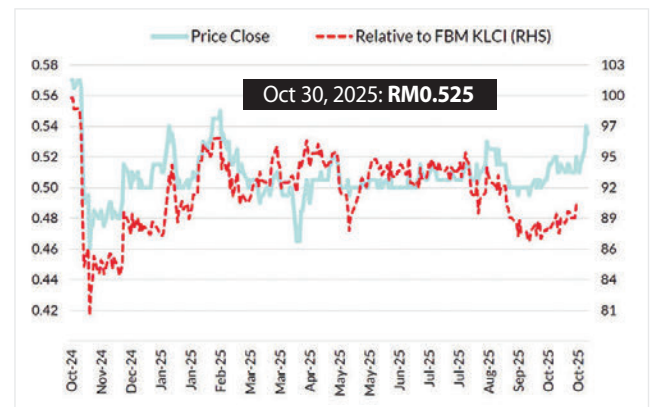
Including this latest win, IJM has secured a total of about RM4.4 billion (based on effective share) worth of DC jobs. The latest one brings the total value of DC jobs won so far to RM5.1 billion (our FY26 assumption: RM6 billion). As such, its total domestic outstanding orderbook is now at about RM8.2 billion (per our estimate). Based on our analysis, DC jobs now make up around RM3.7 billion or 45% of IJM's domestic outstanding orderbook.

We understand that IJM has submitted about 4-6 bids for DC jobs across the Klang Valley and Johor in CY25. Telekom Malaysia's DC in Iskandar Puteri (which IJM is constructing) had a topping out ceremony in July – indicating that its progress has reached the point of meaningful completion.

Buy with RM3.62 TP. – RHB Research, Oct 30

DXN Holdings Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM0.70



Source: Bloomberg

DXN'S 1H'26 results missed forecasts due to unfavourable FX movements that masked the underlying growth of its key markets.

1H'26 net profit of RM144 million (-5% YoY) accounted for only 40% of our full-year forecast due to unfavourable FX trends – the currencies of its key overseas markets depreciated against the MYR. Post-results, we cut FY26-28 earnings by 14%, 13% and 13% after adjusting our growth assumptions.

YoY, 1H'26 revenue was flattish at RM960 million due to unfavourable currency translation effects arising from the depreciation of foreign currencies against the MYR, which masked the solid underlying growth. The like-for-like growth in local currency terms for key markets including Peru, Bolivia, Mexico, India, Turkey, and Mongolia range between 2% and 44%. Meanwhile, 1H'26 EBITDA tracked the topline trend – slipping by 1% to RM276 million but net profit decreased by 5% to RM144 million on higher finance costs and ETR. The group declared a DPS of 0.8 sen in Q2'26, bringing 1H'26 DPS to 1.7 sen (1H'25: 1.7 sen), representing a payout ratio of 59% (1H'25: 56%).

DXN's earnings growth will be supported by the relentless growth momentum in major markets. The core strategies to recruit new members and enhance the members' productivity will continue to revolve around member engagement, complemented by launches of new quality products. Meanwhile, continuous capacity expansion will help to capture the rising demand, while rolling out new product categories to broaden the addressable markets.

Buy with RM0.70 TP. – RHB Research, Oct 30



Straits House.



Penang House.

Dwelling in simple beauty

Temple Tree Resort, Langkawi revives charm of heritage homes

THE creak of wooden floors, the play of coloured windows and the spacious verandahs of century-old Malay heritage homes – all set against the lush tropical beauty of Langkawi – evoke a vivid nostalgia of village life lovingly preserved in time.

Just minutes away from the bustling tourist hub of Pantai Chenang, Temple Tree Resort Langkawi offers an immersive experience that celebrates Malaysia's architectural heritage, now reborn as a collection of luxury stays steeped in history and soul.

What makes this place truly special is that the eight heritage houses here are not replicas. Each is an original structure, carefully relocated from various states across Peninsular Malaysia, meticulously restored and reassembled piece by piece on this island of legends.

Temple Tree Resort manager Irene Vairo said the property showcases wooden heritage homes from states such as Kedah, Perak, Penang and Negeri Sembilan, creating a one-of-a-kind attraction for guests seeking authenticity.

"To preserve the uniqueness of each house, every single panel, joint and wooden beam was dismantled and reconstructed with care, ensuring that the texture,

structure and character of the original design remain intact," she said.

At the entrance stands the elegant Ipoh House, a 120-year-old building that serves as the resort's reception area and houses the Paloh Restaurant & Bar.

Meanwhile, Johor House, brought from Batu Pahat, stands out with its bold pink facade and touches of Taiwanese design – a reflection of its Chinese farmstead origins and one of the most distinctive homes on the property.

The Colonial House from George Town, Penang displays the graceful symmetry and ornate carvings that blend Eastern and Western influences – a legacy of Arab goldsmith craftsmanship from the 1920s that exudes timeless colonial elegance.

From Ipoh comes Estate House, once home to plantation workers in the early 20th century, featuring terracotta floors and solid timber frames that speak to its humble beginnings. Next door, the Plantation House showcases the fine detailing of two-storey traditional Malay artisanship.

Penang House, said Vairo, reflects 131 years of architectural evolution under British influence, combining local, Chinese, Indian and Islamic elements that give it its distinct character.

The Negeri Sembilan House enchants visitors with its coloured glass windows and expansive front porch, capturing the cultural warmth of a traditional home while offering the comfort of a modern suite.

Another gem, the Straits House, once known as Bahagia and built in



Johor House interior.



Negeri Sembilan House.

the 1920s by a Eurasian family on York Road, Penang, now shines with airy interiors, a private pool and ensuite bathrooms – the epitome of tropical sophistication.

Each home has its own story – once belonging to aristocrats, plantation families or fishermen – before finding new life in this serene island setting.

"The goal of the restoration was to breathe life back into each house, allowing guests to feel the peace and spirit embedded in these historic wooden structures.

"Even the creaking of the

floorboards is not seen as decay – it's the rhythm of time, reminding us of a simpler life that found beauty in stillness," said Vairo.

While the original architecture is faithfully preserved, guests still enjoy modern comforts such as plush bedding, air conditioning and Wi-Fi – a seamless blend of the past and the present.

Adding to the charm, a colony of friendly cats roams freely around the grounds, lending warmth and companionship to this tranquil sanctuary that connects heritage with modern living. – Bernama

TransNusa's Jakarta-Penang flights start Nov 24

THE Penang government has received notification from TransNusa Aviation of a new direct flight between Jakarta's Soekarno Hatta International Airport and Penang International Airport, starting Nov 24.

State Tourism and Creative Economy Committee chairman Wong Hon Wai said TransNusa's first-ever route to Penang aligns perfectly with Malaysia's preparations for Visit Malaysia 2026, reflecting the state's ongoing commitment and readiness to welcome more international travellers.

"The launch of this new route adds another vital link between Penang and Indonesia,

strengthening regional air connectivity and fostering closer people-to-people and cultural ties," he said in a statement.

The Jakarta-Penang flight, operating under flight code 8B-633, will depart Soekarno-Hatta International Airport at 5.30am (Jakarta time) and arrive at Penang International Airport at 9am (Malaysia time).

The service will initially operate three times weekly (Monday, Wednesday and Friday) before increasing to daily service from December. Meanwhile, the return flight 8B-632 will depart Penang at 9.30am and arrive in Jakarta at

10.55am following the same frequency schedule.

Elaborating further, Wong emphasised that the timing is opportune, given Penang's positioning in the upcoming Visit Malaysia 2026 and the Malaysia Year of Medical Tourism 2026.

He said according to the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council, Penang remains Malaysia's most successful medical tourism destination, contributing about 45% of the nation's total healthcare travel revenue.

He noted that Indonesia has consistently been Malaysia's largest source market for medical tourism,

accounting for about 65.8% of national medical tourism revenue, and up to 90% of healthcare travel receipts in northern Malaysia are from Indonesian visitors.

"Beyond the healthcare segment, Indonesia has also long remained Penang's top international arrival because from January to September 2025, Penang welcomed 284,364 Indonesian visitors arriving via international flights, a 2.5% increase compared to 277,533 in the same period last year.

"In this context, the launch of TransNusa's direct Jakarta-Penang route perfectly meets market demand," he said. – Bernama

BRIEFS

VIETJET LAUNCHES NEW DIRECT KL-DA NANG FLIGHT

Vietjet has launched a new direct service between Kuala Lumpur and Da Nang, which operates with daily round-trips, offering passengers flexible travel times and seamless connections across Vietjet's network. This marks Vietjet's third connection between Malaysia and Vietnam, complementing its existing services from Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City to Kuala Lumpur. With this addition, Vietjet now operates 42 weekly flights between both countries. Located on Vietnam's central coast, Da Nang is renowned for its beautiful beaches, vibrant culinary scene and proximity to Unesco World Heritage sites such as the Hoi An Ancient Town and Hue Imperial City. Vietjet is offering limited promotional fares for its Malaysia-Vietnam flights, from just RM166 all-in (taxes and fees included) one way, every Friday.

SCOOT TOUCHES DOWN IN KOTA BHARU

Scout, the low-cost subsidiary of Singapore Airlines, has commenced flight services to Kota Bharu. With the addition of Kota Bharu, Scout now operates to 12 destinations across Malaysia, including Ipoh, Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Lumpur, Kuching, Kuantan, Langkawi, Malacca, Miri, Penang, Sibu and Subang. Scout will operate twice weekly flights between Kota Bharu and Singapore on the Embraer E190-E2 aircraft. Designed for added comfort, the 112-seater aircraft features a 2-2 single-class configuration, quieter engines and larger cabin windows. One-way economy class fares from Kota Bharu to Singapore start from RM125, inclusive of taxes.

AIRASIA X CELEBRATES 18 YEARS WITH SPECIAL BIRTHDAY SALE

AirAsia X (AAX) is marking its upcoming 18th anniversary with a special birthday sale. From now until AAX's birthday on Sunday, fares to all of the airline's routes are on sale starting from RM338 for travel until Nov 30, 2026. Fly affordably to Taipei, Beijing, Sydney, Tokyo, Seoul, Almaty as well as to AAX's newest ventures Tashkent and Istanbul, whilst enjoying an additional 18% off on Value Pack bookings which includes meals, travel insurance, seat selection and more. AAX has launched several new routes in the past two years, including to Almaty, Kazakhstan, which marked its first venture into Central Asia, followed by Tashkent, Uzbekistan and Istanbul, Turkiye.

INAUGURAL QUANZHOU-KL FLIGHT ENHANCES TOURISM

Xiamen Airlines has launched its inaugural direct flight connecting Quanzhou and Kuala Lumpur. Quanzhou is a city renowned as the starting point of the ancient Maritime Silk Road. Operating four times a week with a Boeing 738 aircraft, the route connects Quanzhou Jinjiang International Airport to KLIA Terminal 1, accommodating 169 passengers per flight – eight in business class and 161 in economy class. This reflects a significant step forward in enhancing air connectivity between Malaysia and southern China, fostering deeper bilateral cooperation and driving growth in tourism, trade and cultural exchange.



