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Experts divided on how best to beef up security along border with Thailand

The Sungai Golok security corridor has come under the spotlight again following the fatal shooting of a Malaysian man in Kampung Bering along the Malaysian-Thai border on Nov 3. - BERNAMAPIC



AMARAN
 SESIAPA YANG MENYEBERANGI SEMPADAN MELALUI PENGKALAN HARAM (YANG TIDAK DIWARTAKAN) ADALAH MENYALAH
 UNDANG-UNDANG DI BAWAH SEKSYEN 5(2) AKTA IMIGRESEN 1959/63 (Pindaan 2002) YANG BOLEH DIKENAKAN HUKUMAN DENDA MAKSIMUM RM 10,000.00 ATAU PENJARA TIDAK MELEBIHI 5 TAHUN ATAU KEDUA-DUANYA SEKALI.
 DENGAN PERINTAH KETUA POLIS DAERAH

WARNING
 ANY PERSON CROSSING THE BORDER THROUGH ILLEGAL ENTRY (NOT GAZETTED) IS COMMITTING AN OFFENCE UNDER SECTION 5(2) IMMIGRATION ACT 1959/63 (Amendment 00) WHICH CARRIED A PENALTY FINED A MAXIMUM OF RM10,000.00 OR IMPRISONMENT NOT EXCEEDING FIVE YEARS OR BOTH.

BORDER OFFICER IN CHARGE OF DISTRICT

M'sia wins Unesco seat

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Successful election to executive board for seventh term seen as worldwide recognition of country's leadership and contributions to global efforts in education, science and culture.

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Focus of Amanah on welfare of rakyat and not street politics, says Mat Sabu.

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NGO empowers 200 women from PPR communities with entrepreneurship skills.

King's state visit to Bahrain boosts bilateral ties

MANAMA (BAHRAIN): His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia said the close diplomatic and friendly relations between Malaysia and Bahrain hold great potential for further strengthening and expanding cooperation between the two nations.

Sultan Ibrahim described Bahrain as an important strategic partner for Malaysia and expressed hope that bilateral ties, particularly in the economic sector, would continue to grow in line with the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030.

"Bahrain and Malaysia respect each other and share a spirit of brotherhood grounded in common values, aspirations and a commitment to peace, prosperity and progress for our people.

"I hope this state visit will open a new chapter in shaping the future direction of relations between the two countries," he said in his address before attending a state banquet hosted by the King of Bahrain King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa on Friday.

King Hamad expressed Bahrain's commitment to being a sincere and constructive long-term strategic partner for Malaysia by strengthening cooperation across various sectors.

"Malaysia's remarkable growth has been achieved through excellence in business, industry and agriculture, areas that also represent Bahrain's strengths.

"Therefore, there are many opportunities for us to benefit each other, particularly in sectors such as banking, financial technology, tourism, agriculture and infrastructure development.

"Your Majesty and your country have been loyal brothers and allies to Bahrain, and in appreciation of Your Majesty's visit I sincerely hope our friendship will continue to grow and flourish in the years to come."

Upon arrival at the Sakhir Palace on Friday night, Sultan Ibrahim was welcomed by King Hamad, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Bahrain Prince Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa and the royal family.

Accompanying Sultan Ibrahim were the Tunku Temenggong of Johor Tunku Idris Iskandar Al-Haj Ibni Sultan Ibrahim, the Tunku Panglima of Johor Tunku Abdul Rahman Al-Haj and the Tunku Putera of Johor Tunku Abu Bakar Al-Haj. – Bernama

DPM's visit to China proves fruitful

SHANGHAI: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's four-day working visit to Shanghai, China concluded successfully, further strengthening economic diplomacy, *halal* trade and technical and vocational education and training cooperation between Malaysia and China.

The mission achieved several milestones, including a total sales of RM1.24 billion recorded at Mimas@Shanghai 2025 within the first three days since Nov 5, as well as the signing of several strategic MoUs between Malaysian agencies and companies with Chinese industry players.

Among the key achievements was the MoU between Mara and Shanghai Jiao Tong University to strengthen cooperation in academics, research and culture.

The agreement aims to establish strategic cooperation in academic development, research and capacity building in line with Mara's global education agenda. – Bernama

Malaysia elected to Unesco Executive Board

Historic win for 7th term underscores nation's role in advancing educational, scientific and cultural cooperation globally

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has made history on the international stage after being elected again to the Executive Board of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (Unesco) for the 2025-2029 term.

This marks the country's seventh term on the board since becoming a member state in 1958.

The Foreign Ministry said in a statement that Malaysia secured 167 votes, winning one of the six seats allocated to Group IV in a vote held during the 43rd Unesco General Conference in Samarkand, Uzbekistan on Friday.

It said the success underscores the country's steadfast role in advancing educational, scientific and cultural

cooperation in line with the aspirations of Asean Vision 2045 and Unesco's global priorities.

"Malaysia looks forward to contributing actively during its term on the executive board and reaffirms its commitment to working closely with the international community to strengthen multilateral cooperation, advance knowledge, harness science and innovation for sustainability and safeguard cultural heritage for the benefit of all."

This achievement complements Malaysia's active roles in two key Unesco subsidiary bodies, namely the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage (2022-2026) and the Intergovernmental Council of the Hydrological Programme (2023-2027).

Malaysia will be represented by the Education Ministry and its Office of the Permanent Delegation of Malaysia to Unesco in Paris during Unesco proceedings, Bernama reported.

Education Minister and Malaysian National Commission for Unesco President Fadhlina Sidek said the achievement represents global recognition of Malaysia's leadership and contributions in advancing the international agenda on education, science and culture for inclusive and sustainable global development.

"On behalf of Malaysia, I extend my deepest appreciation to all Unesco member states for their trust and confidence in our country," she said in a statement.

She said Malaysia's election carries a responsibility of ensuring that the voices of developing countries, particularly in Southeast Asia and the Asia-Pacific, continue to be heard and respected.

She added that the mandate also reflects Malaysia's commitment to building a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future for the next generation.

"Through this new mandate Malaysia will play a strategic role in shaping Unesco's direction for the next four years in line with the Malaysia Madani vision and the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Agenda."



Fadhlina said the mandate reflects Malaysia's commitment to building a more inclusive, peaceful and sustainable future for the next generation. – PIC COURTESY OF WANITA KEADILAN FACEBOOK PAGE

We do not bow to any major power, says PM

BUKIT MERTAJAM: In establishing international relations without yielding to any major power, Malaysia remains a free and sovereign nation, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said this stance enables Malaysia to maintain trade and investment relations with all countries, including the United States (US), China, Brazil and South Africa, for the benefit of the economy and the well-being of its people.

"Yes, we have a good relationship with the US. For example, on that Sunday (at the 47th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur), we signed a trade agreement with the US and had a discussion with President Donald Trump. However, we were immediately criticised as if we were bowing to the US.

"I also invited South African President

Matamela Cyril Ramaphosa, who chairs the G20. Trump announced a ban on all US representatives from attending the G20, but I will attend because Malaysia is a free and sovereign nation. If we were to bow to America's instructions, I would not go."

He was speaking at the groundbreaking ceremony for the traffic dispersal project between Juru Toll Plaza and Sungai Dua Toll Plaza at the Seberang Jaya Expo site yesterday.

Also present were Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi, Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Amir Hamzah Azizan, Human Resources Minister Steven Sim and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar, Bernama reported.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, said although Malaysia signed the trade deal with the US it does not prevent cooperation with other countries, including in the rare earth sector.

"Some say rare earth investments are only with the US. That is completely untrue. In Pahang, Lynas's rare earth operations involve investment from Australia, and another new RM600 million investment has come in through JS Link.

"In Perak, rare earth investments are with China. There is absolutely no restriction. So, when we look at an agreement we also look at the exemptions and opportunities that exist."

Anwar said this pragmatic approach is vital to ensure that Malaysia continues to attract investments in sectors such as semiconductors and green energy.

Our focus not street politics but people's welfare: Amanah chief

SHAH ALAM: Amanah must continue to act as a bridge between the government and the people, said its president Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu, stressing that the party's focus has always been on serving the *rakyat* rather than engaging in street politics.

"Amanah is not a party that shouts in the streets but one that works on the ground," he said in his keynote address during the party's convention yesterday.

Mohamad, who is also Agriculture and Food Security minister, said the two ministries

under Amanah leadership – the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry and the Health Ministry – are the lifeblood of the people.

He said his ministry has successfully reorganised the national subsidy structure, stabilised the prices of chicken and eggs and saved more than RM1 billion in government expenditure.

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry under the leadership of Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad continues to champion the welfare of doctors and patients, introduce digital

systems and strengthen public hospitals.

"These achievements show that when we lead with integrity and trust, the people will benefit, God willing."

Reflecting on the party's journey, Mohamad said Amanah's first 10 years were a "survival phase" focused on building its foundation and earning public confidence.

He added that the party is now entering its second decade, a phase for strengthening and expanding its influence.

Mohamad said there are three

key priorities for Amanah moving forward as a party.

"First, strengthen Amanah's political brand as a progressive Islamic party. Second, fortify the organisation at the grassroots level. Third, nurture a new generation of leadership."

The Kota Raja MP also emphasised the importance of leadership renewal, saying that no leader, including himself, will remain at the top forever.

"Those of us who have been around longer will continue to train and provide opportunities for

younger leaders to carry on the struggle."

He also reminded members that leadership does not belong to any one individual or group but to all within the party, from those hanging posters and flags to those crafting political strategies.

"Every person who holds power must be just and compassionate towards all party members. Leaders must unite, not divide," he said, urging Amanah members to uphold the party's values of fairness and inclusiveness. – By **Ikhwan Zulkaflee**

Cabinet reshuffle PM's prerogative: Mat Sabu

'Appointments or transfers of Cabinet members, whether from political backgrounds or professional circles, right of prime minister'

■ BY **IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE**
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SHAH ALAM: Any decision to reshuffle the Cabinet is entirely the prerogative of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, said Amanah president Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu.

He said the appointment or transfer of ministers, whether from political backgrounds or professional circles, is the absolute right of the nation's leader.

"For Cabinet matters, that is the prime minister's prerogative. He can appoint anyone whether politicians or professionals from any party. That is his role and authority," Mohamad told a media conference after officiating at Amanah's 10th national convention yesterday.

On whether he would be prepared to take up a different ministerial portfolio if asked,



Mohamad being welcomed by party members at Amanah's 10th national convention in Shah Alam yesterday. – **BERNAMAPIC**

Mohamad replied firmly that he is ready to be shifted.

He also clarified that Amanah has not yet held any discussions with the prime minister on the possibility of a reshuffle.

"So far, no discussions have taken place," he said, adding that he had no knowledge whether the Cabinet would be reshuffled soon.

On the Sabah state election, Mohamad said the party is eyeing at least two state seats to contest, including the Sulabayan seat.

"At present, we are focusing on the Sulabayan seat. It's a hot and challenging seat but we are confident of giving our best."

The Kota Raja MP said negotiations among Pakatan

Harapan component parties are ongoing and final seat allocations would be decided closer to nomination day.

When asked about rumours that Warisan president Datuk Seri Mohd Shafie Apdal might contest in Sulabayan, Mohamad said the matter is best answered by the Warisan leadership.

"I don't know about that, you'll have to ask Warisan. Whoever contests, we will face them as part of the democratic process. Whoever we face, we must be confident of victory. That's part of the spirit of contesting in an election."

Reflecting on Amanah's 10-year journey since its founding in 2015, Mohamad said the party has grown significantly despite

being relatively young compared with other political movements.

"PAS existed for more than 60 years before becoming as established as it is today. We are only 10 years old but praise be to God, Amanah continues to grow, especially in the East Coast, northern states and across the peninsula."

He added that Amanah's progressive Islamic values have resonated with a segment of Malaysians seeking moderation and compassion in politics.

"Our struggle is to promote Islam as mercy for all. For too long, Islam has been presented only through jurisprudence and legalistic interpretations, not through the values of humanity and compassion."

GRS vows continued fight for Sabah rights

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah will continue to maintain a constructive and respectful working relationship with Putrajaya and continue to fight for its rights under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), said the Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) presidential council.

The council said in a statement that it also stands firm in its support for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as prime minister.

"His approach, which is based on inclusiveness, openness and concern for the aspirations of the people of Sabah, is highly appreciated, with the GRS-led Sabah government successfully obtaining 13 out of 29 MA63 claims from the federal government.

"In this regard, under the leadership of Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Sabah will continue to maintain a constructive and respectful working relationship with Putrajaya."

The council reaffirmed its absolute and uncompromising determination to fight for the benefits and rights of over three million Sabahans under the Federal Constitution and MA63.

Meanwhile, the Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) announced six candidates on Friday for the upcoming state election.

Two SAPP deputy presidents – Datuk Edward Dagul and Datuk Japiril Suhaimi – were announced as candidates for the Limbahau and Kundasang state seats, respectively.

The party's vice-president Gee Tien Siong will contest the Luyang seat, Youth vice-chairman Yong Yit Jee in Likas, Tanjung Papat vice-chairman Henley Liew Yun Ye in Tanjung Papat and Mudanita chief Yvonne Yong Yit Phung in Segama.

He said three of the six candidates – Yong, Henley and Yvonne – were contesting for the first time.

The Election Commission has set Nov 15 as nomination day for the election, with early voting on Nov 25 and polling day on Nov 29. – Bernama

Public urged to report side-effects of medicines

PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry has called on the public and healthcare workers to play an active role in reporting the side effects of medicines, as part of the annual #MedSafetyWeek 2025 campaign aimed at ensuring the continued safety of medicines in Malaysia.

Held from Nov 3, the campaign is coordinated by the National

Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency and forms part of a global initiative by the World Health Organisation.