Experience wonders of Istanbul

➤ Guide for 48-hour adventure in city

ISTANBUL tops many travel bucket lists for its rich heritage, vibrant cultural scene, unique experiences, delicious cuisine, lively nightlife and diverse shopping.

Bridging East and West, the city is also a major global transit hub. In 2024, Istanbul's two international airports – Istanbul Airport and Sabiha Gokcen Airport – served around 40.5 million transfer passengers. If you are among them and have a layover to spare, here is how to experience the best of Istanbul in just 48 hours.

Day 1: Experience deep in historical marvels

➤ Morning: Journey to heart of history

Begin your day the Turkish way with a hearty breakfast before exploring the Historic Peninsula, the city's heritage heart. Start at the Hippodrome, now Sultanahmet Square, for a glimpse into Istanbul's storied past. Admire Hagia Sophia's architectural grandeur, then visit the iconic Blue Mosque, renowned for its blue Iznik tiles and serene atmosphere. Nearby, descend into the mysterious Basilica Cistern, where echoes of history ripple beneath your feet. After a morning of exploration, enjoy *sultanahmet koftesi*, the city's famed grilled meatballs.

➤ Afternoon: Palaces and empires
Visit Topkapi Palace, once the administrative heart of the Ottoman Empire. Be sure to see the Holy Relics Room, imperial kitchens and the harem, where sultans lived in lavish seclusion. Alternatively, explore the Istanbul Archaeology Museums, Turkiye's first museum complex, showcasing remarkable artefacts such as the Treaty of Kadesh, the Alexander Sarcophagus and the Ishtar Gate. During summer, the museums stay open until 10pm under the Night Museums Project, offering a cooler and quieter evening experience.

➤ Evening: Markets, flavours and sunset views

A trip to Istanbul would not be complete without getting lost in the magic of the city's legendary bazaars. With over 4,000 shops, the Grand Bazaar is a labyrinth of handcrafted



A bird's eye view of Istanbul.



Hagia Sophia.



Blue Mosque.



Interior of Topkapi Palace.

treasures, textiles and timeless souvenirs. If you are not tired, then walk down to the Spice Bazaar, where colourful spices, Turkish delights and dried fruits offer a fragrant finale to your shopping spree. As the sun begins to set, choose one of the city's fantastic terraces or rooftops and toast the city's vibrant spirit with a glass of Turkish wine.

Day 2: Where Bosphorus meets lively neighbourhoods

➤ Morning: Fantastic views and chic port

Begin your second day with a crispy *simit* and Turkish tea in Karakoy before strolling across to Galataport, the city's vibrant waterfront. More than a cruise terminal, it is a lively cultural hub filled with galleries, restaurants, cafes and boutique

shops. Enjoy a walk along the Bosphorus promenade and a coffee at a stylish cafe, then explore the Tophane Clock Tower and visit the award-winning Istanbul Museum of Modern Art and the distinguished Museum of Painting and Sculpture nearby.

➤ Afternoon: Soulful locales, Bosphorus tours

Next, take the historic Tunnel – Turkiye's first underground rail system and the world's second oldest – from Karakoy to Istiklal Street. Climb the Galata Tower for stunning panoramic views – it stays open until 11pm in summer if you want to see the city illuminated. Stroll along lively Istiklal Street, where the red tram passes historic passages, boutiques, galleries and restaurants. Savour homely Turkish dishes at a

lokanta or sample local favourites such as stuffed mussels, *balik ekmek* (fish sandwiches) and pickle juice at the bustling Beyoglu Fish Market.

Then, head to Besiktas for a short Bosphorus cruise – a great way to admire the city's grandeur while gliding past Ottoman mansions and iconic landmarks along the waterfront.

➤ Evening: Dine across city views
End your day with a sumptuous dinner at one of Istanbul's Michelin-starred restaurants. The city's dining scene is as diverse as its culture, offering creative takes on Anatolian cuisine, seasonal dishes featuring local ingredients, and exceptional global or vegetarian menus. As night falls, begin dreaming of your next Istanbul adventure.



Female impala grazing among dry scrub at the conservancy.



A Maasai woman milks her community's cows at dawn at one of the settlement areas for community residents at the conservancy.



A tourist vehicle drives past a road sign advertising the conservancy. – ALL PICS FROM AFP

AT dawn in a village in Kenya's Maasai Mara wilderness, zebras rouse themselves and head away from the huts where they like to sleep as protection from lions.

Bernard Kirokor, 21, recounts watching an elephant give birth across from his village a few days earlier, showing a video of the mother protecting the newborn, its trunk poking up like a periscope to sniff for danger.

"The wildlife are our neighbours and we love them," he said, as the villagers milked the herd of cattle gathered around their huts.

The village lies in the Nashulai conservancy, which prides itself on how the local Maasai community and their cattle continue to live alongside the lions, elephants and giraffes for which the region is world-famous.

Community conservancies emerged in the 2000s to protect wildlife corridors, with locals pooling their individual plots and pulling down fences so animals could roam freely.

To make it pay, locals often leased their land to tourist companies and moved away.

Nashulai, which means "co-existence" in the local Maa language, was founded in 2016 with a determination to keep its 6,000 people in the conservancy.

It prides itself on being the first that was formed, owned and managed by local Maasai without help from an outside tourism company.

"We don't want to create conservation refugees. The Maasai have lived with the wildlife for the longest time possible. Why do we have to move them because of conservation?" Nashulai's conservation manager Evelyn Aiko said.

Nashulai earns money through a college in the conservancy, training locals to become rangers and tour guides, and study programmes

Co-existing with nature

➤ Kenya conservation areas evolve to keep Maasai, wildlife together



Giraffe at the Nashulai Maasai Conservancy, which is located in the Masai Mara – Serengeti ecosystem in Narok County.

Common zebra at the conservancy.

with universities.

Its model has earned international recognition, including the United Nations Development Programme's Equator Prize in 2020 and a Collective Action Award from the Rights and Resources Initiative this year.

Connectedness

The system of conservancies has changed radically over the past decade, with almost all now embracing the idea that people should stay living in them, albeit with limits on development.

"A lot has changed in how they are governed," said Eric Ole Reson, chief programmes officer at the Maasai Mara Wildlife



Conservancies Association.

"As we extended into more areas, with more settlements, we could not keep moving people," he said.

This was important in Nashulai from the start.

"There was a present and clear danger of losing the cultural

connectedness to the land... which contains all our stories for living, this land where the bones of our ancestors are buried," said founder Nelson Ole Reiyia.

Nashulai is run by a council of elders who decide on grazing and conservation areas.

"It revives their old tradition of stewardship and their connectedness to the land and the wildlife. It has really given them a lot of pride," said Ole Reiyia.

Lacking commercial tourism investors, Nashulai relies on donors for more than half its funding and faces many pressures.

One is climate change, as unpredictable rains make it hard to plan cattle-grazing and keep the area habitable for wildlife. The team is responding with regenerative programmes such as tree-planting.

The other threat is wealthy tourism operators next door. Last year, a fifth of Nashulai's landowners were enticed into leasing their plots to tourist camps and moving away.

'Not one-way'

But Maasai landowners across the region now play a very active role in managing conservancies across the region, sitting on joint boards with the tourism companies.

"It's not a one-way system where someone dictates the payments. These negotiations go on for years and then they get renegotiated. If people aren't happy they'll tell you about it," said an expert who has helped negotiate the deals, but requested anonymity due to the sensitivity of the subject.

Many Maasai landowners have signed new leases in the last couple of years as the original deals expired, he said, so "clearly many people feel they have benefitted". – AFP

Travel agency unveils plan for 60-minute Tokyo-US space travel

A JAPANESE travel agency recently announced that it will launch a point-to-point transport service in the 2030s, which could connect Tokyo and US cities such as New York in just 60 minutes via outer space.

According to Kyodo news, Nippon Travel Agency Co plans to offer the service in partnership with a reusable rocket development startup, with a round trip expected to cost around 100 million yen (RM2.7 million) per customer.

The transport vehicle would

be launched from an offshore site and could connect any two points on Earth within an hour, according to the companies. They hope to link Tokyo and the US initially.

"We hope this business will be a new starting point to connect space travel and tourism," Nippon Travel president Keigo Yoshida said at a news conference in Tokyo.

Advance applications will be accepted starting in fiscal 2026.

The project will proceed in stages, beginning with

space-food tastings and tours of ground facilities related to space in fiscal 2026, followed by a service in the 2040s that will offer stays in orbit.

Under the partnership, Nippon Travel will design and market related products. Kojiro Hatada, president of the Tokyo-based startup Innovative Space Carrier Inc, said his company aims to reduce travel costs by increasing the number of flights each vehicle can make in its lifespan. – Bernama-Kyodo

Japanese film about man-eating bear delayed after deadly attacks

A recent string of deadly bear attacks has prompted Japanese filmmakers to postpone the release of a gory horror movie with the same theme.

Bears have killed at least nine people in Japan so far this year, an unwanted record that the government has described as a "serious problem".

The film, titled *Brown Bear!* and featuring depictions of an animal "attacking and eating" humans, was initially set to hit cinemas next month.

Producers announced that the release would be delayed, adding that they "take seriously the fact that there have been a series of real-life attacks" in the country.

Bears have been increasingly encroaching into towns due to factors

including a declining human population and climate change.

The film tells the story of a desperate university student applying for a shady part-time job that takes him deep into the woods where he encounters a ravenous, man-eating bear.

The producers said their gruesome portrayals of bear attacks were not gratuitous violence but a form of artistic expression "inherent to a monster thriller".

Nonetheless, "we will be considerate toward our real-life situation and make sure to create a screening environment where viewers can feel safe and fully immersed", they said in a statement. – AFP



Album artwork.

NEXT-GEN global girl group A2O May is making a bold return with its first album *Paparazzi Arrive*, anchored by its title track, a bold showcase of A2O May's "Zalpha Pop".

The 14-track release not only introduces A2O Entertainment's original genre "Zalpha Pop" – a fusion of Gen Z and Gen Alpha influences – but also showcases the group's versatility through a dynamic mix of pre-debut songs, unit performances and solo tracks.

Earlier this year, the quintet captured international attention as the first Chinese idol group to perform at iHeartRadio's renowned Wango Tango festival, marking its US stage debut and an American television appearance on KTLA.

Built on a striking siren-like synth riff and dubstep-inspired electro beats, the song *Paparazzi Arrive* delivers a message of confidence and ambition through the group's dynamic vocals. The project also includes its pre-debut single *Under My Skin (A2O)*, the bass-driven *B.B.B.*, the performance-focused *Boss* and the soulful R&B track *Melody*, reflecting the group's versatility and musical range.