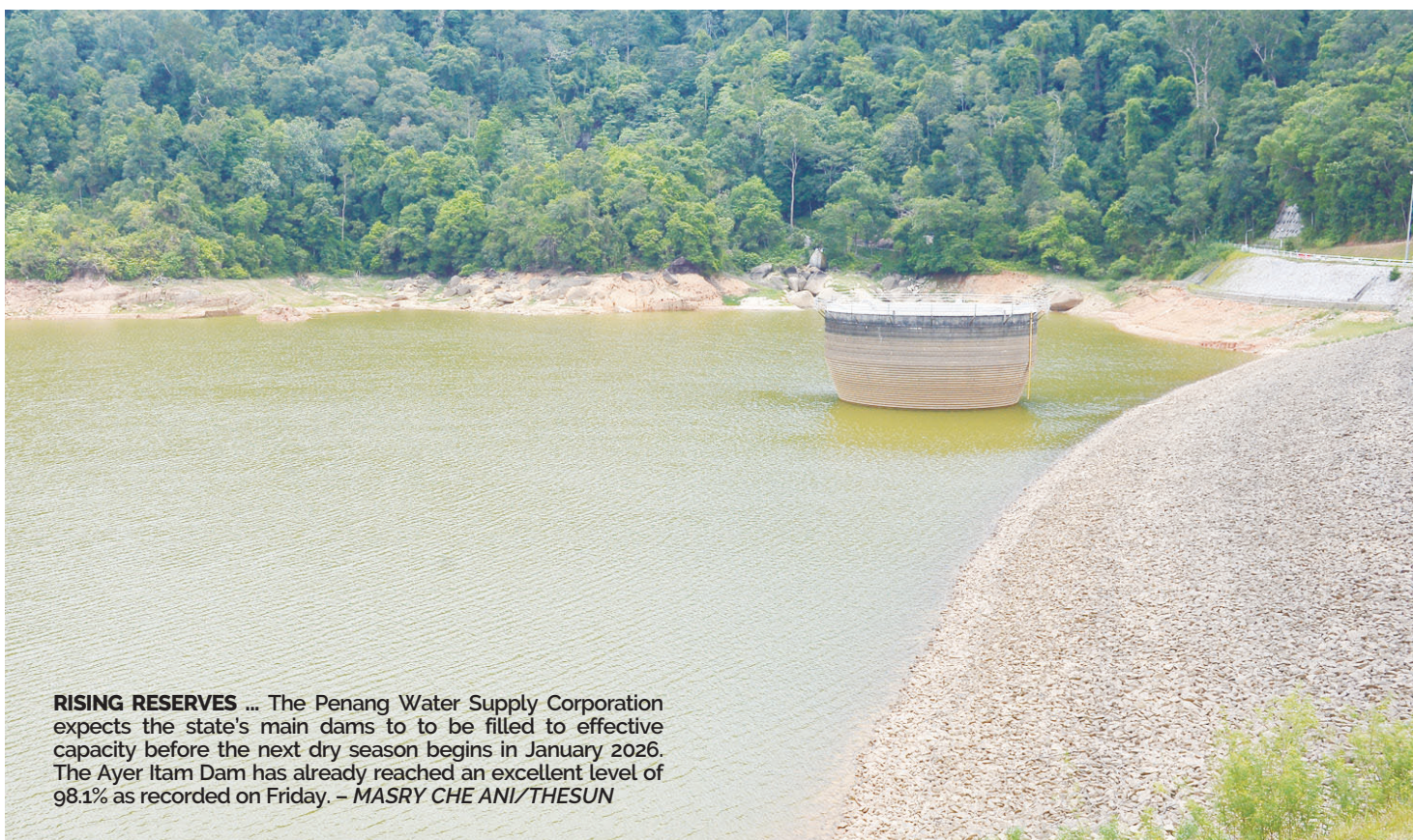
The ministry said the theme "We can all help make medicines safer" underscores that medicine safety is a shared responsibility of all parties, including healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical companies and consumers.

The ministry said monitoring medicine safety is crucial to ensure that products available in the market are both safe and effective.

"All reports of side effects received will be analysed to detect potential new safety risks such as previously unidentified side effects, or to determine appropriate risk mitigation

measures," said the ministry.

Health workers can submit reports through the Hospital Pharmacy Information System or via email at fv@npra.gov.my. Consumers may report suspected side effects by consulting healthcare providers or submitting the Consumer Side Effect Reporting Form directly via email or post. – Bernama



RISING RESERVES ... The Penang Water Supply Corporation expects the state's main dams to be filled to effective capacity before the next dry season begins in January 2026. The Ayer Itam Dam has already reached an excellent level of 98.1% as recorded on Friday. – MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN

Malaysia must process, not export, rare earths

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia should avoid exporting its rare earth elements (REE) in raw form like some African nations that lose economic value by selling unprocessed minerals abroad, said Universiti Malaysia Kelantan Research Management Division director Assoc Prof Dr Abdul Hafidz Yusoff.

He said Malaysia, which holds an estimated 16 million metric tonnes of REE valued at around RM800 billion, must ensure that extraction and processing are guided by technological capability and industrial strategy rather than short-term profit.

"If we mine and sell REE without developing our own processing technology, we will lose out economically. It would be similar to African countries that export raw minerals and later buy back the finished products at much higher prices," he told *theSun* when contacted.

Abdul Hafidz explained that REE is a critical resource for the electrical and electronics industries, particularly in producing batteries for electric vehicles (EVs), as well as in defence applications such as rocket systems.

He added that countries such as China dominate the global EV market largely because they possess REE reserves domestically, while the United States, led by companies such as Tesla, is racing to secure alternative REE sources to remain competitive.

Abdul Hafidz stressed on the importance of developing a complete industrial ecosystem, saying Malaysia must strengthen its capabilities across the REE value chain – covering upstream (exploration), midstream (processing)

With RM800b in REE reserves, nation can be key green tech, EV player through tie-up with Indonesia

and downstream (product manufacturing) stages.

"Malaysia's policy currently prohibits the export of raw REE, so strengthening our midstream processing industry is crucial.

"Without it, we can't fully benefit from our REE potential," he said.

He added that developing local REE technology and processing capacity would allow Malaysia to position itself as a key player in the regional green technology and EV sectors.

Abdul Hafidz welcomed Malaysia's latest move to advance REE processing technology through collaboration with Indonesia's National Research and Innovation Agency (NRIA).

He said NRIA already possesses midstream processing expertise, particularly in the separation of REE elements, although current operations remain small-scale.

"This is a positive development. Even though NRIA's separation process is still small-scale, it shows that the technology works," he said.

Malaysia is set to become the first country outside China to establish a pilot plant for processing REE from ion adsorption clay (IAC) sources, following a strategic collaboration between NRIA and Universiti Teknologi Petronas (UTP).

The agreement was formalised at the Indonesia Research and Innovation Expo in Jakarta, involving NRIA's Research Centre for Nuclear Material and Radioactive Waste Technology, Kuala Lumpur-based Greensnow Sdn Bhd, and several Malaysian research partners.

NRIA's Nuclear Energy Research Organisation head Syaiful Bakhri said the project reflected both nations' commitment to advancing nuclear energy and rare earth mineral research.

"NRIA has mastered the separation technology for uranium, thorium and rare earth metals. Through this collaboration, we aim to apply our research findings further and promote joint downstream technology development with Malaysia," he said.

Indonesia currently has the technical capability to separate rare earth metals with uranium and thorium purity levels below 50 parts per million and a pilot-scale processing capacity of up to 50kg per batch.

The Malaysian pilot plant will be developed with technical support from NRIA and assistance from local institutions, including public universities and national technology agencies.

Once completed, the facility will be the first in the world outside China to process REE from IAC sources, positioning Malaysia strategically to develop downstream industries such as magnet, battery and green energy component manufacturing.

Greensnow Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Nik Abdul Mubin Nik Mahmood said the pilot plant at UTP would build on earlier joint research with NRIA.

"The private sector participation complements the broader government-to-government initiative focused on technology development, knowledge transfer and innovation between the two Asean neighbours."

Food, equipment contamination behind theme park outbreak

SHAH ALAM: The Selangor State Health Department has confirmed that the food poisoning incident during a government agency's family day event at a Petaling Jaya theme park on Oct 4 was caused by contamination of both food and cooking equipment used during meal preparation.

In a statement, the department said it received a notification from the Petaling District Health Office on Oct 6 and subsequently carried out a detailed investigation.

Preliminary findings and active case detection revealed that 322 out of 4,710 individuals exposed experienced symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting and abdominal pain.

"Most of the cases or 92% involved adults, while the remainder were children and teenagers. All affected individuals received treatment and none required hospital admission or intensive care, and no deaths were reported," the statement read.

The statement followed media reports and viral social media posts claiming that over 800 staff and family members from a government agency were affected by the incident during their programme at the theme park.

The department said investigations identified several contributing factors, including insufficient food handlers preparing large quantities of food, prolonged storage before serving and possible cross-contamination during cooking.

A risk assessment found that the source of the food poisoning was contaminated food prepared in the theme park's kitchen.

"As a control and preventive measure, (the department) ordered the closure of the theme park's kitchen for cleaning and disinfection. However, the theme park itself was not closed as the contamination did not originate from the park's general environment," it said.

The kitchen was later permitted to reopen after being certified clean and meeting all food safety requirements.

The department also conducted risk communication sessions and engagement with the theme park management and event organisers to strengthen food hygiene practices.

"Notifications were also sent to other district and state health offices to assist in detecting and monitoring any symptomatic cases," it said.

The department reminded all food handlers to comply with the Food Act 1983 and Food Hygiene Regulations 2009, and to prioritise food safety and cleanliness at every stage of preparation.

Food handlers were also reminded to maintain personal and equipment hygiene, use fresh ingredients and clean water, cook food thoroughly, and ensure it is consumed within four hours of preparation.

"The public is also advised to choose clean food premises, practise the 'see, smell and taste' concept before eating, and seek medical attention at the nearest health facility if they experience symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting or stomach pain after consuming food purchased outside." – Bernama

Analysts split over RM1.5b Sungai Golok security plan

Options include 500m corridor with watchtowers, and technology-driven border surveillance systems

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Security analysts are divided over whether the government should establish a 500m security corridor with physical barriers along Sungai Golok or adopt a targeted, technology-based approach, following the government's approval of a RM1.5 billion allocation to strengthen border control in the area.

Universiti Utara Malaysia border defence researcher Assoc Prof Dr Mohammad Faisal Keling told *theSun*: "It is time for the government to construct a barrier and clear a 500m stretch along the Sungai Golok riverbank to serve as a dedicated security corridor, where multiple observation towers can be built along the entire route.

"Smuggling activities are like a game of 'cat and mouse'. The mouse is more active in areas covered by bushes and thick vegetation, whereas in open, well-lit areas, it is easier for the cat to catch it.

"Likewise, when the government builds more watchtowers, the clearer terrain forces movement into visible spaces, allowing enforcement agencies to observe and respond more effectively."

He said illegal jetties, informal landing points and dense riverbank settlements currently enable smugglers to operate with minimal visibility.

Faisal added that long-standing smuggling activities persist partly because they have become a source of income for certain communities, particularly on the Thai side of the border.

"The issue of border intrusion and cross-border crime along the Malaysia-Thailand frontier must be addressed urgently, as it has persisted for too long.

"If we continue to be lenient simply because some local communities depend on these activities for income, the country loses far greater amounts, running into millions of ringgit every day, from illegal cross-border smuggling.

"And this does not yet include the trafficking of firearms, drugs and other prohibited items," he said.

Faisal also commended the Malaysian Border Control and Protection Agency for its strict stance, under which officers found to be involved in or facilitating border breaches are immediately dismissed.

"With this, we will not lack honest personnel. Immediate dismissal ensures that only those who are responsible and trustworthy remain on the frontline," he said.

Meanwhile, Universiti Teknologi Mara border security analyst Dr Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad cautioned that such a large-scale corridor project could exceed the current RM1.5 billion allocation.

"The construction of a 300km wall with an allocation of RM1.5 billion is an idealistic initiative but not a realistic one.

"With that budget, the cost per kilometre is roughly RM5 million," Ramlan said.

He added that the Sungai Golok riverbank is not a uniform landscape, comprising soft soil stretches, seasonal floodplains and eroded banks, with some homes and small settlements built along the edge.

"This amount may be sufficient for barbed-wire fencing, but not for a solid concrete wall, especially when factoring in land acquisition, design requirements and maintenance in swampy and winding areas," he added.

Ramlan instead proposed identifying specific high-risk

crossing zones, estimated at 50km to 70km, and implementing hybrid security measures combining physical fencing with technology-supported detection systems.

"This means deploying a hybrid physical and technology-based security system, not merely a continuous concrete wall.

"For example, barbed-wire fencing equipped with motion sensors, heat detectors and night-vision cameras linked to a central control centre, as well as electrified fencing powered by solar systems.

"In addition, permanent watchtowers at strategic locations with infrared scanners, high-capacity drones for automated surveillance, and the use of artificial intelligence for real-time data analysis should be strengthened," he said.

The debate on the Sungai Golok security corridor has gained renewed attention following the fatal shooting of Malaysian Mohd Fuad Fahmie, 33, in Kampung Bering on Nov 3.

Personal ties hinder border enforcement

PETALING JAYA: Long-standing familiarity between border enforcement personnel and river communities along Sungai Golok has fostered a pattern of sympathy-driven tolerance that undermines security control, said Universiti Utara Malaysia PhD researcher in Strategic Studies ASP Amirul Abu Hassan.

"These communities are not strangers to the officers stationed there. They share dialects, kinship networks and daily interactions. Because of this familiarity, some officers tend to overlook what they consider 'small' livelihood-related crossings.

"But over time, that tolerance becomes routine and syndicates exploit that space," Amirul told *theSun*.

He said the blurring of social relationships and enforcement responsibilities has created a culture in which informal cross-border movement is treated as normal, reducing the perceived seriousness of smuggling and weakening the deterrence effect of patrol presence.

"In some cases, officers adopt a tolerant or passive stance towards small-scale smuggling activities, either out of sympathy for local residents or due to financial incentives offered by the parties involved.

"Additionally, the way houses are positioned along certain stretches of the Sungai Golok riverbank, with homes sitting (at the water's edge), creates an advantage for smuggling.

"Goods can be moved using small boats tied to ropes and quietly pulled across between the Malaysian and Thai sides."

Amirul said this situation is reinforced by the sociocultural and family links between residents of Rantau Panjang, Kelantan and Sungai Kolok in Thailand, who share Patani-Malay heritage and interdependent economic activity.

"Residents on both sides of the river share Patani-Malay heritage, speak the Kelantan-Patani dialect and maintain cross-border family ties while depending on one another for economic activities such as trade, agriculture and services.

"Because of this demographic and sociocultural reality, Sungai Golok is a particularly fragile border zone, where social and humanitarian considerations often overstep security enforcement."

He said this environment has allowed informal river crossings to operate for decades.

Initially used for family visits and small-scale trade, these routes have gradually evolved into structured smuggling networks, ranging from individuals acting as low-risk runners to organised syndicates transporting drugs, firearms and contraband.

"When the crossing looks like ordinary neighbourly movement, enforcement becomes harder to justify and detect," he said.

Amirul added that strengthening border control will therefore require more than physical infrastructure or seasonal enforcement drives.

He also supported the ongoing dismantling of illegal jetties along the riverbank as a necessary disruptive measure. — **by Faiz Ruzman**



BLAZE CONTAINED ... Fire and Rescue Department personnel in Penang putting out a fire that destroyed a semi-detached house in Kampung Sungai Burung, Balik Pulau yesterday. — PIC COURTESY OF PENANG FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT

Court rejects Briton's appeal in KLIA drug case

PUTRAJAYA: The Court of Appeal has dismissed a British national's bid for leave to appeal against a Magistrate's Court refusal to immediately transfer her drug trafficking case to the High Court.

A three-member bench comprising judges Datuk Wong Kian Kheong, Datuk Hayatul Akmal Abdul Aziz and Datuk Meor Hashimi Abdul Hamid on Friday allowed the prosecution's

preliminary objection, ruling that Deishanei Ciara Hall's leave-to-appeal application was incompetent.

Delivering the court decision, Wong said Section 41(A) of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 is a mandatory provision and that the magistrate cannot automatically transfer the case to the High Court without a chemist report and the public prosecutor's requisition.

Wong, however, urged the prosecution to expedite the chemist report so that Hall's case could proceed without delay.

Hall, 21, was required to obtain leave from the court as her case originated from the Sepang Magistrate's Court.

Drug trafficking cases are initially filed in the Magistrate's Court before being transferred to the High Court.

She was charged at the Sepang Magistrate's Court in April this year for trafficking 19g of cannabis at the narcotics office in KL International Airport on April 12.

In August, the Magistrate's Court dismissed Hall's application for the case to be immediately transferred to the High Court, as the chemist report had yet to be issued. — Bernama

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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200 women complete development course

Participants from six PPR communities trained in entrepreneurship, leadership and socio-economic resilience

KUALA LUMPUR: Celebrating courage and growth, 200 women entrepreneurs from six PPR communities graduated yesterday from the WOW Entrepreneurship Development (WOWED) Programme by Women Of Will (WOW).

The closing ceremony and Community Wellbeing Day marked the culmination of an 18-month journey under the Malaysia UN-SDG Trust Fund – WOWED Programme, which aimed to strengthen women's socio-economic resilience and leadership.

WOW president Datin Goh Suet Lan said the programme not only taught entrepreneurship but also trained 20 women to become community leaders and role models.

She said the initiative was designed in line with WOW's core mission, which is to empower women, particularly those in the lower B40 group.

"It is critical for them to develop their own sustainable livelihoods rather than depend on handouts. That is why our programmes focus on business entrepreneurship and sustainable income generation," she told *theSun*.

Reflecting on lessons learned during the Covid-19 pandemic, Goh said WOW began placing greater emphasis on financial literacy and resilience, as many women entered the pandemic with no savings to fall back on.

She also expressed admiration for the participants, many of whom juggle multiple responsibilities while striving for better lives for their families.

"We are always inspired by the resilience these women demonstrate. They live in challenging environments, and they are constantly multitasking as mothers, wives, housekeepers, businesswomen and teachers.

"Yet, they continue to move forward for the sake of their children."

She added that many of the women who completed the programme emerged with renewed confidence and a stronger sense of purpose.

"They stand taller, prouder and speak louder. You can truly see that transformation, and we are so proud of them," she said.

Through the programme, 73.5% of participants reported an increase in business income, with an average income growth of 60% across all participants, while 72.5% saw significant improvement in



Goh (third from left) said the initiative was designed in line with WOW's core mission to empower women, particularly those in the lower B40 group. – AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

personal savings.

"The 60% income increase represents hundreds of families achieving greater financial stability and dignity. This success is about leadership, unity and empowerment," said Goh.

Yayasan MySDG chairman Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar said Malaysia remains steadfast in its commitment to achieving sustainable development and ensuring that no one is left behind in the nation's progress.

"Malaysia is committed to sustainable development and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

"Yayasan MySDG was entrusted with the mandate to collaborate with the UN in implementing programmes that can enhance the capabilities, income and wellbeing of underserved communities,

including refugees, stateless individuals, the urban poor, women and Orang Asli," he told *theSun*.

Abdul Wahid said Yayasan MySDG has partnered on more than 40 projects with NGOs, with WOW focusing specifically on women entrepreneurs in PPR communities.

"Alhamdulillah, seeing 200 graduates today gives us great pride. Their enthusiasm and growth are inspiring, and we hope they continue to succeed in improving their quality of life."

He said feedback on the programme has been positive, with participants benefitting from capacity building, business training and access to markets.

"What is important now is to ensure they continue to receive guidance and mentoring to sustain their success.

"We also hope to expand such initiatives

nationwide through continued collaboration with WOW and other NGOs to reach more underserved communities."

Abdul Wahid also encouraged women, particularly those from low-income or underserved backgrounds, to take advantage of the many programmes provided by the government and its partners.

"My advice is do not hesitate or feel shy. There are many programmes available, whether through the government or NGOs.

"The goal is to ensure no one is left behind in Malaysia's journey toward shared prosperity and wellbeing," he added.

Since 2016, WOW has partnered with over 3,000 women entrepreneurs across more than 60 communities, nurturing 130 community leaders and indirectly benefiting over 21,000 individuals.

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

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54 hurt in Jakarta school mosque Friday prayer blast

17-year-old student detained as police examine replica of rifle and toy revolver, homemade bomb and remote detonator

JAKARTA: Indonesian police have identified a 17-year-old student as a suspect in an explosion at the State Senior High School 72 in Kelapa Gading, North Jakarta, that injured more than 50 people and disrupted Friday prayers.

National police chief Gen Listyo Sigit Prabowo said Jakarta police and the Densus 88 counterterrorism unit were checking the suspect's background and home.

"Preliminary information shows the suspect is part of the school community.

"That's what we know for now, and investigations are ongoing," he said in a statement on Friday evening.

He said the suspect and another victim were undergoing surgery, while several of the 54



Injured students being treated at the Jakarta Islamic Hospital following the blast. – REUTERS/SPIC

injured, mostly students, had been discharged.

Investigators are examining a replica rifle inscribed with the phrases "Welcome to Hell", and "For Agartha", a reference to a mythical underground world, along with a toy revolver, a homemade bomb and its remote detonator, Bernama reported.

Police are also looking into reports that the suspect had been bullied by classmates.

State news agency Antara reported that a Year 11 student claimed the bomb was brought

by a classmate who was frequently bullied, saying three homemade bombs were planted and two detonated, although police have not confirmed that account of events.

State Secretary Prasetyo Hadi said President Prabowo Subianto had been informed and had ordered that full care be provided to the victims, adding that the incident serves as a reminder to remain vigilant and report any suspicious activity in schools and homes.

Friday prayers at the school

mosque, located inside an Indonesian Navy housing complex, were thrown into chaos by the blast, which sent smoke through the hall and worshippers fleeing, local media reported.

Navy personnel helped evacuate victims to hospital, its spokesperson Rear Admiral Tunggul said.

Teacher Budi Laksono said the Friday sermon had just begun when the explosion occurred at 12.30pm local time, reported *Berita Satu*.

Cambodia pursues economic self-sufficiency

PHNOM PENH: Cambodia is embarking on a major economic transformation to bolster self-sufficiency by promoting its home-grown "Khmer Products" to rely less on imported goods.

Its central policy focuses on building economic self-confidence, leveraging the capacity of small and medium enterprises (SME), and harnessing its demographic advantage to enhance food security – particularly in the fast-moving consumer goods sector.

The strategy has gained momentum as border crossings between Cambodia and Thailand have remained closed since a border conflict in July, slowing imports from the neighbouring country.

"It is a wake-up call for us now, we used to depend a lot on imports from Thailand. Now is a golden chance to improve our economic self-reliance and support our local products and SME." Phnom-Penh-based independent Socio-Economic Researcher Dr Chey Tech told Bernama.

The recent "Khmer Products Exhibition 2025," held twice in the capital, showcased hundreds of locally made items, enhancing the country's economic diversification strategy.

According to government data, about 750,000 micro, small and medium enterprises operate in Cambodia, employing nearly three million people.

Some 60% of these enterprises are managed by women.

Cambodia is also reaping its demographic dividend – at least 60% of its 17 million population is under the age of 30.

"It is good for our SME that were facing difficulties since the Covid-19 pandemic. But now, they can expand their market share. They have enough capital and technology to produce for local and international markets," said Tech.

Local SME primarily operate in the commercial, agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors.

Small-scale producers generate a variety of consumer goods, including instant noodles, bottled water, dried fish, ready-to-eat meat products, sausages, nuggets and burger patties.

N. Korea warns of more 'offensive action'

SEOUL: North Korea's defence minister warned yesterday of more "offensive action", as Washington and Seoul criticised Pyongyang's latest ballistic missile launch.

North Korea's missile launch on Friday came just over a week after US President Donald Trump – on a tour of the region – expressed interest in meeting North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Pyongyang did not respond to the offer.

Pyongyang's defence minister No Kwang Chol said Washington "has become brazen in its military moves to threaten the security" of the North, and that it was "intentionally escalating the political and military tension in

the region".

"We will show more offensive action against the enemies' threat," he said, according to Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Earlier in the week, before Friday's launch, US Pentagon chief Pete Hegseth and his South Korean counterpart visited the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ), where they "reaffirmed the strong combined defence posture and close cooperation" between their countries.

On Wednesday, the US nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS George Washington* arrived in the South Korean port city of Busan for logistics support and crew rest, according to Seoul's

navy – an act No said was "further escalating tensions on the Korean Peninsula".

No also said Hegseth's DMZ visit was meant to "fan up war hysteric".

The US Indo-Pacific Command said on Friday that North Korea's latest ballistic missile launch "highlights the destabilising impact" of Pyongyang's actions, adding that the United States was "consulting closely with our allies and partners".

South Korea's military had strongly condemned Pyongyang's missile launch.

Seoul's military "urges North Korea to immediately cease all actions that heighten tensions between the two Koreas", it said in

a statement.

Trump last week also announced that he had approved South Korea's plan to build a nuclear-powered submarine.

Developing such a submarine would mark a significant leap in South Korea's naval and defence industrial base, analysts say, joining a select group of countries with such vessels.

They have said Seoul's plan to construct an atomic-driven vessel would likely draw an aggressive response from Pyongyang.

South Korean lawmakers said earlier this week that Pyongyang appears ready to promptly carry out what would be its seventh nuclear test, should Kim decide to proceed. – AFP

Philippines issues warning as massive Typhoon Fung-wong set to make landfall

MANILA: The Philippine weather bureau warned of life-threatening storm surges of up to five metres and destructive winds as *Typhoon Fung-wong* churns toward the country's eastern coast, where it is forecast to intensify into a super typhoon before making landfall tonight.

The typhoon's massive circulation, spanning 1,500km, is

already lashing parts of eastern Philippines with heavy rains and winds, Pagasa weather forecaster Benison Estareja said in a briefing.

"It could cover almost the entire country," Estareja said.

Fung-wong, locally named *Uwan*, is currently packing maximum sustained winds of 140kph and gusts of up to 170kph, and could intensify to 185kph as it

nears land, Estareja said, powerful enough to destroy homes, topple trees and structures.

Up to 200mm of rainfall is expected in eastern Philippine provinces, particularly in the Bicol region, as well as parts of Samar, raising the risk of widespread flooding and landslides, while northern and central Luzon could see 100mm to 200mm rainfall

during its passage.

Pagasa urged residents in low-lying and coastal areas to evacuate to higher ground and halt all marine activities, warning of destructive storm surges that could inundate coastal communities, and warned of violent winds.

Several local governments have suspended classes for

tomorrow, and the Philippine national carrier has cancelled some flights, ahead of the arrival of *Fung-wong*.

The warning comes just days after *Typhoon Kalmaegi* left a trail of destruction across the region, killing 204 people in the Philippines and five in Vietnam, and displaced hundreds of thousands of people. – Reuters

US removes Syria president from terror list before visit

WASHINGTON: The United States on Friday formally removed Syrian President Ahmed al-Sharaa from a terrorism blacklist, days before he is set to make a landmark visit to Washington.

The move announced by the State Department was widely expected as Sharaa cooperates with the United States, and comes a day after Washington led a vote by the Security Council to remove UN sanctions on him.

"These actions are being taken in recognition of the progress demonstrated by the Syrian leadership after the departure of Bashar al-Assad and more than 50 years of repression under the Assad regime," State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott said in a statement.

He said Sharaa's government was meeting US demands, including on working to find missing Americans and eliminating any remaining chemical weapons.

Sharaa, once linked to Al-Qaeda, had been considered a "Specially Designated Global Terrorist" by the United States, which once put a bounty on his head.

Sharaa's forces, backed by Turkiye and Gulf Arab powers, swept to power nearly a year ago in a lightning offensive.

Sharaa will visit the White House tomorrow as President Donald Trump promises to help the new Syria.

US ally Israel initially opposed the overtures and has heavily bombed Syria since Assad's fall in hopes of weakening its historic adversary. – AFP

Afghan-Pakistan peace talks fail again

KABUL: Afghanistan's Taliban government said yesterday the latest round of peace talks with Pakistan in Turkiye had failed, blaming Islamabad's "irresponsible and uncooperative" approach.

"During the discussions, the Pakistani side attempted to shift all responsibility for its security to the Afghan government, while showing no willingness to take responsibility for either Afghanistan's security or its own," Taliban government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid posted on social media.

"The irresponsible and uncooperative attitude of the Pakistani delegation has not yielded any results," he said.

Islamabad did not immediately comment on the matter.

Pakistan Information Minister Attaullah Tarar hinted a day earlier that the negotiations were falling through, saying the onus lay on Afghanistan to fulfil pledges to clamp down on terrorism, "which so far they have failed".

"Pakistan shall continue to exercise all options necessary to safeguard the security of its people and its sovereignty," he said.

The two countries met in Istanbul on Thursday to try to finalise a truce agreed on Oct 19 in Qatar, in the wake of the deadliest clashes between the South Asian neighbours since the Taliban returned to power in Afghanistan in 2021. – AFP

Genocide arrest warrant issued against Netanyahu

Turkiye names 37, including Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and army chief Lt-Gen Eyal Zamir

ISTANBUL: Turkiye announced on Friday that it had issued arrest warrants for genocide against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and senior officials in his government over the war in Gaza.

The announcement was met with a firm rebuttal from Israel. Foreign Minister Gideon Saar said Israel "firmly rejects, with contempt" the charges, calling them "the latest PR stunt by the tyrant (Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan)".

The Istanbul prosecutor's office said in a statement that a total of 37 individuals were covered by the arrest warrants, without providing a full list.

They include Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir and army chief Lt-Gen Eyal Zamir.

Turkiye has accused the officials of "genocide and crimes against humanity" that Israel has "perpetrated systematically" in Gaza.

The statement also refers to the "Turkish-Palestinian Friendship Hospital", built by Turkiye in the Gaza Strip and bombed by Israel in March.

Turkiye, which has been one of the most vocal critics of the war in Gaza, last year joined South Africa's case accusing Israel of genocide at the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

A fragile ceasefire has been in force in the devastated Palestinian territory since Oct 10 as part of US President Donald Trump's regional peace plan.

The Islamist group Hamas welcomed Turkiye's announcement, calling it a "commendable measure (confirming) the sincere positions of the Turkish people and their leaders, who are committed to the values of justice, humanity and fraternity that bind them to our oppressed Palestinian people".

Saar said in a post in English on the social media platform X that "in Erdogan's Turkiye, the judiciary has long since become a tool for silencing political

rivals and detaining journalists, judges and mayors".

He added that the Istanbul prosecutor's office "recently orchestrated the arrest of the mayor of Istanbul merely for daring to run against Erdogan", referring to Ekrem Imamoglu, who was detained in March.

Israel's former foreign minister Avigdor Lieberman wrote on X that the arrest warrants for senior Israeli officials "clearly explain why Turkiye should not be present in the Gaza Strip – directly or indirectly".

Turkiye wants to take part in the international stabilisation force intended to play a role in post-war Gaza, according to Trump's plan.

But Ankara's efforts, which include increasing diplomatic contacts in the region and seeking to influence the pro-Israel stance of the United States, are viewed unfavourably in Israel, which considers Turkiye too close to Hamas.

Israeli leaders have repeatedly expressed their opposition to any Turkish participation in the international stabilisation force in Gaza.

Israel has rejected as "false" and "antisemitic" accusations of genocide from a UN-mandated commission, several NGOs and some countries. – AFP

Massive Russian attack hits Ukraine energy facilities

KYIV: A massive Russian attack hit Ukraine's energy infrastructure, killing one person and causing power cuts in several regions, Kyiv authorities said yesterday.