The release highlights individual members through solo and unit tracks. Mische & Kat present *Sweat*, a Latin-inspired song available in English and Spanish. Chenyu delivers emotional depth in *Someone You Loved*. Quchang showcases her powerful range in *Black Sheep* and *Shijie* as well as a smooth R&B flair with *Trip*.

To extend its global reach, the title track also appears in English and Chinese versions, positioning A2O May as a rising force with international ambitions.

In a few short months, A2O May has broken records and defied expectations in the US. Its pre-debut single *Under My Skin* made it the first Chinese group to enter the US Top 40 Radio Chart, where it remained for two consecutive weeks. Its official debut single *Boss* has now charted five consecutive weeks – rising from number 35 to number 32 – marking its second US Top 40 entry and the highest charting



Hailing from Shanghai, Suzhou and Hawaii, A2O May is a multicultural, bilingual group fluent in Chinese and English, representing a new generation of global idols.

Rise of new age music

➤ A2O May defines 'Zalpha pop' with debut album *Paparazzi Arrive*



Each member brings a unique artistic identity shaped by passions such as fashion styling, piano, visual art, songwriting and performance. – PICS FROM A2O ENTERTAINMENT

placement in history by a Chinese girl group. The track has also amassed over 30 million views across Weibo and YouTube, fuelled by the viral "Jump Rope Dance" featured in its chorus. With growing traction across Asia and North America, A2O May is fast emerging as a leading powerhouse in global pop.

Backed by K-pop pioneer Lee Soo Man and launched under A2O Entertainment, A2O May is the first group to embody "Zalpha Pop". Its music fuses futuristic production with emotionally resonant storytelling, creating cultural bridges through sound and style.

Highlighting its unprecedented debut, the group attended the star-studded Amazon Studios' *Lee Soo Man: King of K-Pop* premiere in Los Angeles, the feature documentary chronicling the enthralling life of a bold visionary.

The red carpet sparked with icons such as Girls' Generation members and Taemin from SHINee, sharing the spotlight with the rising group primed for global dominance. A2O May made its debut on Dec 20, 2024.

Owls Woods Graves blurs black metal, punk once more

ALBUM REVIEW

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

FORMED by The Fall/Michal Stepien with E.V.T./Piotr Dziemski, Owls Woods Graves burst out of the Polish metal scene with a relatively decent self-titled EP in 2016. Three years later, the band dropped its first full length album *Citizenship of the Abyss*.

An impressive crossover of black metal and punk, the album saw the duo come into its own, shedding how were previously seen merely as the masked live bassist and guitarist for Mglá, one of Poland's biggest black metal bands.

History once again repeats itself with Owls Woods Graves's latest album *Strix*. Easily reaching the heights of *Citizenship of the Abyss* and *Secret Spies of the Horned Patrician* that released in between, *Strix* is a great, rip-roaring album filled front to back with riffs drenched in black metal and punk.

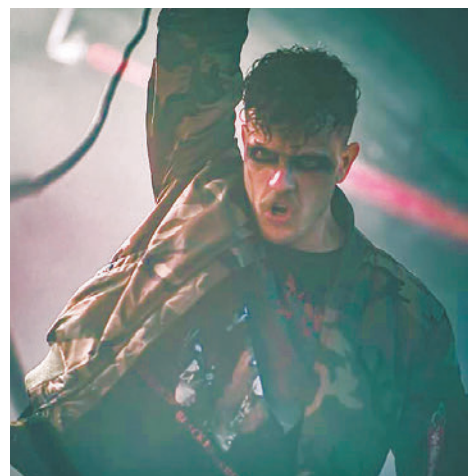
Having said that, in the Venn diagram where black metal and punk as subgenres intersect,

there exists an even smaller circle dead centre of it. A colourless, lightless realm where subgenres lose meaning, *Strix* sits upon the throne in the maw of this abyss.

Ravenous dissonance becomes ghoulish design

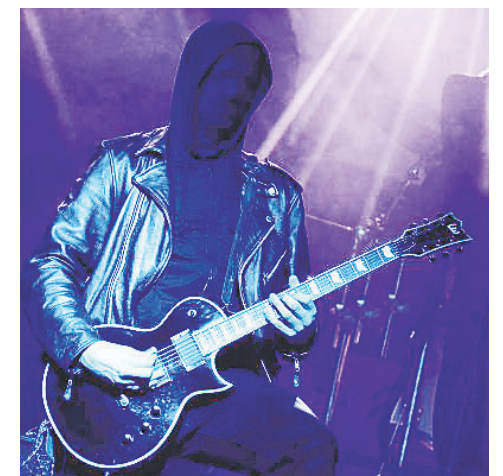
In black metal, song structures are unconventional and typically deviates from the standard verse-to-chorus-to-verse compositions. It is one of the many defining aspects of the subgenre. *Strix* pushes this to the limit, particularly with how often it crosses black metal into punk and vice versa, making the album and the songs in it impossible to classify, but there is a clear pattern of there being more blackened punk than standard black metal punk songs.

Songs such as *Anarcho-Occultism*, *Black Flame in Our Hearts* and *Say No to Heaven* even seem to be inspired by Oi! subpunk rock. The remaining few, such as *They Come Again*, *The Cliff Dance* and *Winged They Come* hew closest to black metal punk with all the tremolo picking and blast beats. However, none of these are a complaint. Each of Owls Woods Graves two previous albums demonstrated distinct identities of their own and



Stepien displays a more dynamic vocal range in *Strix* as the band's lead vocalist. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @PROPHETOTHEWINTER

Strix is no different. It is different from *Citizenship of the Abyss* and *Secret Spies of the Horned Patrician*, certainly, but



Dziemski as he would appear for Mglá's live performances.

– PIC FROM METAL ARCHIVES

Strix still scratches the itch for that weird, flexible crossover of black metal and punk distinct to the band.

BY ASHIQIN AHMAD

FANS were instantly transported back to Malaysia's 90s pop rock era at the Spider Unplugged concert, held at Megastar Arena Kuala Lumpur last Saturday.

The night carried a strong wave of nostalgia as the beloved local band revisited the raw, emotional energy that once defined an entire generation's playlist. From the moment the lights dimmed, the crowd erupted, all ready to relive their youth through music that once dominated radio airwaves and school corridors.

With grunge-inspired visuals and minimalist stage decor, the concert's atmosphere paid homage to a time when music was simple, loud and real.

The stripped-down setting allowed fans to focus on the band's musical chemistry and vocals, rather than spectacle, bringing an authentic unplugged feel that matched Spider's down-to-earth charm.

As frontman Tam Spider took the stage, his unmistakable voice filled the room with the same melancholic grit fans fell in love with decades ago. Backed by the rest of the band, Aie, Iss and Pown, they set the stage ablaze with 24 songs, including fan favourites *Kacap Terlabik*, *Telinga Ke Tulang*, *Mabok*, *Ngam Ho* and

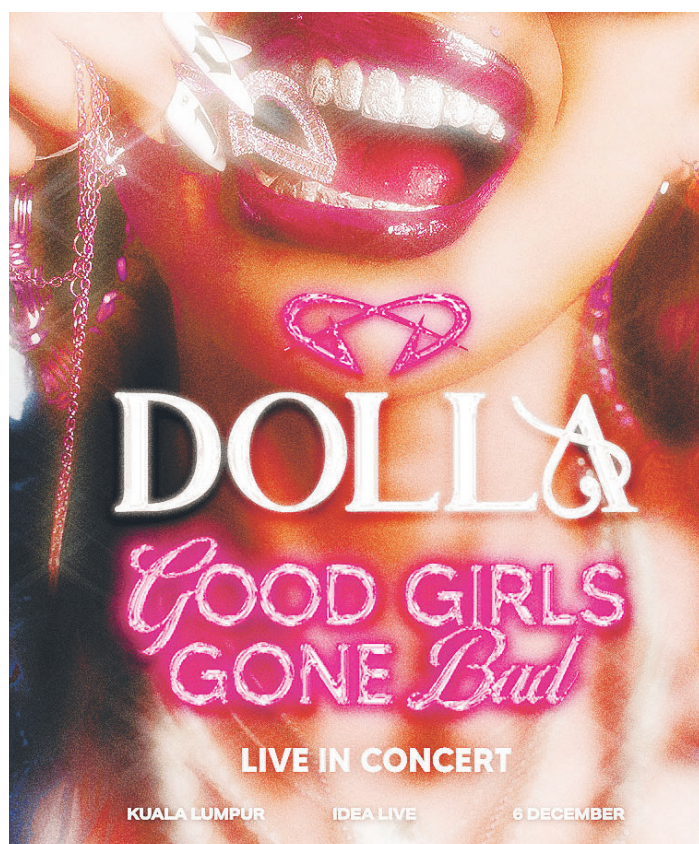


Spider relives its glory days with fans at the concert.



Band member Pown jamming on the guitar.

Grunge nostalgia with Spider Unplugged



The concert will be held on Dec 6 at Idea Live Arena.

Dolla 'Good Girls Gone Bad' concert tickets out now

MALAYSIAN girl group Dolla will take the stage for its Good Girls Gone Bad concert on Dec 6, marking its latest full-scale live performance.

The show, which will be held at Idea Live Arena, is expected to feature new choreography, fresh arrangements and fan interactions that reflect the group's continued growth.

Tickets are now available through AirAsia's Movetix, with two main categories offered to fans. The iDolla VIP (standing) ticket, priced at RM258, includes a

group photo, access to the pre-show soundcheck, a send-off event and exclusive merchandise such as a lanyard and photo card.

VIP ticket holders will also be entered into a priority access draw and receive limited-edition collectibles. The MWA! (standing) ticket, priced at RM138, offers similar perks including the limited-edition items and access to the same draw.

Buyers are also eligible for travel discounts when booking flights and hotels through the AirAsia Move app.

► Concert harks back to 90s pop rock era

Lauku Cukup Masin, instantly sparking singalongs from start to finish.

The energy built steadily as Spider transitioned into its timeless hits, including *Aladin*, *Cinta Dewa Dewi*, *Nazraku*, *Relaku Pujuk* and *Kasih Latifah*. Each performance was met with cheers, claps and even a few tears from fans who have grown up with the band's heartfelt lyrics and distinctive sound.

Between songs, Tam shared anecdotes and memories from the band's journey - moments of humour, reflection and gratitude that deepened the sense of connection with the audience. The relaxed setup of the concert allowed these interactions to shine, creating an intimate experience reminiscent of a jam session among old friends.

While the night celebrated Spider's legacy, it also highlighted how its music continues to resonate with longtime followers and new listeners. Their ability to blend rock energy with relatable storytelling remains a defining quality of Malaysian pop-rock, especially in a landscape where nostalgia and authenticity are once again finding



Tam reminisces about the golden days with fans.



The crowd erupts as the band plays classic, nostalgic hits.