Moscow has in recent months escalated its attacks on energy infrastructure in Ukraine, damaging natural gas facilities which produce the main fuel for heating in the country.

Experts have said Ukraine risks heating outages ahead of the winter months.

"The enemy is massively attacking Ukraine's energy infrastructure again. Because of this, emergency power outages have been introduced in a number of regions of Ukraine," Energy Minister Svitlana Grynchuk wrote on social media, without specifying the locations affected.

"Emergency power outages will be cancelled after the situation in the energy system stabilises," she said.

"Despite the enemy's plans, Ukraine will have light and heat this winter."

Air raid alerts were triggered across Ukraine through the night, with authorities in northeastern Kharkiv and southern Odesa reporting drones strikes on energy facilities.

A drone strike on the eastern city of Dnipro ripped through a nine-storey building, killing one woman and wounding six, including a child, according to emergency services.

In the capital Kyiv, civil and military authorities said falling debris had caused fires at two locations in the central Petchersky district.

Russia has targeted Ukraine's power and heating grid throughout its almost four-year invasion, destroying a large part of the key civilian infrastructure.

Drones also hit energy infrastructure in Ukraine's southern Odesa on Friday evening, the region's governor Oleg Kiper said on Telegram.



Firefighters inspecting an impact site after a Russian drone attack. – REUTERS/SPIC

"There was damage to an energy infrastructure facility," he said, reporting no dead or wounded.

The attacks on energy infrastructure have raised concerns of heating outages in Ukraine as the war enters its fourth winter.

Kyiv's School of Economics estimated in a report that the attacks shut down half of Ukraine's natural gas production.

Ukraine's top energy expert Oleksandr Kharchenko told a media briefing Wednesday that if Kyiv's two power and heating plants went offline for more than

three days when temperatures fall below minus 10°C, the capital would face a "technological disaster".

Ukraine has stepped up strikes on Russian oil depots and refineries in recent months, seeking to cut off Moscow's vital energy exports and trigger fuel shortages across the country.

On Friday evening, drone attacks on energy infrastructure in southern Russia's Volgograd region caused power cuts there, its governor Andrei Botcharov said on Telegram. – AFP

A person in silhouette stands with their arms raised against a vibrant sunset sky. The person is wearing a dark jacket and a hat. The sky transitions from a deep blue at the top to a bright yellow and orange near the horizon. The overall mood is one of freedom and connection with nature.

theSun day

NOVEMBER 9, 2025

Special

ALSO INSIDE

**Fads we loved and
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overload:
How to filter what
you read**

Alone

without feeling lonely



City stillness ... being alone doesn't mean being lonely.

Solitude is not loneliness

Loneliness is the ache of disconnection, a sense that you're unseen, unheard or left behind, even in the presence of others. Solitude, on the other hand, is chosen. It's intentional. It's the space where you meet yourself again – not to fix anything, but to listen.

In our hyper-connected world, we've started to conflate being alone with being irrelevant. The moment we find a pause, we feel we should be catching up – with someone, with something, with the world. It's not just a distraction anymore; it's a

“Solitude is the rebellion that roots you inward.”

Alone without feeling lonely

When solitude becomes a skill, it can anchor you instead of isolating you

BY SIMON VELLA

YOU'RE home. It's quiet. There are no meetings, no visitors, no emergencies. Just ... you. You have time. But instead of relaxing into the stillness, your mind begins to fidget. You reach for your phone without thinking. You scroll. You refresh. You open the fridge for the third time – not because you're hungry, but because you're restless.

You rewatch a show you're not even following. You sit down, but the quiet somehow grows louder. And though you're not quite bored or sad, you feel a low hum of discomfort. Unsettled.

Even in a peaceful room, being alone can feel like a threat – especially when we've spent so much of modern life trying to avoid it.

Many of us think we're comfortable with solitude. We might even pride ourselves on it – solo café visits, quiet walks, independent living. But often, those moments are filled with background noise: music, scrolling, group chats, mindless browsing.

We may be physically alone, but mentally we're in 15 places at once, keeping up with messages, headlines, updates and other people's lives. Aloneness that lacks presence isn't really solitude. It's simply disconnection dressed up as independence – with Wi-Fi.

conditioned reflex. But constant outward attention gradually dulls our inner awareness. Over time, we lose the ability to feel at ease in our own company.

You don't have to be an introvert to enjoy solitude. You just have to build the muscle for it. At first, silence feels unnatural. Stillness can seem like laziness. Your mind may try to escape it. But if you stay – just a little longer each time – something shifts. You begin to hear your own thoughts without trying to silence them.

You allow your emotions to surface without labelling them. You follow your mind's wanderings and discover it still has ideas of its own. That discomfort? It's often the mind relearning how to breathe.



Time alone, with intention ... is one of the most humanising things we can do

Modern life makes solitude hard – but not impossible

Even when we are physically alone, we're rarely disconnected. Our days are shaped by a constant stream of noise – messages, work updates, videos, smart assistants, endless content. In this state of hyper-availability, two things quietly happen: first, we develop a fear of missing out, convinced someone else is living a better version of life; and second, our ability to self-reflect erodes.

When your attention is always outward, your sense of inner clarity grows faint. You don't know why you're exhausted. You can't name what you need. You just

keep moving – stimulated but numb, productive but detached.

When approached with care, time alone becomes an emotional reset button. It helps regulate your nervous system. It reintroduces you to your own rhythm, not the one demanded by notifications or deadlines. In that space, insights appear quietly. Grief finds a way to move through. Creativity reawakens. Priorities gently rearrange themselves.

Some of the most profound shifts don't happen in therapy or conversation. They happen while doing something small and ordinary – sweeping the floor in silence, walking at dusk without headphones,

folding laundry with no background noise. These moments, stripped of performance, make room for presence.

If solitude makes you anxious, you're not alone – most of us weren't taught how to be with ourselves. But it's a skill and like any skill, it starts with practice. Begin small. Ten minutes a day with no agenda. No screens, no music, no to-do list. Just sit. Or take a slow walk. Let your thoughts surface without grabbing at them. Don't aim for clarity. Aim for contact. You're not trying to "do nothing" – you're trying to become reacquainted with yourself, the part of you that lives underneath the replies and tasks and reactions.

“You're not alone – you're just reacquainting yourself with your own company.”

Time alone, with intention ... is one of the most humanising things we can do.

**The Malaysian texture of quiet**

In Malaysia, solitude can feel elusive. We live in dense spaces – flats, terrace houses, shared homes. Family obligations often stretch across generations. Silence isn't always easy to find.

But still, there are windows: morning walks before the city wakes, the quiet after rain, the stillness in places of worship between prayers, an empty park bench. Solitude doesn't need to be grand. It just needs to be noticed. Five minutes of uninterrupted awareness can be as profound as an hour of meditation.

This is the subtle shift: loneliness says, "No one is here with me." Solitude, when well-practised, says, "I am here with myself."

When you spend time alone without rushing to escape it, you begin to learn:

- What you truly enjoy when no one else is watching
- What your emotions are trying to tell you when you slow down enough to listen
- What matters to you beyond trends, scripts and opinions

Being alone isn't a failure of connection. It's the foundation of it. In a world that constantly pulls your attention outward, solitude is the rebellion that grounds you. It's not about withdrawing from others – it's about re-entering your own presence, gently, honestly, without apology. Because once you learn how to enjoy your own company, you'll never fear being alone again.

Making peace with stillness**How can people gradually build comfort with quiet time, especially in high-stimulation environments?**

Start with micro-moments of stillness. You don't have to switch off completely – just carve out small pauses where you let your senses reset. Take your coffee without your phone, look out a window before checking messages or walk without music. These quiet intervals signal to your brain that silence isn't a threat but a space for recovery. Over time, short breaks expand into longer stretches of calm.

Activities that involve gentle focus – such as gardening, sketching or journaling – also help. They engage your attention

without overstimulating you and train your mind to stay focused on one task. The aim isn't total silence; it's learning to be comfortable with less noise.

What role does self-awareness play in reducing feelings of social dependence?

Self-awareness is what anchors solitude. It allows you to notice your emotional patterns rather than react to them. When you recognise the difference between "wanting connection" and "needing distraction", you become less dependent on constant social feedback. That awareness builds confidence in your own presence – a quiet steadiness that travels with you, even in a crowded world.



Fads we loved and left behind

BY HANNEF ESQUANDER



TRENDS come and go. What changes faster than a trend is a fad. One day, it is all around you and with just the blink of an eye, it is over and everyone forgets and moves on. But trends and fads make our lives more fun. They bring joy and add some colour to our daily life. It is not about trying to blend in or losing our sense of individuality, because we choose and decide what we like and don't like. We are just in it for fun. That is what this is all about.

Tamagotchi

Before smartphones, Tamagotchi was the only gadget we carried around with us as kids. These little digital pets needed feeding, cleaning and attention or they would go straight to pet heaven. Most importantly, Tamagotchi taught us about responsibility. Pocket-sized and pixelated, Tamagotchis became the ultimate playground status symbol in the late '90s.

While their chirping was sometimes annoying, owning one felt like being part of an unspoken club. Even now, seeing one triggers a wave of nostalgia. With the current wave of nostalgic comebacks, Tamagotchi has been re-released and updated with a colour screen and Wi-Fi connectivity to elevate the experience. It may be time to hatch one again.

Labubu

Labubu is a craze that is hard to ignore. Some might think they are ugly, but the sales figures of Popmart, the Chinese retailer where these little monsters are sold, prove otherwise. Popmart saw a 726.6% increase in just one year, with *The Monsters* series generating 3 billion yuan in 2024, up from 368 million yuan the previous year. It is impossible to take the train or walk through the mall without

seeing a Labubu dangling from someone's handbag, phone or even belt loop.

But what is Labubu without its predecessors? All the other fads that were equally fun and cute from yesteryear may have come and gone, but for those who were part of it when it was cool, we might still have them somewhere in storage or in a box stowed away under the bed. It may be time to take them out and give them a second life.



Beanie Babies

With their heart-shaped tags and punny names, Beanie Babies were once considered serious investments. People lined up outside shops and paid big money, convinced these stuffed animals would one day fund university tuition. Not really the case, but we had our fun.

Each Beanie had its own backstory, adding charm and personality. There is a special edition purple Beanie with a white rose on its chest, released in honour of the passing



of Princess Diana in 1997. Although they were special, these purple Beanies were not limited edition. Adults genuinely thought they would be worth something in the future. That future is now, and sadly, the purple Beanie's estimated value is only around US\$200 on the resale market.

Pokémon

Few fads have had the staying power of Pokémon. From Game Boy screens to the TV screen, it was more than a game; it was a lifestyle. Every kid had a favourite Pokémon and the hunt to 'catch 'em all' felt like a never-ending adventure that spanned playgrounds and weekends.

Perhaps it is not quite right to call Pokémon a fad, since it evolved and has stuck around. With new generations and spin-offs, Pokémon continues to connect people across ages. Whether you are trading cards, playing Pokémon GO or collecting the plushies, the franchise is not going anywhere any time soon.

Troll dolls

Wild neon hair and jewel-studded bellies made Troll dolls bizarre and a little creepy, but absolutely beloved. Their odd charm and goofy expressions made them irresistible collectables in the '90s. Kids braided their hair, swapped them like Pokémon cards and some even believed they brought good luck.

They were not just toys; they had personalities. Some were themed, others just plain weird, but all brought joy and colour to our lives. The Trolls of today may look different because they have been modernised by DreamWorks, which produced all the films. Some may not like the new look, but they are still as cute.



Furby

When Furby hit the scene, it was like owning a tiny alien that spoke its own language. Its blinking eyes and robotic voice were both fascinating and slightly terrifying. People were buying all the different versions released. Parents were not exactly happy because these Furbies did not come cheaply.

As creepy as they sometimes were, Furby brought a kind of magic. It felt like a step toward the future, a talking pet that could remember things. Now they sit somewhere in the storeroom collecting dust, but why not try inserting some batteries to see if it still talks?



IN times when artificial intelligence (AI), cloud adoption and digital transformation are reshaping economies, networks are no longer just about connectivity. They have become the “central nervous system” of business – underpinning growth, enabling innovation and standing as the first line of defence against increasingly complex cyber threats.

Lee Chee Kheong, managing director of Cisco Malaysia, shares why Malaysia’s digital future depends on rethinking infrastructure not as a series of incremental upgrades but as a fundamental architectural shift. He argues that the demands of AI, coupled with new security realities, mean businesses must view the network as a strategic asset – agile, intelligent and inherently secure.

Infrastructure transformation is often mistaken for a technical upgrade or expansion. According to Lee, this is a misconception.

“We are seeing fundamental architectural shifts in the network today – what it is, what it enables and how it protects the organisation, especially with AI in the picture,” he said.

AI is now a top business priority, with 98% of Malaysian companies reporting an increased urgency to deploy it over the past year. Yet this rapid uptake has also created complexity in network traffic, forcing businesses and global service providers to rethink requirements around computing power, storage, bandwidth and security.

“Every new agent in the system is both an asset and a potential risk. Businesses must reimagine their entire digital infrastructure instead of approaching it as a simple upgrade of existing systems,” he said.

With digital operations expanding, security can no longer be treated as an afterthought. The network, Lee said, now acts as both the first and last line of defence.

“With the rise of agentic and generative AI, we’re seeing an entirely new class of risks at an unprecedented scale,” he said.

“Threat actors are using AI to launch sophisticated attacks such as prompt injection and AI-enhanced social engineering, while employees’ use of unsanctioned AI tools – what we call Shadow AI – introduces further risks.”

Cisco’s Cybersecurity Readiness Index 2025 paints a stark picture: 93% of Malaysian businesses reported AI-related security incidents in the past year, yet only 3% are fully prepared to face current threats.

“To manage these risks, security must be deeply integrated into the network itself,” Lee said.

He recommended a zero-trust framework, leveraging AI for threat detection and unifying security and network operations teams to ensure complete visibility.

The risks of legacy systems

For organisations still relying on legacy infrastructure, the stakes are high. It doesn’t just slow things down – it prevents businesses from fully leveraging AI and emerging technologies. A Cisco AI Readiness Index found that only 14% of Malaysian businesses are fully prepared to adopt AI. Infrastructure remains a major obstacle, with gaps in computing capacity, network performance and cybersecurity.



Modern networks, smarter security

BY DAYANA SOBRI

“Security today is non-negotiable. In a hyper-distributed landscape, businesses need policies and centralised controls to secure everything, everywhere,” he said.

One of the biggest mindset shifts needed is in how businesses view their networks. No longer should they be seen purely as a cost centre.

“A decade ago, technology was about keeping the lights on. Today, it is an enabler of growth, innovation and productivity. IT leaders are already reporting that networks are delivering value by improving customer experience, boosting efficiency and enabling innovation,” he added.

The challenge, however, is ensuring that value is not built on fragile foundations. Infrastructure not designed for AI or real-time scaling will inevitably fail to deliver. For this reason, Lee argued, business leaders – not just IT teams – must champion infrastructure transformation as a strategic priority.

Autonomous networks: Barriers and opportunities

Autonomous networks, capable of making real-time adjustments with minimal human intervention, are increasingly recognised as the future. Yet many Malaysian businesses have yet to embrace them.

“First, autonomous networks require architectural streamlining – converging IP, optical and transport layers to reduce complexity. Second, they demand a talent and mindset shift. Teams must move from managing inputs to guiding outcomes. Finally, governance around the ethical and responsible use of AI is essential,” Lee outlined three barriers.

- **Data:** breaking down silos and improving observability.
- **Governance:** strengthening cybersecurity and ethical practices.
- **Talent:** building skills and fostering innovation.
- **Culture:** encouraging collaboration across IT, security and business units.

A cornerstone of future networks is intelligent automation. Traditional networks can take days to implement changes; automated systems can do so within minutes.

“Intelligent automation shifts networks from reactive to proactive. In the age of agentic AI, networks must run at machine scale with close human-agent collaboration,” Lee said.

Sustainability and ESG alignment

Modern networks also have an environmental dimension. As companies pursue environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals, smarter infrastructure can reduce energy consumption and waste.

“The network is core to sustainability, from managing energy more efficiently to providing insights into consumption patterns,” Lee said.

Innovations such as Power over Ethernet reduce the need for separate power supplies, while cloud-managed platforms allow real-time monitoring of energy use. Advances in chip design, such as Cisco’s Silicon One, also reduce hardware requirements, lowering power consumption and electronic waste. Take-back and reuse programmes for end-of-life hardware will further support circular practices.

Regional markets like Malaysia often look to technology partners not just for tools but for strategic guidance.

“Trusted partners are critical in helping organisations modernise and secure their infrastructure. They provide not only best-in-class technology but also advisory support, from ESG compliance to regulatory requirements,” he said.

Looking ahead, Lee believes the roles of chief information officers (CIOs) and chief technology officers (CTOs) will continue to expand. No longer mere custodians of IT, they will be central to shaping business strategy.

“In the next five years, CIOs and CTOs will need to leverage technology for customer experience and revenue growth, understand how data and AI intersect with infrastructure and make cybersecurity a company-wide effort,” he said.

Environmental priorities will also rise. “Energy management, responsible procurement and device lifecycle management will become board-level concerns. Technology leaders must be both strategists and champions for sustainability.”

The message is clear: Networks are no longer background utilities but strategic assets that determine whether businesses thrive or falter in an AI-first world.

For Malaysian enterprises, the challenge is twofold – building agility to seize new opportunities and embedding security and sustainability at every layer. The reward is resilience, growth and readiness for a digital future that is already unfolding.

As Lee concluded, “The businesses that succeed will be those that reimagine infrastructure not as a burden, but as the very foundation of their innovation and long-term success.”



Businesses must reimagine their entire digital infrastructure instead of approaching it as a simple upgrade of existing systems.”

Lee

The human factor is crucial. Rather than fixing errors manually, future teams will focus on training systems, ensuring fairness and transparency, and protecting intellectual property.

For businesses looking to modernise, assessing readiness across six key pillars is crucial:

- **Strategy:** securing executive commitment to long-term goals.
- **Infrastructure:** investing in scalable, secure systems for AI workloads.



Information overload: How to filter what you read

BY ASHRAF WAHAB

FILTERING what you read is essential in this day and age.

There's an adage that goes, "Information is knowledge and knowledge is power." That's because in the old days, access to information was scarce. Even censorship works by denying or limiting access to information.

However, the world is perpetually evolving. We live in an age where the news never sleeps. Our phones buzz with updates from WhatsApp groups, Instagram reels, TikTok feeds and online news portals – all competing for attention before we've even had our first sip of coffee.

This can be exciting, but it can also be overwhelming. If you've ever felt paralysed by the sheer volume of articles, opinions and "breaking news" popping up on your screen, you're not alone. This is what experts call 'information overload'.

Going back to what we said earlier

about censorship, it works in a completely different mechanism in today's age. It now floods people with premature, irrelevant and often fake information. Having power no longer means having access to data. Instead, having power in this era means knowing what information to filter and ignore.

Malaysians are right in the thick of it, too. Elrafaei Sapi, a media consultant and former award-winning journalist with over two decades of experience, confirms that the real danger is not just the flood of information but the way it shapes how we think and react.

"The biggest concern is that people are quick to believe what they read without verifying the source. Many even share and comment emotionally based only on the headline," he said.

So how do we cut through the noise? Let's explore why information overload matters and how we can better manage it.

The shift from newspapers to smartphones

Not too long ago, Malaysians relied on newspapers, radio and television for updates. There was a certain rhythm to it: the morning paper with kopi O, the evening TV bulletin after dinner. Those days feel distant now. With smartphones, news doesn't wait for us – it finds us.

Elrafaei noted that the credibility once attached to mainstream media has been eroded by the sheer convenience of digital platforms. In just a few seconds, you can access information from all corners of the world. While this has democratised access to knowledge, it has also blurred the line between what's accurate and what's misleading.

The problem is not only about misinformation but also about volume. Even accurate news, when delivered in torrents, can overwhelm our ability to process and act on it.



The biggest concern is that people are quick to believe what they read without verifying the source."

Elrafaei



Signs you're drowning in information

Think you're immune to information overload? Consider these tell-tale signs:

- You find yourself gossiping or debating endlessly about the latest headlines
- You frequently post or comment on social media, often reacting emotionally
- You forward messages in WhatsApp groups without checking their authenticity
- You feel drained after scrolling, but not necessarily more informed

Sound familiar? If so, you may be passively consuming information rather than critically filtering it. And the truth is, when we're overloaded, our brains default to shortcuts. We skim headlines, rely on widely shared online posts and fall into echo chambers where algorithms feed us more of what we already believe.

The double-edged sword of alternative media

Mainstream media still matters, but in Malaysia, many now turn to online portals and social platforms as their primary sources of news. That's not always a bad thing. Independent portals can highlight stories overlooked by traditional outlets. But as Elrafaei cautioned, not all portals are run by trained journalists. Some are set up without regard for media ethics, which opens the door to sensationalism and clickbait.

He believed that every news portal should be required to register officially, much like how citizens must have identity cards. His reasoning was straightforward.

"Without proper accountability, portals can publish misleading content that sparks provocation or confusion," he said.

Whether or not such regulation becomes reality, the takeaway for readers is clear: trustworthiness should come before virality.

Filtering information isn't just about spotting fake news. It's about developing media literacy – the ability to access, analyse and evaluate information critically.

In Elrafaei's view, this literacy gap explains why some Malaysians are more vulnerable to manipulation than others. Factors like age, education level, career and life experience all shape how we process information. The challenge, then, is building awareness across the board.

Government campaigns and partnerships with trusted media outlets can help, but the responsibility also lies with us as individuals. After all, every share, like and retweet reinforces what others see online.



Practical ways to take control

So, what can you do starting today to avoid drowning in digital noise? Here are some practical habits drawn from Elrafaei's advice and broader best practices:

- **Read beyond the headline:** Headlines are designed to grab attention, not tell the whole story. Always read the article before reacting or sharing.
- **Check the source:** Ask yourself, is this from a registered, credible news agency or an obscure site with no track record?
- **Pause before sharing:** Put it simply, "Think before you act." One careless post can damage reputations or even land you in legal trouble.



Social media can both connect and confuse – knowing what to trust makes all the difference.

- **Limit your sources:** Choose a handful of reliable outlets you trust. You don't need ten apps pinging you with the same news.
- **Set boundaries:** Instead of scrolling endlessly, dedicate specific times of day to reading news. Treat it like checking emails – structured, not constant.
- **Engage critically:** If something sounds too outrageous, it probably is. Do a quick fact-check with other sources before forming an opinion.
- **Stay positive online:** Avoid leaving comments that are inflammatory or touch on sensitive issues like race, religion or royalty.

These habits may sound simple, but they require discipline. Just like eating healthier or exercising, mindful news consumption is about long-term habits, not quick fixes.

Journalists aren't immune either

Interestingly, even journalists suffer from information overload. Elrafaei recalled how some reporters now rely heavily on social media posts as the basis of their

stories. While this may be efficient, it risks compromising accuracy.

"Follow-up reporting is crucial to show credibility and professionalism," he stressed.

His own career – spanning stints at *Kosmo!*, *Harian Metro*, *Astro Gempak* and his own media ventures such as *Kafebuzz* and *Filem Malaysia* – have taught him the value of going beyond what's trending. For journalists and readers alike, the lesson is the same: Shortcuts may boost clicks, but depth builds trust.

As if social media weren't enough, artificial intelligence (AI) has added another layer of complexity. Tools that can generate essays, mimic human voices or even create deepfake videos make it more complicated than ever to distinguish fact from fiction.

Elrafaei acknowledged the benefits of AI but warned that it also accelerates information overload. The solution? Developing sharper critical thinking skills and cross-checking multiple reliable sources before believing what we see.

For young professionals in particular, the overlap of work emails, breaking news and endless social feeds can be mentally exhausting. The key is to practise restraint online. Don't create fake accounts to vent frustrations. Don't jump into hostile debates. Remember that what you consume influences how you think and behave.

He emphasised the importance of maintaining positivity and civility in the digital space. After all, no one benefits when we treat the internet like a dumping ground for negativity.

Filtering with wisdom

At the end of the day, it boils down to a single principle: Think before you act. In other words, pause before hitting "share", before leaving that heated comment, before letting a viral story hijack your emotions.

Because in an age of information abundance, wisdom lies not in knowing more but in understanding better. So, the next time your phone buzzes with yet another notification, take a deep breath. Ask yourself: Is this worth my time, my energy or my credibility? If the answer is no, swipe it away guilt-free. That is the best way to stay afloat in a sea of endless updates.



Information overload can affect anyone, from casual readers to seasoned journalists.



A cup of green tea delivers a soothing balance of caffeine and antioxidants for calm focus and sustained energy.

DIPPED in femininity and tradition, green tea is far more than just a pretty beverage in your ceramic cup. Long before the *matcha* craze dominated café menus and skincare trends, this emerald-hued elixir had already secured a sacred place in Japanese culture, not just as a symbol of Zen but as a daily health ritual.

Praised for its antioxidant-rich profile and gentle caffeine kick, green tea delivers a cocktail of wellness benefits. From lifting your mood to supporting your heart, here's why this age-old drink remains modern wellness's best-kept secret, backed by both tradition and science.

1. Mood booster with a side of brain power

Green tea contains a unique amino acid called L-theanine, which has been shown to promote the production of alpha brain waves associated with a relaxed yet alert state.

According to a 2008 study published in *Biological Psychology*, L-theanine increases activity in the brain's frontal and occipital regions within 30 minutes of ingestion, helping calm the mind without sedation.

Unlike the jolt of coffee that spikes and crashes, green tea offers a gentler, sustained boost. Its combination of low-dose caffeine (roughly 30-50mg per cup) and L-theanine creates what researchers call "attentional alertness" – improved focus without the frayed nerves.

So, if you're craving clarity without chaos, green tea could be your go-to.

2. Calm focus without the caffeine crash

You've probably heard that green tea makes you calm, but why? It's all in the L-theanine-caffeine synergy.

Research from the *Journal of Nutrition* shows that L-theanine not only supports dopamine production (your brain's pleasure chemical) but also reduces cortisol levels, the primary hormone responsible for stress.

Together, these compounds balance each other beautifully. While caffeine increases alertness, L-theanine modulates overstimulation, meaning you get sharper attention with a stabilised heart rate. No jitters, no anxious spirals – just a gentle ascent into productivity.

3. A subtle metabolism kick for weight goals

Green tea isn't a magic bullet for fat loss, but it can assist when paired with a healthy lifestyle. The hero here is EGCG (epigallocatechin gallate), a catechin shown to enhance fat oxidation.

In a study published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, participants who consumed green tea extract burned 17% more fat during moderate exercise compared with those who didn't.

It also mildly boosts thermogenesis, your body's heat production process, which can enhance calorie burn. While it won't replace your gym session, sipping a few cups a day may improve your body's fat-burning potential over time, especially when paired with physical activity and mindful eating.



Rich in polyphenols like EGCG, green tea helps protect the skin from UV damage and supports healthy ageing.

5 power-packed perks of green tea

Beyond its tasty flavour and trendy appeal, here are five feel-good reasons green tea deserves a spot in your daily routine

BY AQILAH NAJWA JAMALUDDIN

4. Antioxidants to defend and repair

You've heard the term "antioxidant" thrown around in skincare ads, but green tea is the real deal. Packed with polyphenols like EGCG, it helps neutralise free radicals – unstable molecules that damage cells, accelerate ageing and contribute to chronic diseases.

Free radicals are formed both internally (during metabolism) and externally (from sun exposure, smoking and pollution).

Left unchecked, they wreak havoc on collagen, elastin and even your DNA. Antioxidants from green tea fight oxidative stress, aid cellular repair and support glowing, resilient skin from within.

A 2010 review in the *Journal of the American Academy of Dermatology* found that green tea polyphenols can protect the skin against UV damage when consumed regularly.

5. A tonic for the heart

Cardiovascular health is often overlooked until trouble starts, but green tea has quietly earned recognition as a heart-loving powerhouse. A large-scale cohort study in Japan involving more than 40,000 participants found that those who drank five or more cups a day had a 26% lower risk of death from cardiovascular disease compared with non-drinkers.

How? Green tea's polyphenols help prevent oxidation of LDL (bad) cholesterol, reduce triglyceride levels and improve arterial flexibility. They also support endothelial function, which affects how blood vessels contract and relax – a key factor in blood pressure regulation.

Just one to three cups a day can already contribute to better circulation, lower blood pressure and a reduced risk of heart-related issues. It's like giving your heart a spa day every day.



Regular green tea drinkers have been shown to enjoy better heart health and lower cholesterol levels.

So, should you switch?

Whether you're sipping to feel better, age more slowly or simply swap your third latte for something gentler, green tea offers a beautiful balance of ancient ritual and modern research. Not all wellness trends stand the test of time, but this one has brewed itself into history for good reason.

If you're new to the habit, start with one cup daily, ideally brewed fresh (not bottled) to retain maximum antioxidants. And if you're feeling fancy, explore *matcha*, its powdered counterpart, which delivers a more concentrated dose of all the above.

Drink up the green tea – your skin and heart will thank you.

Did you know?

- **Matcha vs green tea:** *Matcha* contains three times more antioxidants than regular green tea because the whole leaf is consumed.
- **Best time to drink:** Avoid drinking it on an empty stomach. Morning or post-meal is ideal.
- **Brew tip:** Steep at 80°C (not boiling) to preserve nutrients and prevent bitterness.



Syafiq has cemented his status as one of Malaysia's most popular actors

AFTER more than a decade in the entertainment industry, actor Syafiq Kyle has firmly established himself as one of the country's most popular actors. Winning not only trophies at prestigious award shows for both television and film but also the hearts of fans across the local entertainment scene, Syafiq has acted in more than 25 movies, including *Langit Terbelah*, *Halimun* and *Blood Brothers: Bara Naga*, which is currently the third highest-grossing movie of all time in Malaysia at RM76 million.