Tam signing fans' phones at the end of the concert.

their place.

With the band's signature blend of grunge attitude and emotional

sincerity, Spider proved that true classics never fade, they only grow stronger with time.



The band taking a group photo at the end of concert with fans.

EVENTS LISTING



KS Chithra and the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra
Date: Nov 29
Time: 8pm
Venue: Petronas Philharmonic Hall, KLCC
Entry fee: RM288-RM1,599

Known as “The Golden Voice of India”, Chithra will take centrestage and dazzle the audience with orchestral interpretations from iconic films. Her soulful vocals will be complemented with the grand sounds of the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra with its versatility, promising an unforgettable fusion of Indian melodies and symphonic brilliance.



Sports & Mental Health Summit 2025
Date: Until Nov 2
Venue: Pavilion Bukit Jalil

A first-of-its-kind event dedicated to advocate for the power of sport, physical activity and movement to combat Malaysia’s growing mental health challenges, particularly among children and youth.



The City of Willows
Date: Until Dec 7
Time: 12pm to 7pm, every Friday to Sunday
Venue: Cultprint, George Town, Penang
Entry fee: Free

The exhibition centres around *The City of Willows (2025)*, a playable game developed by Chong Yan Chuah and Simon Soon. The work reimagines the rituals of Chinese secret societies, or triads, that flourished in the Malay archipelago during the 19th century. Rooted in histories of mutual aid and brotherhood among Chinese migrants, the game transforms the traditional triad initiation ceremony into a cosmological landscape.



A4 Art Fair 2025
Date: Until Nov 2
Time: 11am to 8pm
Venue: GMBB, Bukit Bintang
Entry fee: RM15-RM28, Conference and two-day access RM88

Themed “The Art of Everything”, this reimagined art fair explores how creativity moves through art, craft, culture and everyday living. Featuring more than 90 artists, artisans and designers from Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, Taiwan, US and Argentina, the fair unfolds across six experiential segments, inviting visitors to experience creativity through new lenses.



World of Smooth 2025
Date: Until November
Venue: Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Malacca, Johor

A nationwide celebration of Malaysia’s fiery food culture paired with the smoothest beer in town. Until November, fans of Carlsberg can expect one-of-a-kind experiences, from flavourful food trails to music-fuelled alleyway takeovers that turn everyday hangouts into smooth and unforgettable moments.



Scaled Down: Small Works with Big Stories
Date: Nov 1 to 9
Venue: YAS House, Kuala Lumpur

An exhibition grounded in the belief that limitation can sharpen clarity. The show explores how artists, when working within a smaller format, often produce works that are more focused, refined and deliberate.



Nature in Exile 2.0
Date: Until Nov 16
Time: 2pm to 6pm
Venue: Centre of Photographic Arts - Kokopelli Templar
Entry fee: RM30-RM100

The works are an allegory of nature that is visually captivating and thought-provoking. Francois Bancon’s images transcend reality into an unexpected brew of thoughts and emotions, designed to steer audiences from the comfortable domains of what is conventionally beautiful to a space for self-question, doubt and ultimately our own truth.



Beyond Pink Charity Walk & Wellness Fest 2025
Date: Nov 16
Time: 7am
Venue: Gurney Walk, Penang
Entry fee: Registration RM50 per pax, RM40 per pax for group of 10

A community-driven event that promotes cancer prevention, education and early detection, while uniting Penangites through wellness, fitness and compassion. All proceeds will benefit Mount Miriam Cancer Hospital and the Penang Hospice Society.



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- Assist the IT team in delivering effective support and services across the group.
- Develop, implement, and manage IT strategy, infrastructure, and operations.
- Provide technical support and resolve hardware and software issues.
- Monitor system and website performance, ensuring data security and integrity.
- Undertake any other assignments as directed by management.

Requirements:

- Diploma/Bachelor's degree in Information Technology or related field.
- Asst Manager/Manager: Minimum 5+ years' working experience in IT, with proven leadership or supervisory skills.
- Executive/Senior: Minimum 1+ years' working experience in IT.
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LOST CERTIFICATES

The following Share Certificates have been reported lost or destroyed

Certificate No	Name	No Of Share
20123 - 20124	LAM SOON (M) BHD TAN AH HUAT @ TAN TEONG THONG	2 x 1000
9514	WONG AH MOI	
36638 - 639		3 x 1000
4443	LENG SEH SEAU	
34268 - 269		3 x 1000
48567 - 48568	DEVI A/P N. RAJU	2 x 1000
33798 - 33799	LIM KEE AH	2 x 1000
8313	TAN KIM HONG	3 x 1000
18753 - 18754		

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that if within fourteen (14) days from the date hereof, no claim or representation in respect of such certificates is made to the Directors, they will then proceed to issue replacement certificates and the original certificates will be deemed cancelled and void.

REGISTRARS
BOARDROOM SHARE REGISTRARS SDN BHD
Registration No. 199601006647(378993-D)
Date: 31.10.2025

322 Notices

FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)

NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPERTI SEDIA AD

TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG: East Coast Region (Kota Bharu, Kuantan & Temerloh) 05-11-2025 (Rabu) Pukul 11:00pagi

TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9:00pagi - 4:00petang)

PERTANYAAN (Tel) : Kota Bharu 07-7747972, Kuantan 017-4973133, Temerloh 012-428 7538

FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) En Mohd Fawzi Bin Ibrahim (33056) & Mr Mazenan Bin Haji Mohamed (01/2024

Alamat : Lot 5198, Petak 41 Jalan 20, Kawasan Perindustrian Pengkalan Chepa, Fasa 2, Pengkalan Chepa, 16100 Kota Bharu.

: Lot 10869, Lot 10870 & Lot 10871 Jln Tanah Putih, Tanah Putih 25100 Kuantan

: PT5101 & 5102, Kampung Megat Segama, 28000 Temerloh

SILA LAYARI LAMAN WEB KAMI : <http://www.focalpark.com.my>

Lot	Reg No.	Jenis & Model	Tahun
AM1	VAS5803	HONDA CITY 1.5L HYBRID	2017
AM2	TB67874	PERODUA MYVI 1.3	2012
AM3	CCJ6126	PERODUA MYVI 1.3	2009
AM4	DCX1878	TOYOTA VIOS 1.5E AT	2016

(Perhatian: Kenderaan-kenderaan diatas yang tidak dibida dalam perolehan akan dilelong semula pada 12/11/2025)

In the matter of the Companies Act, 2016 and

In the matter of JEBSEN & JESSEN LOGISTIC SERVICES SDN. BHD. [Company No. 198701007234 (165952-M)] (In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given that pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016 that a Final Meeting of the members of the above named Company will be held at No. 7-13A-01, Level 13A, Jebesen & Jessen Tower, UOA Business Park (Tower 7), Jalan Pengaturcara U1/51A, Seksyen U1, 40150 Shah Alam, Selangor on Monday, 1st December, 2025 at 11.00 a.m. for the following purposes:-

Agenda

- To have an account laid before them showing the manner in which the winding up has been conducted and the property of the Company disposed of and of hearing any explanation that may be given by the Liquidator;
- To determine the manner in which the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator thereof shall be disposed of.

GONG WOOL TEIK
Liquidator
Dated this 31 October 2025

Notes :

- A member entitled to attend and vote at this meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote on his behalf.
- The instrument appointing a proxy should be deposited at No. 7-13A-01, Level 13A, Jebesen & Jessen Tower, UOA Business Park (Tower 7), Jalan Pengaturcara U1/51A, Seksyen U1, 40150 Shah Alam, Selangor not less than 48 hours before the time fixed for the meeting.

322 Notices

NOTICE OF PROPOSED REDUCTION OF SHARE CAPITAL

SECTION 117(1) OF COMPANIES ACT, 2016 TEAM FOUR SDN. BHD. [197801006456 (43492-A)]

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that TEAM FOUR SDN. BHD. [197801006456 (43492-A)] would like to propose a reduction of share capital in accordance to Section 117(1) of the Companies Act, 2016 after this notice is being published. The creditors of the Company who wish to make objection against the reduction of share capital should file their objection within 6 weeks from 31 October 2025.

Penang

LIM YONG CHIAT (MAICSA 7060553) SSM PC NO. 201908000066 Company Secretary

Date: 31 October 2025

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR

IN THE STATE OF WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN, MALAYSIA COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) NO.: WA-28NCC-1003-09/2025

In the matter of Section 465 (1)(e) of the Companies Act 2016

And

In the matter of Bayjin Sdn Bhd [Company Registration No.: 201201024330 (1008620-A)]

BETWEEN

QUICKASH MALAYSIA SDN BHD [Company Registration No.: 201701007737 (121902-M)] ... PETITIONER

AND

BAYJIN SDN. BHD. [Company Registration No.: 201201024330 (1008620-A)] ... 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 23rd September 2025 presented by QUICKASH MALAYSIA SDN BHD. And that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Kuala Lumpur High Court, at nine o'clock in the morning, on the 27th November 2025; 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 No. 107-113, Jalan USJ 21/10, 47630 Subang Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's solicitor is Messrs Leong Law Chambers whose address of service is at No. 113, Jalan USJ 21/10, 47630 Subang Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan. Tel: 016-9236824 (Ref: LLC/23/QK-BAYJIN/L31)

Messrs Leong Law Chambers
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 abovementioned Messrs Leong Law Chambers, 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 solicitors (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovementioned not later than twelve o'clock noon of the 26th November 2025.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF MESSB PROJECT MANAGEMENT SDN BHD (200801039754 (841103-D)) (In Members' Voluntary Winding Up) NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act 2016, that a Final Meeting of the Company will be held at SOHO Suites @ KLCC, Block A2, Level 32-3A, No. 20, Jalan Perak, 50450 Kuala Lumpur on 2 December 2025 at 10.00 a.m. for the following purposes:

AGENDA:

- To receive and consider the Liquidator's Statement of Accounts and Report showing how the winding up has been conducted and to receive any explanation thereon.
- To consider, and if thought fit, pass the following resolution as an Ordinary Resolution:- "That the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator shall be kept by the Liquidator for a period of three (3) months from the date of the Final Meeting and that thereafter such books, accounts and documents may be destroyed by the Liquidator."

Dated this 31 October 2025

Chong Ai Ling
Liquidator

Note:
The Member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting may appoint a proxy (or in the case of a corporation, to appoint a representative) to attend and vote in his place. The Form of Proxy may be obtained from the office of the Liquidator located at SOHO Suites @ KLCC, Block A2, Level 32-3A, No. 20, Jalan Perak, 50450 Kuala Lumpur. The appointment of a proxy must be lodged at the Liquidators' office at least forty eight (48) hours before the meeting.