The Kuala Lumpur-born actor's most popular television series is *Nur*, which aired from 2018 to 2019, with 11 million viewers tuning in for its debut episode. One of his latest works for television, *One Cent Thief*, which premiered in 2022, made it to NME's list of Asia's best television shows of that year. Not bad for someone who, in 2011, came second in *Hero Remaja*, an annual talent search and personality competition for young men organised by a local magazine.

Syafiq Kyle is in his own lane

BY HANNEF ESQUANDER

Syafiq has played many memorable characters throughout his career. From a religious teacher to a police inspector, he has stretched his acting muscles far and wide in pursuit of his craft.

"The most challenging role I've taken on was one that required me to delve deep into emotions and experiences quite different from my own. It pushed me to explore new aspects of my craft. So far, I'd say it would be Iman from *One Cent Thief*, a series loosely based on a true story and Ariff, a character from one of my recent movies, *Blood Brothers*," Syafiq said.

Some of these emotional and heavy scenes require months of preparation. Syafiq's process involves immersing himself in the character's backstory and emotions. Sometimes, he even listens to music that resonates with the scene or reflects on personal experiences that evoke similar feelings, helping him connect.

"I hope to continue growing as an actor, taking on diverse roles that challenge me. I also aspire to explore directing or producing, bringing my own stories to life," he added.

The balancing act

Syafiq always ensures there is a balance between his professional and personal life. His wife, fellow actress Mimi Lana, has been a major priority since they got married in February this year.

"When I'm not on set, I love spending time with my family and friends, travelling and exploring new hobbies. I am also a coffee lover. Having simple moments together with my loved ones over a cup

of coffee like *Kopiko Macchiato* really helps me recharge and find inspiration in everyday life. Whether it's catching up with loved ones or taking a quiet break for myself, coffee has become my little go-to ritual," Syafiq shared.

Despite his success, Syafiq never stops reminding himself of his roots and the people who supported him along the way. Staying connected to his community and engaging in meaningful conversations helps him remain grounded. He not only values his own journey but also supports and respects the talents of those walking alongside him in the creative industry. Local director Din Said and prolific actor Beto Kusyairi are among the talents Syafiq truly admires and would love to work with in the future.

But Syafiq is far from limiting himself to acting alone. While his career in front of the camera has taken up a significant portion of his life, his passions extend well beyond the screen. He is equally enthusiastic about exploring other creative avenues, such as writing. He also maintains a strong commitment to personal health and fitness. Moreover, Syafiq is deeply driven to give back, actively engaging in community initiatives that enable him to make a meaningful impact.

Recently named the new face of *Kopiko*, Syafiq has embraced opportunities to participate in outreach efforts and public events that bring him closer to everyday people. These interactions not only help him stay grounded but also serve as a powerful source of inspiration, fuelling both his personal and professional growth.

"Being an actor is not all glamour and as simple as it seems. My advice to young aspiring actors out there is to stay true to yourself and be persistent. Take every opportunity to learn and grow, whether it's through classes, auditions or small roles. Passion and dedication are key. There will be hard times and pressure, especially now that social media has become a part of our lives. I try to share only what feels authentic to me. I believe in maintaining a balance and not feeling obligated to share every moment," he said at the end of the conversation.



Playing complex characters like Ariff in *Blood Brothers* pushed him to grow as an actor.



I believe in maintaining a balance and not feeling obligated to share every moment."

Syafiq

Whispers of care

As the country works to improve its health sector, the harsh reality of neglected healthcare in rural Malaysia remains visible

BY AQILAH NAJWA JAMALUDDIN



BEFORE sunrise in rural Sarawak, a mother wakes her feverish child. The closest clinic is two hours away by longboat and car. The journey costs more than a week's groceries and when they arrive, the doctor is only in on Fridays.

This is the unseen reality of healthcare for millions of Malaysians living far from city hospitals.

In Kuala Lumpur, medical care feels effortless, with clinics on every corner and hospitals minutes away. But in villages scattered across Sabah, Sarawak and the interior of Peninsular Malaysia, access to healthcare is still a matter of distance, cost and luck.

Despite decades of progress, gaps remain.

According to the Health Ministry, nearly a quarter of Malaysians live in rural areas, yet only around a third of healthcare providers serve them. In some districts, clinics lack full-time doctors.

Others have no laboratory, ambulance or pharmacy services, leaving patients to wait or travel further for even basic treatment.

These shortcomings are not just inconvenient; they are dangerous. Infant mortality among Orang Asli communities is more than five times the national average. In Sabah, the doctor-patient ratio is still far below the World Health Organisation (WHO) recommended standard of one doctor for every 600 people, standing closer to one for every 2,000 in some districts.



A nurse administering to villagers in rural Sabah under the "Leaving No One Behind" initiative.



Progress in healthcare access can feel slow, but every individual helped is a victory."

Abdullahi

In many villages, people delay care because the journey is too costly or too exhausting to make unless absolutely necessary. The consequences are severe: Preventable illnesses spiral into emergencies and conditions that could have been managed early become life-threatening.

"This is not about neglect, but about uneven progress – a health system that has improved dramatically overall, yet still struggles to reach its farthest communities," said Dr Abdullahi Sherif, managing director of MSD Singapore, Malaysia and Brunei.

"No one should be left behind when it comes to access to appropriate and effective healthcare. An effective health system is one where people can access the right intervention at the right time, no more and no less."

Distance is not the only challenge. Even when services are available, they are not always used. According to the Malaysia Health Literacy Survey 2023, only one in four adults has an excellent understanding of how medicines, vaccines and screenings prevent disease.

Almost half of Malaysian adults have only a basic or limited level of health literacy, with the lowest rates among older people, those with little formal education and those in rural areas.

"People first need to know why preventive care matters," he said.

"Clear, clinically led education helps communities understand how vaccines, medicines and screenings protect them and their families. When individuals understand the benefits, they make better choices and that enhances public health as a whole."

In many rural areas, misinformation fills the gap left by scarce knowledge. Some families refuse vaccinations out of fear or rely solely on traditional remedies until illness becomes critical.

These are not simply cultural preferences, but decisions made without access to clear, trusted information.



Healthcare is not just a service. It is a promise that every Malaysian deserves to be seen, heard and healed.

The good news is that collaboration works. In 2024, the “Leaving No One Behind” initiative, led by the National Cancer Society Malaysia with support from the Health Ministry and MSD, delivered around 300,000 HPV vaccine doses to vulnerable groups – many of them in remote parts of the country.

“It was particularly impactful to see this reach communities that are traditionally hard to access,” Abdullahi said.

“Each person vaccinated is potentially saved from HPV-related cancers. When the government, NGOs and private companies work together, extraordinary things can happen.”

The programme did more than provide vaccines. It educated families about cervical cancer prevention, helping to dispel myths and build trust in modern healthcare.

MSD’s commitment extends beyond

vaccination. The company has been Malaysia’s top sponsor of clinical trials for several years, connecting local doctors and scientists to global research networks. This ensures that breakthroughs are not just imported, but also developed locally.

“Successful partnerships that are informed by community needs bridge the gap between innovation and access.

“This is how we turn scientific progress into real-world benefits,” he said.

Such collaborations are essential in building systems that last. As Abdullahi explained, governments provide direction and infrastructure, healthcare providers offer clinical leadership, NGOs bring grassroots insight and private companies add resources and expertise.

“This combined effort achieves better health outcomes than any one group alone. It is important to have multi-sector collaboration to deliver lasting impact.”

Malaysia’s 13th Malaysia Plan calls for stronger health promotion, better literacy and equitable access to care. Digital tools, such as teleprimary care, are already helping patients connect with doctors remotely. Still, technology cannot replace a clinic that has no staff, no medicine or no reliable road to reach it.

“To close the gap, rural communities need doctors willing to serve outside the city, transport links that connect clinics to patients and consistent investment in

education programmes that help people recognise when to seek help,” he said.

“Technology can amplify these efforts, but it cannot replace them,” he stressed.

The work also requires tackling misconceptions about disease prevention head-on.

“One of the biggest challenges is misinformation and the hesitancy it breeds,” he said.

“The world has made incredible progress with vaccines and screenings, but if people have misconceptions, the very people who could benefit most may refuse these potentially life-saving tools. Building trust through respectful community engagement is essential.

Young Malaysians entering the healthcare field play a crucial role. Progress in healthcare access can feel slow, but every individual helped is a victory. If you keep your compass set on improving people’s lives, the impact will last far beyond your career.”

The vision is simple: No child travelling hours for a basic vaccination, no elderly patient skipping treatment because the transport costs more than the medicine, no mother left guessing what to do when her baby is sick at night.

“Knowing that our work has the potential to change the trajectory of someone’s life fundamentally is incredibly moving.

“The dedication of healthcare professionals, whether in the city or deep in the rural interior, inspires us to keep building pathways so that every Malaysian can live a healthy, productive life,” Abdullahi said.

This is not a story of despair, but of possibility. It is about nurses who fly into villages with supplies, educators who correct misinformation face-to-face and partnerships that deliver vaccines and hope where roads end.

Healthcare is not just a service. It is a promise – a promise that every Malaysian, no matter where they live, deserves to be seen, heard and healed.



TECHNOLOGY is quietly transforming how rural Malaysians access healthcare. Through teleprimary care, patients in remote districts of Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia can now consult doctors hundreds of kilometres away.

Health officers at community clinics use secure digital platforms to upload patient data, transmit lab results and receive real-time guidance on diagnosis or treatment. The system has proved especially useful for monitoring chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension and heart disease, where regular follow-up is vital.

In places with limited mobile coverage, hybrid models combine online consultations with periodic in-person visits by travelling doctors and nurses.

The future of rural healthcare is connected care. Technology enables early intervention, helps doctors make informed decisions faster and ensures patients are not forgotten between visits.

Still, experts emphasise that connectivity alone cannot close the healthcare gap; it must be supported by trained staff, consistent medicine supplies and reliable transport networks.



A child is being treated at a rural clinic where doctors visit once a week.

IN the heart of the Klang Valley's ever-growing café scene, a niche yet thriving subculture has quietly carved its own cosy corner: cat cafés. These feline-friendly spots offer more than your average café latte. They provide sanctuary for rescued cats, a calm oasis for urbanites and sometimes even quirky therapy for the soul.

As lifestyles shift and mental wellness takes centre stage, many Malaysians are

seeking experiences that blend comfort, calm and companionship. Cat cafés seem to deliver just that. Whether you're a cat parent without the space to own a pet, a traveller looking to unwind, or simply a fan of purring background music, there's something for everyone.

Check out what makes each of these five cat cafés unique – from resident feline personalities to creative activities that go beyond just sipping coffee among cats.



Purradise Cat Café (TTDI)
Tucked away on the first floor of a shoplot in TTDI, Purradise is one of the earliest pioneers in KL's cat café scene. They even hosted Jackson Galaxy of Animal Planet's popular cat show, My Cat From Hell. It offers a laid-back, barefoot experience with rescue cats

lounging freely in hammocks, cardboard boxes and sunny windowsills. What makes it unique is its hourly rate concept – you pay for time, not just coffee. Visitors can enjoy bottomless drinks while playing or reading, next to cats available for adoption (subject to vetting).

Kopicat Café (Sunway Geo Avenue)

Strategically located near Sunway University, Kopicat is a hit among students and tourists alike. What sets it apart is its community-driven approach – their café cats were adopted from various shelters and the team regularly hosts donation drives and rescue awareness events. Their signature paw-print cakes and cat-shaped macarons add a thematic touch to the experience, while visitors can lounge in colourful beanbags as the cats weave in and out.



Seri Talam Cat Café (Subang Jaya)

Part café, part traditional dessert spot, Seri Talam stands out for combining Malay kuih and teh tarik with feline companionship. The café's retro aesthetic – complete with marble tables and vintage tiles – brings kampung nostalgia into the modern cat café experience. Their cats, all adopted or rescued, are known to nap near guests or perch above picture frames, adding unexpected joy to a quiet teatime.

5 cat cafés in KL for the purr-fect escapes

BY DAYANA SOBRI

Purrista Cat Café (Petaling Jaya)

This Muslim-friendly cat café has no entrance fee and you can expect delicious French pastries, shaved-ice desserts and a banana-pudding matcha latte on its menu, among other delicacies. The ambience is very homely; you'd think you're visiting your neighbour's to play with their cats. Don't be surprised if the café bakers are sleeping on the counter; they work hard to welcome you to their café!



Monster. A Garden Café (Kuala Lumpur)

With no entrance fees and reservations required, any cat lover in need of a quick pick-me-up can simply drop by the café (just not on Tuesday). Expect mid-century ambience and minimalism with lots of cat houses made from boxes. Top menu items include ice cream waffles and iced coffee. These friendly felines are ready to take your orders, but don't expect them to remember anything!

Beyond Instagram: A safe space for cat lovers

While cat cafés may look like whimsical backdrops for selfies, many play a larger role – raising awareness about pet adoption, educating the public and offering quiet, restorative spaces amid the bustle of city life.

According to a study by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, spending time with animals has been shown to reduce cortisol levels and improve psychological well-being. In Klang Valley's fast-paced environment, cafés like these offer micro-moments of calm.

People underestimate how therapeutic it is to sit quietly among animals. Many of these cafés also offer second chances to abandoned cats, so your visit helps sustain that mission.

Things to note before visiting a cat café

- **Respect the cats' space:** Some may be friendly, while others are shy or resting. Avoid picking them up without

permission.

- **Sanitise before entering:** Most cafés require sanitising hands and removing shoes before entering cat zones.
- **Supervise children:** Young guests should be accompanied by adults and taught how to interact gently.
- **Avoid flash photography:** Sudden light can startle cats or disturb others.
- **Don't feed the cats:** Unless allowed, bringing outside food for cats is discouraged.

The joy of slowing down

In a city known for its fast pace and endless mall culture, cat cafés offer something rare. A chance to slow down, observe, breathe, and connect. Whether you're an animal lover, an overworked urbanite or simply curious, these cafés provide more than coffee. They offer company, comfort, and perhaps even a new feline friend.

So the next time you need a pause from the daily grind, consider curling up in a corner where the company doesn't talk back – but purrs instead.



Rugged little adventurer

Jaecoo J5 HEV is a baby J7 that delivers beyond expectation

BY TIMOTHY PRAKASH

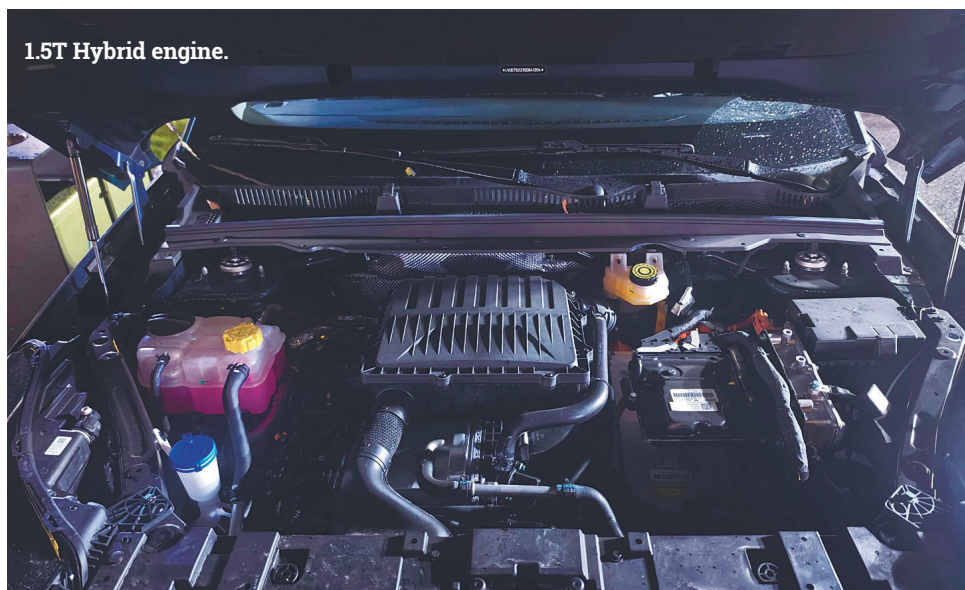
WHEN Jaecoo announced its plans to expand its hybrid lineup, many wondered if the brand's rugged DNA could truly coexist with electrified refinement.

The answer, as I found out after a two-day drive through some of China's most scenic and challenging roads, is a resounding yes.

I had the rare opportunity to test-drive the upcoming Jaecoo J5 SHS-H, also known as the J5 HEV, ahead of its Malaysian debut.

The compact hybrid SUV hasn't been launched here yet, but based on my experience, it's poised to make a strong impression when it arrives.

Think of it as a "baby J7", same adventurous attitude, but more nimble, lighter on its feet, and surprisingly eager to impress.



1.5T Hybrid engine.



18-inch dual tone wheels.



Sony speakers.



Gear shifter.



Flat bottom steering wheel.

THE SETTING: TEN COUNTRIES SUPER HYBRID MARATHON

The J5's proving ground was the O&J Ten Countries Super Hybrid Marathon, an endurance drive that put the brand's latest Super Hybrid System (SHS) lineup, the O5, J5 SHS-H, and O7 SHS-P, through their paces.

Our route spanned roughly 800km across China's picturesque Anhui province, beginning in Wuhu, cutting through the famed South Anhui 318 scenic highway, climbing up to Mount Huangshan, and looping back.

The landscape was as demanding as it was beautiful, a mix of highways, steep mountain passes, tight bends, and small-town traffic that made for a perfect real-world test.

The J5's task was clear: prove that Jaecoo's latest hybrid system could deliver

range, power, comfort, and efficiency, all without sacrificing the brand's signature off-road spirit.

POWER AND POISE: THE HEART OF THE J5

Under the hood, the J5 SHS-H packs Jaecoo's fifth-generation hybrid system, paired with a dedicated 1.5T hybrid engine boasting a class-leading 44.5% thermal efficiency.

Together, the setup produces 221hp and a top speed of 175kph, while the Super Hybrid System (SHS-H) architecture ensures two distinct driving personalities, an efficient, serene cruiser and a powerful, sporty performer.

In real-world terms, this meant the J5 felt composed and confident in any driving mode.

In ECO, the SUV glides smoothly, relying



Narrow mountain roads not an issue.



480 litres boot space.



Battery pack in the trunk.

heavily on its electric motor for short commutes. It can travel in pure-electric mode up to 60km, giving it that whisper-quiet, near-EV experience during city drives.

But switch to Sport, and the character changes completely. The throttle sharpens, acceleration becomes instant, and the hybrid system unleashes all its muscle.

On long highway stretches, the J5 surged forward with a responsiveness that rivals turbocharged petrol SUVs. Even at higher speeds, the power delivery remained linear and steady, making overtaking and hill climbs effortless.

THE MOUNTAIN TEST: HANDLING, CORNERING, AND CONFIDENCE

The most telling part of the journey was the climb up Mount Huangshan, where narrow switchbacks and steep gradients tested the J5's balance and agility. Here, the SUV truly shined.

The steering felt well-weight and precise, while the chassis, tuned with a good mix of comfort and stability, inspired confidence through every turn.

Heading up and down mountain roads was unexpectedly easy; the J5 handled the tight hairpins gracefully, maintaining stability and composure even when pushed harder through corners.

Jaecoo's engineers clearly spent time fine-tuning the suspension geometry, as body roll was impressively contained for an SUV of its size.

On downhill stretches, regenerative braking worked seamlessly with the hybrid system, offering controlled deceleration without the jerky feel common in some hybrids.

The phrase "one car, two vibes", a tagline Jaecoo uses to describe its hybrid range, felt entirely appropriate.

The J5 could cruise silently one moment and attack corners with lively energy the next. It's this duality that makes it genuinely engaging to drive.

PERFORMANCE MEETS EFFICIENCY

Efficiency was another highlight. Over the full 800km route, the J5 delivered outstanding endurance and stability. Its 1,000km comprehensive range puts it among the most capable hybrids in its class, while its smooth transitions between electric and hybrid power kept energy use optimised throughout the journey.

During the "Super Range Test," the J5 performed admirably, maintaining steady power delivery while sipping fuel conservatively.

Even on the demanding mountain sections, the hybrid system kept the engine RPM calm and composed, contributing to both comfort and economy.

The high-torque electric motor deserves special mention. With 310Nm of torque and a maximum motor speed of 16,000rpm, it delivers an instant burst of acceleration

without hesitation, breaking free from the limitations of conventional HEVs. Combined with its electric motor's quick response, the J5 feels punchier than its figures suggest.

RIDE COMFORT AND NVH – MOSTLY REFINED, BUT NOT PERFECT

At lower speeds, especially under 60kph, the J5 runs almost silently in electric mode, offering a serene cabin experience reminiscent of a fully electric vehicle. However, when pushing past highway speeds, a few imperfections become noticeable.

While the overall ride quality is excellent, wind noise does creep into the cabin at



Smaller J7.

around 110kph and above. There's also a touch of road and tyre noise on rougher surfaces, not intrusive, but enough to remind you that Jaecoo still has some NVH (noise, vibration, and harshness) tuning to perfect before launch.

That said, the sound insulation remains competitive for the segment, and engine noise is impressively well-suppressed, even under heavy throttle in Sport mode.

Over long distances, the cabin comfort and seat ergonomics make it easy to overlook these small imperfections.

INSIDE THE CABIN: SIMPLE, STYLISH, FUNCTIONAL

Step inside, and the J5's interior feels invitingly modern. While the test unit I drove was a pre-production model, the build quality and layout were impressive.

The dashboard design follows Jaecoo's clean, tech-forward approach, featuring digital displays and minimalist physical buttons.

The driving position is commanding, visibility is excellent, and the ergonomics feel intuitive.

Space-wise, the J5 comfortably accommodates five passengers, with ample headroom and legroom even for taller occupants.



J5 and J7.

THE ROAD AHEAD: COMING SOON TO MALAYSIA

The Jaecoo J5 SHS-H/HEV hasn't officially arrived in Malaysia yet, but based on this early experience, it's safe to say that local buyers have a lot to look forward to.

The brand's blend of hybrid efficiency, long range, and dynamic performance could make it one of the most versatile SUVs in its class.

Given Malaysia's growing appetite for intelligent hybrids and Jaecoo's success with the J7, the J5's upcoming launch will likely draw plenty of attention.

If priced competitively, it has the potential to be a game-changer in the mid-size hybrid SUV segment.

VERDICT: SMART, CAPABLE, AND SURPRISINGLY ENGAGING

The Jaecoo J5 SHS-H/HEV is a confident step forward for the brand. It's not just efficient, it's genuinely fun to drive.

It tackles mountain roads with grace, corners with stability, and powers through long stretches effortlessly.

Yes, there's a little wind noise at high speeds and some NVH tuning left to do, but these are minor quibbles in an otherwise polished package.

With its 221hp output, 310Nm torque, and 1,000km driving range, the J5 proves that hybrids can be both intelligent and exciting.

It's a hybrid SUV that doesn't just meet expectations, it dares to exceed them. When it finally lands in Malaysia, expect it to make waves.

The J5 may be the "baby J7," but make no mistake, this is one baby that's ready to thrive.

SPECIFICATIONS

Engine: 1.5-litre turbocharged

Power: 221hp

Torque: 310Nm

Transmission: Dedicated Hybrid Transmission (DHT)

Price: Not available as yet

We like: Stability, handling, power delivery.

We don't like: NVH levels.

Committed to hybrids, EV's and safety

HONDA is one of the most dynamic companies in the market. On one end it builds cars like the Honda City and City hatchback for regular people to go about their regular lives.

On the other end it makes cars like the Civic Type R and now the Prelude for those who love the joy of driving and want to have fun.

It also builds electric cars such as the e:N1 and the Prologue, the latter available in the North American market only.

In fact, Honda has been building electric cars since 1997, the year it introduced the EV Plus, an exclusive EV only model powered by a nickel-metal hydride battery. Groundbreaking at that time.

Honda is also a firm believer in hybrid technology and has over 25 years of experience in building hybrid powertrains.

On a completely different spectrum, the company builds some of the best motorcycles in the business, marine engines, airplanes, and as of late, has also started developing reusable rockets to rival that of Elon Musk's Space X.

All of that without mentioning the decades of success it has enjoyed in the world of motorsport.

So, believe me when I say that Honda is one of the most dynamic companies in the business.

So, to be able to sit down for a question-and-answer session with the top management of the company is nothing short of impossible. Except that member of the Malaysian automotive press had that exact opportunity recently at the company's office in Tokyo.

In attendance was the man himself, Toshihiro Mibe, Director, President and Representative Executive Officer of Honda Motor Company, Ltd.

Also in attendance were press members from other countries who asked questions that were specific to their markets, but there were two key takeaways for global markets.

The first being Honda still acknowledges that battery electric vehicle's play a big role in environmental impact.

Despite heavily backing hybrid technology as the best way forward, Mibe also reaffirmed Honda's commitment to BEV's.

During the interview Mibe said "it is not true that we are scaling back on our development of full EV's, but compared to our initial forecast, the volume will have to be lower".

"As I have said before, when it comes to carbon neutrality for passenger cars, battery EV's are the optimum solution. That remains

unchanged.

"So, it is not that we are scaling back on EV development, but we are just reviewing and revising our models and their volume, and we will continue to work on that".

Mibe was also quick to reaffirm Honda's commitment to hybrids, which the company has been building and refining over many years.

"On the other hand, hybrid vehicles are an area where we have many years of experience, and we have been building hybrids for more than 25 years or so".

"We have plenty of expertise and know how when it comes to hybrid vehicles, so without spending extraordinary amount on development expenses, we can utilise our expertise, keeping down the investment required and we can develop new models out of those (experience). Both EV's and hybrid will continue to support Honda's automobile business.

"We will also increase the volume of our hybrid vehicles, by 2030 we are planning for over two million units. By 2030, hybrids will be the main portion of our business and for BEV's we will continue with our research and development activities."

I had a chance to test drive Honda's future hybrid technologies and besides efficiency and environmental factors, Honda's engineers also placed big importance on making the hybrid powertrains feel as close to a regular internal combustion engine as possible.

Honda's hybrid powertrains do not have transmission boxes and rely on electric motors to drive the wheels.

But the engineers have figured out a way to simulate engine noise as well as the "feel" of a transmission shifting gears.

That requires a different article altogether, but I will say that Honda has done a fantastic job with that.

The second takeaway is Honda's commitment to safety for its four- and two-wheels business.

Back in 2021, Honda announced its zero fatalities by 2050 target, and during the interview Mibe reaffirmed the company's commitment to that target.

Citing Honda's Sensing technology which is a form of advanced driver aid system and the progress of artificial intelligence, Honda continues with the target of zero fatalities in just 25 years.

So you may think that Honda cars are lagging its competitors especially those from China, but Honda has survived many challenges before and judging from what I saw and experienced at Honda's test facilities, this is a company that you never count out.



WRITTEN BY
KESHY DHILLON

City-focused electric hatchback

Malaysia's first affordable EV hits the road



PROTON has officially introduced the e.MAS 5, marking a significant step in the national carmaker's transition into electric mobility.

The compact EV is closely related to the Geely Xingyuan but carries distinct Proton cues – including the signature tiger emblem on the nose, Proton lettering across the tailgate, and e.MAS 5 badging that identifies it as Malaysia's own version of the city-focused electric hatchback.

The colour range largely mirrors its Geely counterpart with Moonstone White, Graphite Silver, and Slate Grey, while the Premium variant adds Marble Cream and Quartz Rose to the palette.

The latter, a pale lilac hue, was inspired by the updated shades seen on the 2026 Xingyuan facelift.

Visually, the e.MAS 5 retains the soft curves and smooth surfaces of the original design, with slim LED lighting units, a closed-off front fascia, and chrome highlights along the front corners. The Premium model distinguishes itself with a black roof and mirror caps.

Unique to Proton's version are the C-pillar star motifs and an interior "shooting star" light pattern, replacing the Chinese model's city skyline theme. These details subtly connect to the Xingyuan's original "star wish" inspiration.

Inside, the cabin adopts Proton's current design direction – clean, minimal, and driver-oriented. The dashboard is built around a 14.6-inch infotainment display running Atlas OS, offering wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto, along with the "Hi e.MAS" voice assistant in Bahasa Malaysia.

It also integrates dedicated EV fea-

tures, such as a real-time charging map showing nearby charging stations.

Below the screen sits a simple storage tray, tactile air-conditioning controls, and a crystal-effect gear selector, with twin cupholders and a small compartment beside it.

The base model comes equipped with halogen headlights, 16-inch steel wheels, manual air-conditioning, manual seat adjustment, rear air vents, and faux leather upholstery.

Moving up to the Premium adds full LED headlights, a black contrast roof, D-pad-inspired alloy wheels, a six-speaker sound system, a 360-degree camera, and a powered tailgate.

Power comes from a rear-mounted electric motor, with two configurations available.

The Prime variant delivers 79PS and 130 Nm, powered by a 30.12kWh LFP battery that offers 225km of WLTP range.

The Premium increases output to 116PS and 150Nm, using a 40.16kWh battery for 325km of range. Top speeds are limited to 125kph and 135kph respectively.

The Premium variant supports DC fast charging up to 71kW, enabling a 30–80% charge in 21 minutes, while both models accept 6.6kW AC charging for convenient overnight replenishment using a home wallbox.

The emas.5 is priced at RM59,800 for the Prime variant and RM72,800 for the Premium variant.

A rebate of RM3,000 is given to buyers from now till end of 2025. Also included is a 6-year unlimited mileage vehicle warranty and an 8-year or 160,000km high voltage battery and component warranty.

TC SUBARU SDN. BHD. has officially introduced the all-new Subaru Forester 2.5 in Malaysia, bringing with it a balance of power, safety, and comfort that defines what a modern SUV should be.

Positioned as a rugged yet refined all-purpose vehicle, the new Forester 2.5 promises a pure Subaru driving experience built on the brand's proven engineering heritage.

Every model under this line is fully imported from Japan, ensuring that customers receive the highest standards of fit, finish, and long-term reliability that come from meticulous Japanese production methods.

Powering the Forester 2.5 is a new 2.5-litre FB25 Boxer engine that puts out 185PS and 247Nm of torque, paired with the upgraded TR58 Lineartronic gearbox.