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJISTRET DI KUALA LUMPUR

DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA GUAMAN SIVIL NO: WA-A72M-21546-09/2025

ANTARA

YAYASAN IHSAN RAKYAT (NO. SYARIKAT: 201201017719 [1003231-A]) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

MOHD AL-HAFIZI BIN ABU BAKAR (NO. K/P: 850822-10-5225) ...DEFENDAN

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI)

Kepada: -
1) MOHD AL-HAFIZI BIN ABU BAKAR

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, dalam Guaman No. WA-A72M-21546-09/2025 oleh Yayasan Ihsan Rakyat ("Plaintiff") yang beralamat di Tingkat 20, Menara Teo Chew, No. 1, Jalan Lumut, 50400 Kuala Lumpur di mana Plaintiff menuntut terhadap kamu antara lain untuk membayar semula pinjaman, faedah dan kos.

DAN TELAH DIPERINTAHKAN bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 2.09.2025 dan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 2.09.2025 diserahkan secara penyampaian ganti terhadap kamu melalui penampalan pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, penampalan di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui Plaintiff dan pengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan penyampaian Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa lapan hari (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membela tindakan tersebut, kamu mestilah memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 21 haribulan Oktober 2025

.....t.t.....
TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY
Peguamcara Plaintiff

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI) ini telah difailkan oleh TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY, peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang beralamat di C-10-28, Block C, Lobby 2, Centum Oasis Corporate Park, No. 2, Jalan PUJ 1A/2, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel No. : +603 2714 5456
E-mel : genetan@gmtan.biz
Faks No. : +603 2714 5457
Ruj Kami : GMT/YPR(RCE)/01110/2025

322 Notices

PJC SYNERGY REALTY SDN. BHD.

200701024526 (782546-X)
(Members' Voluntary Winding-Up)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE is hereby given to all the members of PJC SYNERGY REALTY SDN. BHD. (In Liquidation) that a Final Meeting of the members is to be held at No. 13 Jalan Mutiara Melaka 6, Batu Berendam, 75350 Melaka, on the 8th day of December, 2025 at 10.00 a.m. to adopt the following:-

- The Final Report by the Liquidator on the affairs of the liquidation.
- The Statement of Receipts and Payments of the liquidation.
- That the books and records of the company be destroyed after three months of the termination of the liquidation.

Dated this 31st day of October, 2025.

CHONG SHU FEN
Liquidator
TAC CARE SERVICES SDN. BHD. (369754-W)
No. 13 Jalan Mutiara Melaka 6 Batu Berendam 75350 Melaka.

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MALACCA | N.SEMBILAN

MR. Rajah

TEL: 012-628 2844 FAX: 06-764 2051

JOHOR BAHRU

MS. Anne Lim

TEL: 013-770 6699 FAX: 07-355 5549

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJISTRET DI KUALA LUMPUR

DALAM WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA GUAMAN SIVIL NO: WA-A72M-21548-09/2025

ANTARA

YAYASAN DEWAN PERNIAGAAN MELAYU PERLIS BERHAD (NO. SYARIKAT: 201201017719 [249763-U]) ...PLAINTIF

DAN

AZLIZA BINTI ABDUL HAMID (NO. K/P: 821124-06-5526) ...DEFENDAN

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI)

Kepada: -
1) AZLIZA BINTI ABDUL HAMID

SILA AMBIL PERHATIAN bahawa suatu tindakan telah dimulakan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, dalam Guaman No. WA-A72M-21548-09/2025 oleh Yayasan Dewan Perniagaan Melayu Perlis Berhad ("Plaintiff") yang beralamat di Tingkat 20, Menara Teo Chew, No. 1, Jalan Lumut, 50400 Kuala Lumpur di mana Plaintiff menuntut terhadap kamu antara lain untuk membayar semula pinjaman, faedah dan kos.

DAN TELAH DIPERINTAHKAN bahawa Writ Saman bertarikh 2.09.2025 dan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 2.09.2025 diserahkan secara penyampaian ganti terhadap kamu melalui penampalan pada Papan Notis Mahkamah Majistret Kuala Lumpur, penampalan di alamat terakhir kamu yang diketahui Plaintiff dan pengiklankan sekali di suatu penerbitan akhbar "The Sun", dan penyampaian Writ Saman dan Pernyataan Tuntutan sedemikian akan dianggap sebagai penyerahan lengkap dan sempurna terhadap kamu dalam masa lapan hari (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau pengiklankan yang terakhir tersebut.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membela tindakan tersebut, kamu mestilah memasukkan kehadiran sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguamcara kamu. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, penghakiman boleh diberikan terhadap kamu.

Bertarikh pada 16 haribulan Oktober 2025

.....t.t.....
TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY
Peguamcara Plaintiff

NOTIS (IKLAN PENYAMPAIAN GANTI) ini telah difailkan oleh TETUAN GM TAN & COMPANY, peguamcara pihak Plaintiff yang beralamat di C-10-28, Block C, Lobby 2, Centum Oasis Corporate Park, No. 2, Jalan PUJ 1A/2, Ara Damansara, 47301 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Tel No. : +603 2714 5456
E-mel : genetan@gmtan.biz
Faks No. : +603 2714 5457
Ruj Kami : GMT/YYP(RCE)/01108/2025

Muhammad Ali's grandson held to draw in 'Thrilla in Manila 2'

BY JAMES HICKEN

NICO ALI Walsh, the grandson of the greatest of all time, Muhammad Ali, fought to a draw against Kittisak Klinson at the 50th anniversary show for the 'Thrilla in Manila' yesterday.

Fifty years ago, Ali defended his heavyweight crown against bitter rival Joe Frazier to bring an end to their sport-defining story.

After 14 gruelling, brutal rounds of back-and-forth action in 1975, Frazier retired on his stool inside the oppressively hot Araneta Coliseum in Manila and crowned Ali the better of the two legendary champions.

In the present day, at the very same arena,

paying tribute to his late grandfather, Walsh fought with his heart on his sleeve and even pulled out the family signature "Ali Shuffle" in the final round to send the attending fans into rapture.

Despite it being a family legacy fight, Walsh (10-2-1, 6 knockouts), faced tougher than expected opposition, and Klinson laid down the gauntlet in the early rounds – pushing the pace and trying to spoil the party.

But such is his heritage, Walsh weathered the early storm and fought back down the stretch, buoyed by chants of "Ali" from the crowd.

It was not to be as the judges scored it 75-77 in favour of Klinson and the others 76-76 for a majority decision draw.

Walsh, while surprised he wasn't given the nod,

was more moved by the support he felt from those in the arena.

"I thought it was a clear victory," Walsh said after the fight. "I am happy that the fans enjoyed the fight. I thought it was a dominant performance. I was shocked by the decision.

"It was amazing. And the people made it special. It's not just the walls and the place. It's not just here. It's not just the arena that makes it special.

"Not to sound corny or anything, but seriously, it's the people. If I were in an empty stadium, this wouldn't be as special.

"It's the people chanting Ali now, the same way they were 50 years ago. That's what makes it special." – The Independent

Sinner cruises in Paris

...as Zverev keeps title defence alive

JANNIK SINNER began his tilt at a maiden Paris Masters crown which would return him to world No. 1 with a 6-4, 6-2 win over Zizou Bergs yesterday, while reigning champion Alexander Zverev battled through a lengthy three-setter.

Following the surprise exit of world No. 1 Carlos Alcaraz at the round of 32 stage on Wednesday, a maiden crown in the ATP 1000 event in the French capital would return Sinner to the summit of the world rankings.

But the Italian second seed showed no signs of feeling the weight of that pressure in his opening match at La Defense Arena – the top eight seeds received byes through the first round.

"I'm very happy to come through the first match," Sinner said. "I was very precise, and I also started off with a break straight away, which gives you a bit more confidence."

Four-time Grand Slam champion Sinner is known for his efficiency on-court and won through against 41st-ranked Belgian Bergs in one hour and 27 minutes without facing a single break point.

The 24-year-old methodically engineered breaks of his own early in both sets to seal his spot in the third round, where he will meet Francisco Cerundolo overnight.

Germany's Zverev battled past Argentine world No. 49 Camilo Ugo Carabelli 6-7 (5-7), 6-1, 7-5 to open his title defence.

He will next take on Spanish 15th seed Alejandro Davidovich Fokina following his victory over Frenchman Arthur Cazaux.

A hardfought tiebreak separated Zverev and Ugo Carabelli in the opening set, before the 28-year-old cruised through the second in 35 minutes.

It then seemed Zverev might follow Alcaraz in crashing out early at La Defense Arena when the third seed fell 1-3 behind in the decider.

But he hit back instantly on his opponent's next service game, before securing the crucial break at 5-5 to keep his title defence alive.

Norwegian eighth seed Casper Ruud was felled in his opening match at the tournament by 50th-ranked German Daniel Altmaier 6-3, 7-5.

Former world No. 1 Daniil Medvedev of Russia was given a walkover to the third round after Grigor Dimitrov withdrew with a shoulder issue.

The 34-year-old Bulgarian's return from a pectoral injury, which forced him to retire when leading eventual champion Sinner two sets to love in the fourth round at Wimbledon in July, unfortunately lasted only one match before his latest fitness setback.

Italy's Lorenzo Musetti, who occupies the final qualification spot for November's ATP Finals in Turin, fell to a costly three-set defeat to compatriot Lorenzo Sonego.

J u s t

behind Musetti in the race for Turin is Canadian ninth seed Felix Auger-Aliassime, who ground out a 5-7, 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7-4) win against France's Alexandre Muller.

Cousins Valentin Vacherot and Arthur Rinderknech opened the day's action in a repeat of their Shanghai Masters final from earlier in October.

And just like in China, it was the Monegasque Vacherot who claimed victory in three sets against the Frenchman. He will next face Alcaraz's British vanquisher Cameron Norrie.

Russian 10th seed Karen Khachanov grinded past Brazilian teenager Joao Fonseca 6-1, 3-6, 6-3 and will meet Australian sixth seed Alex de Minaur in the round of 16. – AFP



Jannik Sinner serves to Belgium's Zizou Bergs during their men's singles match. – AFP/IC

BRIEFS

Woods will not play in Hero Challenge

TOURNAMENT host Tiger Woods will not compete in the Dec 4-7 Hero World Challenge in Albany, Bahamas, according to the final player field released yesterday. When the initial field was announced three weeks ago, there was hope Woods would be added later as one of three exemption spots but he has since undergone lumbar disc replacement surgery and his return date is unknown. The 15-times major champion has not competed since he missed the British Open cut in July 2024 and also had surgery in March to repair a ruptured left Achilles tendon. According to organisers of the Hero World

Challenge, a charity event that benefits Woods' foundation, the final three players who will round out the 20-player field are Jordan Spieth, Billy Horschel and Akshay Bhatia. Twice defending champion Scottie Scheffler and 2016 winner Hideki Matsuyama of Japan were previously announced as being among those who had officially committed to the event.

Villars challenges FIA presidential election rules

SWISS-FRENCH racer Laura Villars has taken former legal action to challenge rules that prevented her from standing against the incumbent Mohammed Ben Sulayem for president of motorsport's world governing body. A vote was scheduled for December but Emirati

Mohammed is set to be returned unopposed to a second term at the helm of the International Automobile Federation (FIA). Villars, 28, announced her surprise candidacy in September but was unable to put together the required slate of potential vice-presidents from an official list of 29 by an Oct 24 deadline. Every candidate must name one person from all the FIA global regions but there is only one South American on the list, Fabiana Ecclestone, and she is already on Mohammed's team. In a statement dated Oct 27, Villars said the Judicial Court of Paris had authorised her to summon the FIA before an emergency judge, with a hearing scheduled for Nov 10. Her lawyer said the court was "taking seriously the serious democratic failings within the FIA, as well as several violations of its Statutes and Regulations that we have denounced."

'The crash was on purpose'

FELIPE MASSA said in a witness statement made public yesterday that his former Ferrari boss Jean Todt suspected immediately after the 2008 Singapore Grand Prix that Renault's Nelson Piquet Jr had crashed on purpose, but he had not believed him.

The ex-driver was attending a High Court hearing in London for his action against Formula One Management, former supremo Bernie Ecclestone and the governing FIA resulting from one of the sport's biggest scandals.

In the written statement, Massa said then-Ferrari CEO Todt called him to his office "very soon after the 2008 Singapore GP finished" along with team boss Stefano Domenicali, now F1 chief executive.

"Todt said he was sure Nelsinho crashed on purpose. I did not believe him because I know Jean Todt does not like Flavio Briatore (then the Team Principal of Renault) – they had a personal rivalry," Massa explained.

The Brazilian, who finished championship runner-up by a single point to McLaren's Lewis Hamilton in 2008, told Todt he did not think any driver would do that.

He said a 2023 report that Ecclestone and the late FIA president Max Mosley allegedly knew already in 2008 that the crash was deliberate, but took no action, came as a "massive shock".

Massa is now suing for a declaration that he should have won the 2008 championship, and would have done so if the race had been annulled, and is seeking around £64 million (RM371m) plus interest.

The defendants argue Massa knew enough to sue in 2008 and 2009, meaning the case should be thrown out as having been brought too late. Piquet, whose father and namesake is a triple world champion, told the FIA in late July 2009 he had been ordered to crash by team bosses to help teammate Fernando Alonso win.

Briatore is now running the Renault-owned Alpine team after a lifetime ban from the sport was overturned in 2010.

Massa, who was managed by Todt's son Nicolas and retired in 2017, said that ahead of the Bahrain Grand Prix in April 2009 he came across Briatore and former Ferrari and Benetton racer Jean Alesi at a restaurant and joined them.

"During the lunch, I asked Briatore whether he had asked Nelsinho to crash on purpose at the 2008 Singapore GP. Flavio Briatore denied that Nelsinho had crashed on purpose," he said in the statement. I thought he was probably lying by the way he answered me, but I did not know."

That July he was on a plane with Piquet Jr flying to a karting event in Italy and asked his compatriot if he crashed on purpose.

The Brazilian denied it but Massa said "the way he answered me he didn't convince me he was telling the truth." – Reuters

Kane stars as Bayern set European record

HARRY KANE grabbed a double as Bayern Munich set a European record of 14 successive victories to start a season with their 4-1 win at Cologne in the German Cup second round yesterday.

Kane's first, an incredible curling strike on the turn, and a second-half header brought his tally to 22 goals in 14 games this season.

Wingers Luis Diaz and Michael Olise also got on the scoresheet for the 20-time German Cup winners.

Cologne's Ragnar Ache scored the opener, which put Bayern behind for the first time in a match this season.

Bayern's victory bettered the record of 13 wins to start a season in all competitions set by Fabio Capello's AC Milan in 1992-93 – the previous best mark in Europe's top-five leagues.

The in-form England captain Kane has scored two hattricks and six braces in Bayern's record-breaking run, only failing to score in two of the 14 matches.

Bayern coach Vincent Kompany was careful to praise Kane's all-round contribution, as the striker continued to drop deep and create.

"It's funny sometimes – at the end of the game I asked someone if Harry scored today, and he said 'yes, two goals,'" Kompany told Germany's *ARD*. "Sometimes you don't even

notice it, because of all the other stuff he does for the team."

Earlier, Bayer Leverkusen scored two goals after the 120-minute mark to win 4-2 at a 10-man Paderborn.

A frustrating night for the 2024 German domestic double winners looked destined to go to spotkicks until 19-year-old Ibrahim Maza netted to spare Leverkusen's blushes against their second-division opponents, who had not lost since August.

Alex Garcia then added gloss to the result with Paderborn pushing for an equaliser.

In regulation time, Alejandro Grimaldo's 60th-minute freekick for Leverkusen – his fourth dead-ball goal this season – was cancelled out when Paderborn's Stefano Marino scored in the 90th minute.

Then in extra-time, Paderborn, who were reduced to 10 men before the hour for a last-man foul which led to Grimaldo's freekick, stunningly took the lead through Sven Michel on 96 minutes.

But former Liverpool centreback Jarell Quansah made it 2-2 shortly before the extra time interval.

Winners in 2023-24, Leverkusen will be joined by current cup holders Stuttgart, who won 2-0 at Mainz thanks to goals from Luca Jaquez and captain Atakan Karazor. – AFP

'Poor' PSG retain Ligue 1 lead despite stalemate

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN clung onto the Ligue 1 summit yesterday despite a stalemate at Lorient and an injury to star forward Desire Doue as other results went their way.

Doue fell to the ground grimacing with a right thigh injury on the hour mark, before being carried from the field of play raising immediate doubts over his availability for PSG's date with Bayern Munich next week in the Champions League.

The forward had only recently recovered full fitness after being injured playing for France in September.

The 20-year-old scored a brace in PSG's 7-2 rout of Bayer Leverkusen in their last Champions League outing, and his potential absence against Bayern on Nov 4 would represent a serious blow to Luis Enrique's European champions.

"It's always bad news when there are injuries," remarked the Spaniard.

"It's a strange injury; I don't know exactly his condition. I hope it's not a serious injury," added the PSG coach, without speculating on how long Doue might be out.

After the match, an *AFP* journalist saw Doue, head down and hood over his head, leaving the

locker room on crutches and avoiding putting weight on his right leg as he got on the PSG bus.

Nuno Mendes put PSG into a 49th-minute lead in Brittany, only for Igor Silva to cancel that out seconds later to leave it 1-1 on the night.

Luis Enrique did not sugar-coat the performance.

"We didn't deserve the victory, we played a poor match," he said. "It's a shame because we need points and we want to earn points."

"They defended very well, you have to stay focused for the full 90 minutes, and it's difficult."

However, PSG remained top of the table after Marseille had to settle for a 2-2 home draw with lowly Angers.

Angers, who arrived at the Velodrome propping up the table, took a first-half lead before a double from Robinio Vaz appeared to have saved the south coast club's evening.

But Ousmane Camara's dramatic late leveller in the sixth minute of injury time lifted Angers out of the relegation zone as Marseille remained in third.

A thrilling 5-3 win at Nantes lifted Monaco up to second, one point off the lead. – AFP

SIDENETTING

Messi leads MLS earners

INTER MIAMI'S eight-time Ballon d'Or winner Lionel Messi remains the highest-paid footballer in Major League Soccer with Los Angeles FC's recent arrival Son Heung-min second, according to an updated salary list published yesterday. The US\$20.4m (RM86m) guaranteed annually that Messi receives from Inter Miami remains far ahead of other players. The figure does not include other types of income, such as his extensive portfolio of sponsorships. South Korea's Son, the star signing of the US summer, ranks second with the US\$11.1m (RM47m) annually established in his contract with LAFC. The former Tottenham captain landed in California in August after the most expensive transfer in MLS history, estimated at US\$26m (RM109m). The third spot on the list is occupied by Spaniard Sergio Busquets (US\$8.7m/RM36.5m), who will retire at the end of the season with Inter Miami. Paraguayan Miguel Almiron (US\$7.8m/RM33m) is in fourth place, and Mexican Hirving "Chucky" Lozano (US\$7.6m/RM32m) is in fifth, both notable signings for this season by Atlanta United and San Diego FC.

Real seek damages for Super League collapse

REAL MADRID will seek "substantial" compensation from UEFA after a Spanish court yesterday dismissed an appeal from European football's governing body relating to the breakaway Super League. Proposed in 2021 by 12 elite European clubs, including Real Madrid and Barcelona, the Super League project quickly collapsed due to fierce opposition from English clubs' fans and threats from Uefa and Fifa. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) ruled in December 2023 that the ban on the Super League was contrary to European law. Last year, a Spanish judge said Fifa and Uefa had "prevented free competition" by opposing the Super League, ruling they were practising anti-competitive behaviour and abusing their dominant position. Real Madrid said they were "delighted" by the ruling and "will continue to work for the good of global football and fans, while claiming substantial damages from Uefa."

Barca's injury crisis deepens

BARCELONA midfielder Pedri has been diagnosed with a muscle tear in his left leg, the club confirmed yesterday, adding to the La Liga side's mounting injury list. The 22-year-old Spanish international is expected to be sidelined for at least four weeks, missing three upcoming matches for Barcelona. Pedri would also miss Spain's crucial World Cup qualifiers against Georgia and Turkey in November. "First team player Pedri has suffered a tear in the distal biceps femoris muscle in his left thigh. The player's recovery will dictate his return to action," Barcelona said in a statement. The injury compounds Barcelona's struggles, with 12 players sidelined since the start of the season. Key absentees include Robert Lewandowski, Gavi, Raphinha, Ter Stegen, and Dani Olmo.



Juventus's Kenan Yildiz fights for the ball with Udinese defenders. – AFP/PPIC

... as Roma, Inter keep pace with leaders Napoli

JUVENTUS snapped an eight-match winless streak with yesterday's 3-1 success over Udinese with Luciano Spalletti ready to replace the sacked Igor Tudor, as Roma and Inter Milan stayed on Serie A leaders Napoli's tails.

Federico Gatti thumped home a powerful header in the 67th minute before Kenan Yildiz slotted in a late penalty in Turin to give Juve a first win in any competition since mid-September and move them to seventh spot on 15 points, six behind leading pair Napoli and Roma who beat Parma 2-1.

Gatti and Yildiz saved Juve's blushes after another disjointed performance, this time under "Next Gen" U-23 coach Massimo Brambilla who has stepped in until Tudor's permanent replacement in the dugout is confirmed. Juve were level at 1-1 heading into the final third of a match played at a soaking Allianz Stadium after Nicolò Zaniolo stroked home his third goal of the season in the dying seconds of the first half, cancelling out Dusan Vlahovic's early penalty.

"I've only been here with the first team a couple of days, on Monday morning I was in training with the U-23s and then in the afternoon I was with the first team," said Brambilla to

broadcaster *DAZN*.

"They're good players, they know what they're supposed to do and today they deserved the win."

Spalletti is expected to sign a contract until the end of the season which will be renewed only if Juve manage to qualify for the Champions League. But speaking to *DAZN* ahead of yesterday's win, Giorgio Chiellini, a club icon and now Juve's strategic director, insisted that "nothing has been signed right now."

Spalletti, now 66 years old, had a dreadful time in his most recent job as Italy boss, but he has been one of the country's most influential coaches over the past two decades and won a historic Serie A title with Napoli in 2023.

In the capital, Mario Hermoso headed home his first goal for Roma just after the hour mark before Artem Dovbyk netted the crucial strike with nine minutes remaining as Gian Piero Gasperini's charges maintained their pursuit of Napoli. Dovbyk's second goal of a troubled start to the season for the Ukraine striker was key as Alessandro Circati pulled one back for Parma shortly afterwards but the 15th-placed side couldn't force an equaliser.

"These are three well-earned points... Once

we got going we controlled the game, conceded very little and created plenty," said coach Gasperini.

Milan are fourth after being overtaken on goal difference by local rivals Inter Milan, who comfortably beat troubled Fiorentina 3-0 at the San Siro and moved into third on 18 points.

A brace from Hakan Calhanoglu and Petar Susic's sumptuous individual goal, all in the second half, got Inter back on track after losing at Napoli on Saturday.

Calhanoglu opened the scoring with a unstoppable low drive in the 66th minute, finally ending Fiorentina and goalkeeper David de Gea's resistance. And Susic doubled the hosts' lead with his first Serie A goal five minutes later, bringing the house down in the process.

Susic, who signed from Dinamo Zagreb in the summer, collected Lautaro Martinez's pass on the edge of the penalty area before skipping through Fiorentina's defence and, after a perfectly-executed shimmy, rifling home a low finish.

Calhanoglu rounded off victory with a late penalty won by Ange-Yoan Bonny, leaving Fiorentina in the relegation zone without a win to their name. – AFP



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Arteta hails Dowman as teen becomes youngest ever starter in win over Brighton

PHILIP DUNCAN

MIKEL ARTETA lauded Max Dowman's "special" performance as the 15-year-old rewrote history by becoming Arsenal's youngest-ever starter in his side's Carabao Cup victory against Brighton.

Ethan Nwaneri and Bukayo Saka – who replaced Dowman with 20 minutes remaining – struck in the second half as Arsenal secured a 2-0 win at the Emirates to book their place in the fifth round and a home tie against Crystal Palace.

But it was Dowman, still two months and two days shy of his 16th birthday, who stole the show and was afforded a standing ovation as he departed the pitch.

"A tiny smile, that's what you get with him," said Arteta when asked how Dowman reacted when he told him he was starting.

"For him everything is natural, for him everything is OK. It's the way he plays and that's the secret, that he doesn't make a big fuss of it.

"He just does what he does best, which is to play football. To play football with a lot of courage and determination and today again, he has shown some incredible skill, some capacity to run past players at that level in the Premier League at 15. It's

definitely something special."

Asked if the highly-rated teenager – who previously came off the bench in the league against Leeds and Liverpool and the last round of this competition at Port Vale – would now be desperate for more starts, Arteta added: "For sure, if you ask him.

"That's what we have to manage and not only that, there's a lot of things that are new in his life.

"We have to make sure that he takes the right steps and he needs to be able to cope with it, too, because it's

happening very, very fast and we all need to be aware of that.

"Let's encourage him to keep going that way, but let's protect him as well."

Dowman was among 10 changes made by Arteta with only Eberechi Eze keeping his place from the side which saw off Crystal Palace to move four points clear in the Premier League on Sunday.

Brighton had chances to score but Arsenal kept the visitors at bay as Arteta's men recorded their eighth win on the bounce and sixth clean sheet in a row.

Their defence has been breached just three times in 14 matches across all competitions so far.

Arteta added: "We were struggling in the first half. I expected that when you make 10 changes and you have

players that have never played before and some of them haven't played much this season.

"You have to gamble. But I was ready to take that risk and in the second half, we needed to start in a different way and we certainly did that and the game shifted momentum."

Frustrated Brighton manager Fabian Hurler rued his side's failure to convert any of their six shots on Arsenal's goal.

He said: "When we take all the chances, we are in the next round. It is about scoring and defending and we were not able to score or defend the most important actions.

"The goal from Arsenal changed the game and it is not easy to score goals here as we all know." – The Independent

Maresca fumes over Delap red card as Chelsea win thriller

HARRY LATHAM-COYLE

ENZO MARESCA admitted that Liam Delap deserved to be sent off for Chelsea against Wolves as the manager lamented a "stupid foul".

The visitors survived a seven-goal thriller at Molineux despite threatening to squander a three-goal lead late on before Jamie Gittens popped up with what proved a crucial goal in a 4-3 win.

Maresca had been boosted by the availability of striker Delap after an injury lay-off and introduced the forward in the second half, with the 22-year-old back amongst things after 10 weeks out.

The young forward soon found himself in trouble with the referee, though, first being cautioned for pushing Yerson Mosquera to the ground before fouling Emmanuel Agbadou and being shown a second yellow.

An impending one-match suspension will force Delap to miss Sunday's (1.30am Malaysian time) Premier League clash with Tottenham, and continues a theme of ill-discipline this season for Chelsea.

Robert Sanchez was sent off against Manchester United, Trevoh Chalobah against Brighton, Joao Pedro against Benfica and Malo Gusto against Nottingham Forest – while Maresca also served a touchline ban for his celebrations of a winning goal against Liverpool.

And while believing there was mitigation for some of his side's misdeeds, Maresca branded Delap's two yellows as "embarrassing".

"Absolutely, yes," Maresca said when asked if Delap deserved his dismissal. "(It is a) stupid foul, we can avoid that.

"I completely understand when there are red cards like Brighton or Man United that is difficult, but red card against Nottingham Forest and red card today, both we can avoid that. And we have to avoid that.

"It's embarrassing when it's a red card like today, because it's two yellow cards in seven minutes. I think we can avoid that.

"After the yellow card, I told him four or five times to keep calm. But Liam is a player that when he's inside the pitch probably he'll be playing the game for himself and he struggles to realise and to listen around him."

Chelsea have been drawn an away tie against League One Cardiff in the quarterfinals. – The Independent



Bukayo Saka scores Arsenal's second goal during yesterday's Carabao Cup match against Brighton at the Emirates Stadium in London. – REUTERS/SPIC

Pep lauds 'patient' Omar after vital goal in City win

PHIL BLANCHE

MANAGER Pep Guardiola was delighted Omar Marmoush opened his goal account for the season as Manchester City reached the Carabao Cup quarterfinals with a 3-1 win at Swansea.

Omar was thrust into the role of chief striker with Erling Haaland rested in south Wales and responded with City's crucial second goal after Swansea had threatened an upset through Goncalo Franco's 12th-minute opener.

Jeremy Doku levelled before half-time but City's constant pressure and probing did not yield a second until Omar turned smartly on Rayan Cherki's 77th-minute pass and rifled home high at the near post.

Cherki confirmed City's victory in the third minute of stoppage time – and Guardiola's side will now host Brentford in the last eight in mid-December.

"With him with that system, five in the back, with centre defenders around, with Erling, he knows perfectly how to be patient," Guardiola said of Egypt striker Omar, who suffered knee damage during the international break at the start of September and returned to action last week.

"How to be in small spaces, how to be consistent, to go to the runs in behind. We have incredible good deliveries with Phil (Foden), especially with Rayan Cherki and, of course, Nico Gonzalez.

"It's getting better and getting

better. I'm happy for him more because a striker needs goals and for his confidence it will be important.

"He's been injured a long time and of course playing in the position from Erling is important. We know in many games we need both and having him back is so nice."

Franco rewarded Swansea's excellent opening half-hour, with his sweet strike from the edge of the box beating James Trafford on his return to the City goal.

But Doku's deflected drive restored parity and the visitors set up camp in the Swans' half after the interval, although the Championship side were 13 minutes from taking the tie to penalties when Omar struck his first City goal since May.

Guardiola added: "We started with

a really good tempo. We were not flat but they were better.

"I would say they were impressive but (after) 20-25 minutes we take the game."

Swansea are 13th in the Championship and head coach Alan Sheehan said: "We started the game incredibly well on the front foot and had an opportunity to make it 2-0.

"You have to be perfect because of the pressure they put you under.

"They camp you in into these areas and in the end we ran out of a bit of steam.

"We wanted this game. We won three games to get here and you want to test yourself against the best but you have to understand the quality they have." – The Independent

Howe relishes Newcastle challenge of fighting on all fronts after Spurs win

DAMIAN SPELLMAN

EDDIE HOWE is relishing the challenge of fighting on all fronts after steering Newcastle into the Carabao Cup quarterfinals for the fourth-successive season.

The holders were handed a home tie against Fulham in yesterday draw after defeating Tottenham 2-0 in the last 16 yesterday.

Speaking before the draw had been made, head coach Howe – who

made eight changes with Sunday's League trip to West Ham and Athletic Bilbao's Champions League visit to Tyneside to come in the next week – was a happy man.

Asked about the challenge of competing in each competition, the Magpies boss said: "We are enjoying it. I always say the games are an amazing experience, each and every one of them.

"Preparing for the games is a challenge, of course there's a lot of

work, but it's what we do and what we love to do.

"I really enjoyed the first Champions League season. It was a different focus, less training and more tactical work and I'm enjoying it again. So far, so good."

Newcastle were rewarded for a promising start when Fabian Schar headed a 24th-minute Sandro Tonali corner past goalkeeper Antonin Kinsky. Although Spurs were stung into action, they fell further behind

two minutes after the restart when Nick Woltemade beat Kinsky to Joe Willock's cross.

Spurs played well for long periods but bemoaned the manner of the opening goal after the referee allowed Tonali to take a corner as defender Djed Spence made his way into the penalty area after re-tying his boot.

"We conceded two goals because of two mistakes. In my opinion, unfortunately, the ref was part of the mistake in the first one," head coach

Thomas Frank said.

"I'm not saying there's things we can't do better, but his boot is off, he needs to tie his boot.

"It's minute 23, it's not like we've delayed the game for 10 minutes and we're 1-0 up. It's common sense to allow him time to get in, so as soon as he had the boot on, the ref let it go.

"Then to make it perfect, it's Djed's man he had to mark, Schar, that scored, so that's why we were very animated." – The Independent

AFC's heritage players tightrope

THE Asian Football Confederation (AFC) has acknowledged that it faces a time constraint before beginning a potential disciplinary review on Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) over documentation issues involving seven Harimau Malaya heritage players.

AFC secretary general Datuk Seri Windsor John said the confederation hopes all legal and appeal processes undertaken by FAM will be completed before March 31 next year to avoid disruption to preparations for the 2027 Asian Cup final round draw.

"For us, we have a time constraint because our draw will take place after the Asian Cup's (qualifying round) last match, which is on the 31st of March. "After the last match, we will start preparing for the

draw.

"So for the draw, we need the team from Malaysia's group, which team is going to qualify. So that's why we need to finish everything by March 31, hopefully," he said after a session with media here, today.

The national team, led by head coach Peter Cklamovski, currently leads Group F of the 2027 Asian Cup qualifying round with a perfect record, having won all four matches, including crushing nearest rivals Vietnam 4-0 here in June.

Malaysia top the group with 12 points, followed by Vietnam (9 points), Laos (3 points) and Nepal at the bottom with no points.

Only the group winners will qualify for the finals in Saudi Arabia, scheduled to be held in January 2027.

Windsor said AFC will only begin its disciplinary review through the disciplinary committee once the final decision is received from the International Federation of Association Football (Fifa) or the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

"After the final decision, whether from FIFA's Appeal Committee or CAS, we will take that as the definitive ruling. It all depends on FAM's appeal process.

"So after that, the case file will be given to AFC to look at and then take action accordingly in the context of the consequence of the decision of Fifa how it's going to impact AFC matches, so that is how the disciplinary committee will then look at the case file and then see what are the areas that have been breached," he said.



Dryburgh in the mix at Maybank Open

► Gemma one shot behind Choi Hye-Jin after impressive opening round

■ BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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SCOTLAND'S Gemma Dryburgh believes she has what it takes to lift the trophy at this year's Maybank Championship after a strong opening round at the Kuala Lumpur Golf & Country Club (KLGCC).

Speaking to *theSun* after posting an impressive 7-under 65 yesterday, the 31-year-old expressed confidence in her form and mindset heading into the weekend.

"Of course. I've put myself in a good position now, so no reason why not. If I keep going the way I played today, then no reason why I can't be in the hunt on Sunday," Dryburgh said.

She is tied for second with Italian Benedetta Moresco, one shot behind first-round leader Choi Hye-Jin from South Korea.

Dryburgh acknowledged the demanding nature of the KLGCC course, describing it as both beautiful and punishing for those who miss the fairways.

"KLGCC's got a couple of challenging holes. It's a tough course, and usually, the scores are

pretty low.

"You have to hit it hard off the tee because the rough is quite thick. But if you can get it close, you can make some putts, which is nice."

The scorching Malaysian weather added another layer of difficulty to her round, with temperatures soaring under the tropical sun.

"It's very hot, obviously," she said. "I just tried to stay cool, had the umbrella out to stay in the shade. It's more of a mental challenge than anything else."

Dryburgh also praised the emerging talent among Malaysian golfers, highlighting the progress of players rising star Mirabel Ting.

"Yeah, (they are) amazing. I've known Kelly Tan for a long time. I think she was behind me today. It's great to see some new girls come through. Ashley Lau, I think as well.

"I'm obviously excited for what Mirabel is going to do. She's obviously had a really good amateur career. I'm excited to have them on the tour and see how they go."

Meanwhile, Malaysian pro golfer Tan made a solid start to this year's Maybank Championship, finishing at 3-under 69.

The 30-year-old, playing in front of her home crowd at the KLGCC, showcased her skills despite a few setbacks.

"I hit a lot of fairways and gave myself a lot of looks. I hit 15 greens, so obviously, a lot of birdie chances. I made a few, so that was nice."

However, she also encountered some trouble on the 9th and 10th holes, recording bogeys on both.

"I just pulled my 7-iron on No. 9 and went

in the bunker, and had a top fly. On No. 10, I had a bit of bad luck with a flyer from the rough. But I took my medicine and came back with birdies."

Despite the minor setbacks, Tan remained upbeat about her performance, saying that she had what it takes to recover from the mistakes.

"You can't win a tournament on the first day, but I kept myself in it and gave myself chances. I just focused on the next shot and how I could set up for a birdie."

Tan also said that she enjoyed playing in front of friends, family, and passionate Malaysian fans.

"Playing at home is always hard but fun at the same time. The expectation is through the roof because you want to make your country proud. This week, though, I'm just trying to keep it low key and enjoy myself."

KLGCC's challenging layout didn't faze Tan, who was familiar with the course but acknowledged it still presented risk-reward decisions especially the 16th hole, though she said that that's not where he struggled.

"I birdied the 16th, so that was really good. But I'd say 9 and 10 challenged me the most today," she said.

Looking ahead to the rest of the tournament, Tan said that she need to fine-tune her putting and work for longer putts.

The Maybank Championship, the most prestige woman golf tournament in Asean, features a 78-golfers competing over four days in a no-cut format, with a total prize purse of RM12.6 million at stake.

M'sia keen to renew MotoGP contract: Yeoh

THE Youth and Sports Ministry (KBS) is awaiting the final decision from the Ministry of Finance (MoF) regarding the extension of the contract to host the Malaysian Grand Prix (GP), which is set to end next year, said Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh.

She said the government, in general, welcomes the extension of the contract, and added that the ministry will furnish further details to the Finance Ministry (MoF).

"I have met with Dorna Sports (the commercial rights holder of the race) and conveyed the government's intention to renew the contract. However, the Finance Ministry usually requires data to reassure them that the expenditure (to host MotoGP) will not be wasteful and will generate economic returns for Malaysia.

"As we know, the organisation of MotoGP usually creates job opportunities. Last year, around 4,000 people gained employment through it.

"This year too, ticket sales have exceeded 90% and the number of tourists purchasing tickets also increased," she said.

She told reporters this after making a working visit to the upgrading project of the Raja Muda Sports Complex for the development of the Malaysian Sepaktakraw Academy in Kampung Baru, Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Earlier, Sepang International Circuit (SIC) Chief Executive Officer Azhan Shafriman Hanif said the company is in the final stages of discussions with Dorna Sports regarding the duration of the new contract.

According to Azhan, further details on the duration of the new contract, whether it will be for a continuous five-year period or based on a 3+2 structure, will only be announced once approval has been obtained.

The organisation of the 2025 Malaysian GP, which concluded last Sunday, successfully attracted more than 190,977 spectators over the three-day event. – Bernama

Bogey-free Choi out in front

"IF you don't miss your tee shot, you don't make bogeys, you can make a lot of birdies," said South Korea's Choi Hye-Jin Choi, summing up her brilliant bogey-free display en route to an 8-under 64 in the opening round of the Maybank Championship 2025 at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club (KLGCC) yesterday.

Choi carded six birdies on holes 1, 7, 9, 12, 16 and 18 and an eagle on the 3rd hole.

Though she faced several tricky situations due to the rough and hazards, she remained composed to produce solid par saves throughout the round.

"I had a lot of situations which I could make bogeys because of rough and hazard, but I made a lot of good pars," she said through a translator yesterday.

With hot weather testing players, Choi revealed her focus is on conserving energy as she competes in her fifth consecutive tournament.

"So like two things I'm thinking about. First is to have short practice and long rest. So it's my fifth tournament in a row so I really have to maintain my power. I'm going to eat well and rest well," she said.

Heading into the second round, she remains grounded despite leading the field after her stellar opening effort.

"So it was a really good round in the first round, so I'm just going to think the rest of the rounds are going to be like today. I'm going to start over and not really think about my score and just try my best," she said. – Bernama



Miserable failure



Crystal Palace's Ismaila Sarr in action with Liverpool's Alexis Mac Allister during yesterday's Carabao Cup 4th round match at Anfield. - REUTERS/SPIC

Slot stands by team selection as gamble falls flat against Eagles

ARNE SLOT stood by his decision to make sweeping changes to protect players despite Crystal Palace conceding Liverpool to a sixth defeat in seven matches as they bowed out of the Carabao Cup.

Having won the Community Shield on penalties and last month's Premier League meeting at Selhurst Park, yesterday saw the Eagles get the better of the Reds for the third time this season.

Ismaila Sarr's first-half brace put Oliver Glasner's Palace in control, with Yeremy Pino's first goal for the club wrapping up a 3-0 fourth-round win after Liverpool substitute Amara Nallo was sent off.

Slot's decision to make 10 changes and leave star players out of the squad backfired at Anfield, but the Reds boss does not regret his choice to prioritise the upcoming run of fixtures.

"It's always a blow to lose a game of football, especially if it leads to going out of a

competition," the Reds boss said.

"But it's the same selection I did tonight as I did last season in rounds like this.

"There are many reasons maybe why we've lost six out of seven. None of them are good enough to accept losing so many.

"I can come up with arguments or reasons but none of them will be enough to go to that standard because at Liverpool losing five out of six, six out of seven is always too much."

Slot explained how he wanted to keep key players fresh, pointing to the drop in standards from the sole win in Liverpool's run at Frankfurt in the Champions League last Thursday before losing on Sunday against Brentford.

They face the same turnaround as they prepare to host Aston Villa, with the manager also pointing to the impact of the previous round against Southampton.

"In two days we play Villa," Slot continued. "The last time I played a player that we thought was ready for that programme, it turned out maybe that he wasn't. It was Alexander Isak when he went out with an injury.

"Last time we played Southampton, Giovanni Leoni went out with an injury in a game like this, and we got the red card for Hugo Ekitike after two yellows.

"To add to that, this club has always used this competition for their academy players as well, so for the non-starters and academy players this felt to me as the right decision.

"And I haven't changed my opinion about that after the result because with our starters we haven't been able to win a lot from Palace as well."

Slot was serenaded with "sacked in the morning" chants from the Crystal Palace away end after Pino's late curler added salt to the Liverpool wounds, sparking a fan exodus from Anfield.

FA Cup holders Palace meanwhile will travel to Arsenal in the quarterfinals after Glasner oversaw a comprehensive win at Anfield.

"I'm not pleased with the first 15 minutes," the meticulous Eagles boss said. "I told the players they look like we are still in the hotel beds.

"But then, yes, we did much better. We controlled the game, scored very nice goals in the first half.

"But on the other side I think we could have decided the game earlier. We had many situations that looked threatening but then the last pass, finish or decision was not good enough.

"But overall, of course, when you win 3-0 at Anfield it's a very good night for us, a very positive night and qualifying for the quarterfinal is of course what we wanted."

Glasner felt it was "disrespectful" to suggest Liverpool had fielded a weakened team and believed his side deserved all the credit.

"It was Arne Slot's decision and we never care what other teams are doing," said the Eagles boss.

"I've seen Joe Gomez play for England, win the Champions League, seen Wataru Endo play I don't know how many games for Japan, Alexis Mac Allister won the World Cup, (Federico) Chiesa plays for the (Italy) national team.

"It was still a good team and everyone is a member of the Liverpool squad. I was never good enough to be in the Liverpool squad. Maybe it was not the strongest team, but still a very good Liverpool side." - The Independent/Agencies