Complementing this is the new dual-pinion electric power steering system that sharpens handling and provides a sportier, more connected feel. Subaru's engineers have also refined the braking system for smoother control and overall drivability.

Underneath, the SUV rides on the latest iteration of the Subaru Global Platform, now 10% stiffer thanks to a new full inner-frame structure and greater use of structural adhesives.

As expected, Subaru's renowned Symmetrical All-Wheel Drive (SAWD) system remains at the heart of the Forester's capability, continuously distributing power to the wheels with the best traction.



Rugged yet refined

New Subaru Forester 2.5 redefines modern SUV

The system works in tandem with dual-function X-MODE for confident off-road performance, while Hill Descent Control makes steep, slippery descents less intimidating.

With 220mm of ground clearance, the Forester stands ready for anything from city potholes to unpaved terrain.

Drivers can also personalise the car's behaviour with the Subaru Intelligent Drive (SI-Drive) system, choosing between the fuel-efficient Intelligent mode or the more performance-focused Sport mode.

Step inside, and the new Forester feels every bit as premium as it is practical.

The cabin's design is minimalist yet inviting, offering gen-



erous space and comfort for all passengers.

At the centre of the dashboard sits a sharp 11.6-inch Full HD infotainment display, which

supports wireless Apple CarPlay and Android Auto.

A wireless charging pad, multiple USB ports for front and rear passengers, and an easy-to-

use interface complete the car's tech offering.

Safety, as always with Subaru, is uncompromising. The Forester 2.5 features eight airbags, including a new passenger seat cushion airbag that enhances protection in frontal collisions.

The latest version of Subaru's EyeSight 4.0 system now includes a wide-angle monocular camera, expanding the range of detection for pedestrians and cyclists.

It also integrates advanced driver assistance features such as the Emergency Driving Stop System, which safely halts the car if it detects prolonged driver inactivity, and a new Driver Monitoring System that uses facial recognition to track drowsiness or inattention.

For enhanced visibility and manoeuvrability, the Forester comes equipped with a 360-degree Multi-View Monitor, Reverse Automatic Braking, and Active Torque Vectoring. All of this works seamlessly to create a safer, more confident driving experience.

The new Forester also makes a bold statement in design. Its fresh front fascia, complete with a larger grille and signature C-shaped LED headlights, gives the SUV a commanding road presence.

The all-new Subaru Forester 2.5i-S EyeSight, part of the Japan Premium Line, is priced from RM221,500 (indicative). Customers can now visit authorised Subaru dealerships across Malaysia for detailed specifications and test drives.

Black Edition beauty

GWM MALAYSIA has pulled the covers off the new Tank 500 HEV Black Edition – a darker, more commanding take on its flagship hybrid SUV. Priced at RM336,800, the new variant carries a modest RM8,000 premium over the standard model but brings with it a host of exclusive blacked-out enhancements that give the already-imposing SUV an even stronger visual presence.

Built on the same foundation of capability, refinement, and advanced hybrid power as the regular Tank 500, the Black Edition adds a new layer of sophistication through a bold monochrome treatment.

Almost every chrome detail has been replaced with sleek black finishes, giving the SUV a more aggressive yet premium look.

The list of upgrades includes darkened headlamps, a gloss black front grille, black door handles, and black garnish pieces for the bumpers, fog lamps, and tail lamps. The alloy wheels are now finished in black, as are the window trims, roof rails, and side steps, while a black rear bumper protector and emblem complete the stealthy transformation.



The result is an SUV that strikes a perfect balance between ruggedness and luxury, a vehicle designed for drivers who appreciate understated strength and individuality without compromising on comfort or performance.

Powering the TANK 500 Black Edition is the same 2.0-litre turbo-

charged hybrid powertrain that underpins the standard version. It continues to deliver impressive performance on all terrains while maintaining excellent fuel efficiency and refinement. Inside, the cabin remains every bit as luxurious and high-tech as before, with advanced comfort features, intelligent driving aids, and a

premium finish that rivals some of the most well-known names in the large SUV segment.

Owners of the GWM TANK 500 HEV, including the new Black Edition, will benefit from a comprehensive ownership package that underlines GWM's confidence in its product. The coverage includes a lifetime warranty for the engine, transmission, and hybrid system (for first-hand private owners), an eight-year or 200,000 km battery warranty, a six-year unlimited mileage vehicle warranty, and a five-year free maintenance package. Early buyers will also receive an exclusive Limited Edition Premium Gift Set as a token of appreciation.

The debut of the TANK 500 HEV Black Edition also sets the stage for more excitement from GWM Malaysia. The company has confirmed that it will be launching the new ORA Good Cat and ORA GT on 6 November 2025. The upcoming models are expected to inject sportier styling and enhanced performance into GWM's growing electric vehicle range, continuing the brand's mission to make EV ownership both stylish and accessible for Malaysian drivers.

Solve The Phrase And Sudoku

#1

□ □ H □ R □

Hint: Largest desert in the world

Letters Remaining = SA

#2

□ □ E □ T
B □ □ □ E □
□ E E □

Hint: Natural wonder off Australia

Letters Remaining = FIARG

#3

□ O M □ W □ □
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Hint: Great achievements take time

Letters Remaining = REDANLSI

#4

□ □ E E □
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□ □ G □ T

Hint: Nothing faster than

Letters Remaining = DOPFHSLI

#5

□ H □ □ □ U □ D
□ □ M U □ I □

Hint: Singing in the Austrian Alps

Letters Remaining = OENCFST

#6

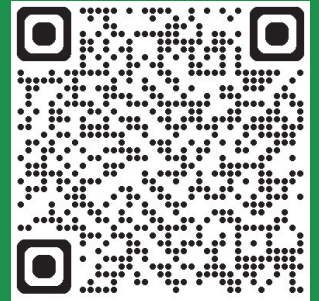
C □ □ M □
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Hint: French custard

Letters Remaining = BRE

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GIANTS VS TITANS
Gamification for
a better planet
from FIRST RAY

Answers
will be uploaded
on Sunday,
November 16 @
thesun.my/puzzles

Your weekend horoscope



ARIES
March 21 – April 19
Courage and action come naturally to you, making it easy to lead in important moments. Challenges feel like opportunities to show your strengths. Communication improves when you choose calm words, even if the situation feels rushed. Trying something new can spark excitement and help you grow.



TAURUS
April 20 – May 20
Comfort guide your decisions, helping you stay grounded even when things shift around you. Focusing on responsibilities brings satisfying results. Spending time in cozy spaces or enjoying simple pleasures gives you a sense of peace. Your dependable nature helps others feel secure and thoughtfulness relationships stronger.



GEMINI
May 21 – June 20
Your curiosity grows stronger, inspiring playful conversations and bright ideas. Social interactions feel lively and sharing your thoughts helps build interesting connections. Choosing one or two priorities brings better success than trying to juggle everything at once. People enjoy your friendly energy and laughter may fill your day more often.



CANCER
June 21 – July 22
Your caring heart supports the people who matter most to you. Emotional awareness helps you sense when someone needs comfort or encouragement. Protecting your personal space keeps you balanced and confident. A peaceful environment allows you to think clearly and handle responsibilities.



LEO
July 23 – Aug 22
Your warm and cheerful nature brings light wherever you go. Inspiration may spark creative plans that let you shine. Confidence grows stronger when you remain true to yourself. Appreciation and friendly attention come naturally when you show genuine interest in others.



VRGO
Aug 23 – Sept 22
Your thoughtful approach helps you stay organised and efficient. Paying attention to details brings success in important tasks. Staying gentle with yourself prevents stress from building. Others may rely on your problem-solving skills and your calm support makes things easier for everyone.



One commonly overlooked, but a seriously problematic feature is living directly under or next to high-voltage power lines or electrical pylons.

Hidden threat to energy stability

Living under high-voltage power lines

IN *feng shui*, the environment around your home plays a powerful role in shaping your personal energy, health and opportunities.

One commonly overlooked, but a seriously problematic feature is living directly under or next to high-voltage power lines or electrical pylons. According to *feng shui*, these tall metal structures generate intense *sha qi* – harmful energy.

Their towering height and constant electromagnetic field can create an oppressive presence over the house, symbolically pressing down on the roof and suppressing the flow of uplifting *qi*.

This is especially harmful when the pylon is located very close to the house, or when the wires pass directly over the roof.

In such situations, the house's energy field becomes disturbed – often leading to subtle but long-term effects such as:

- ➔ Mental fatigue or poor sleep
- ➔ Increased arguments or instability within the household
- ➔ Difficulty attracting wealth or support from benefactors
- ➔ Recurring health issues, especially involving the nervous system

It also disrupts the protective energy shield of the home, weakening the stability

that *feng shui* aims to preserve.

Think of it like an umbrella with holes – no matter how good your internal layout is, the external pressure keeps leaking in. You may ask: “What if it’s a few houses away, not directly above me?”

While distance helps, the visual presence still matters. If you can see the pylon clearly from your main door or windows, it can still trigger subconscious tension and affect your overall harmony.

If you already live in such a location and cannot move, here are some remedies you can consider:

- ➔ Use thick curtains or strategic screens to block the visual line of sight
- ➔ Place natural elements such as plants, bamboo or water features near the boundary to buffer and soften the incoming *sha qi*.
- ➔ Reinforce your home's internal energy flow with proper furniture placement and support from your *BaZi* favourable elements

But in *feng shui*, prevention is always better than cure. When selecting a new home, always assess the nearby environment. A quiet house with clean landforms and no pressing structures will always bring smoother energy for the family.

This article is contributed by metaphysics researcher Daniel Siew. Discover more at www.danielsiew.com.



LIBRA
Sept 23 – Oct 22
Your natural charm encourages fairness and harmony in every situation. Conversations feel smoother when you stay open to different viewpoints. Balancing your own needs with the needs of others brings peace to your heart. A stronger interest in creativity may lift your mood.



SCORPIO
Oct 23 – Nov 21
Your focus becomes sharper, guiding you to look deeper into situations before reacting. Strong feelings motivate you to build trust with others who share your values. Personal boundaries are important, and standing by them brings empowerment. Quiet reflection gives you clarity and helps you make important decisions.



SAGITTARIUS
Nov 22 – Dec 21
Your upbeat energy inspires you to explore new ideas or reconnect with activities that bring joy. Friendly interactions may lead to opportunities that spark excitement. Honesty creates meaningful bonds, especially when you share your hopes openly. Staying focused helps you reach goals without losing motivation.



CAPRICORN
Dec 22 – Jan 19
Your strong sense of responsibility pushes you to handle tasks with care and dedication. Long-term ideas become clearer as you take steady steps forwards. People may admire your reliability, and your calm approach brings order to busy situations. Make time for personal comfort.



AQUARIUS
Jan 20 – Feb 18
Your original thinking helps you find smart solutions and new paths. Friends and community may play a bigger role, bringing support and fun conversations. Enjoying time alone allows you to recharge and reflect on your own goals. Express your ideas clearly and listen with intent.



PISCES
Feb 19 – March 20
Your gentle imagination encourages emotional connection and creative expression. Offering support to others brings joy, but remember to protect your own energy too. Moments of quiet reflection help you understand what you truly need. Kind gestures strengthen trust in relationships.



Experienced, not old

Hazlewood confident in Australia's attack for Ashes

PACEMAN Josh Hazlewood has brushed off worries about Australia's ageing attack for the Ashes, saying he personally feels as good as he has in a long time and that the unit's experience of bowling together is a major advantage for the team.

Australia's stalwart spinner Nathan Lyon will turn 38 during the series, while left-arm quick Mitchell Starc is 35. Skipper Pat Cummins, the youngest of the bowlers at 32, has been ruled out of the first Ashes Test but is likely to be replaced by 36-year-old Scott Boland in Perth.

Hazlewood, 34, said the bowling unit that has helped Australia retain the Ashes since the 2017-18 series would break up eventually but there was plenty of life in it yet.

"I feel in the best shape I've been in a long time," Hazlewood told reporters at the Sydney Cricket Ground yesterday.

"I think the experience, not just through red ball cricket, through all



the formats, you put all the pieces together.

"You've been in so many situations now out in the middle that you've learned a lot over the years, not just as an individual but as a group, and we just bounce off each other out there and know each other's game so well, so we can help each other out.

"There'll come a time (when we move on), no doubt, but I don't think it's yet."

Hazlewood's thoughts echoed those of Lyon, who is set to overtake Glenn McGrath as Australia's second most prolific Test wicket-taker after Shane Warne during the series.

"The game has totally changed," Lyon said this week. "It is a lot more professional than what it was probably 10 years ago with the science behind it all and the recovery."

"I feel like age is just a number. I still feel like I am yet to play my best cricket."

The Ashes first test starts on Nov 21. - Reuters

Australia's Josh Hazlewood in action against South Africa. - REUTERS/SPIC

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DEWAN BANDARAYA KUALA LUMPUR

FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING ACT) 1982 (AKTA 267)
FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING) (APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION) (FEDERAL TERRITORY OF KUALA LUMPUR) RULES 2025
RULE 3

NOTICE TO OBTAIN VIEWS

The Mayor has received an application for the proposed to demolish a 1-storey commercial building and reconstruct a 14-storey hotel comprising 1 basement level for mechanical service areas, 1 main lobby floor with commercial and mechanical service spaces, 2 floors of car parking, and 10 hotel floors including facility areas and mechanical service spaces with a Plot Ratio 1:7.26 on Lot 1222, Section 67, Jalan Barat, Imbi Bandar Kuala Lumpur.

(Ref: DBKL.JPRB.856/64)

Pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, Federal Territory (Planning) (Application For Planning Permission) (Federal Territory Of Kuala Lumpur) Rules 2025, the Mayor grants the registered landowners in the surrounding area a chance to submit their views towards this application.

If any registered land owners in the surrounding area decides to do so, they are required to submit in writing their views towards this application addressed to the Pengarah, Jabatan Perancangan Bandaraya, Tingkat 9, Menara DBKL 1, Jalan Raja Laut, 50350 Kuala Lumpur and through email: jprb@dbkl.gov.my.

These views shall be submitted within two (2) weeks from the date of publication of this notification, clearly stating the name of the owner, lot number, local postal address, and DBKL reference number.

Date: 9th NOVEMBER 2025

DATUK BANDAR KUALA LUMPUR

Weatherald keen to partner with Khawaja

AUSTRALIA'S Jake Weatherald says he is excited about the possibility of opening the batting with Usman Khawaja in the first Ashes Test against England later this month, even if he was not his senior teammate's first choice.

While the uncapped Weatherald is not assured of his place at the top of the order for the opening match in Perth, the significance of being selected in Australia's 15-man squad was not lost on the 31-year-old.

"It is a pinch-yourself moment," he said in Hobart on Friday.

As a kid in Australia, you grow up wanting to play professional sport; representing Australia in cricket is the highest honour, and something that I've aspired to my whole career."

Khawaja had singled out Matt Renshaw as his preferred option to open alongside him, but when his Queensland teammate did not make the squad he subsequently backed Weatherald.

"He didn't have me in four days ago," quipped Weatherald, whose rich form in domestic cricket prompted his Ashes section.

"You get the backing of someone like that who's played so much first-class cricket. He's made so many hundreds for Australia and is such a respected cricketer within our community. "I'd be really excited to partner up with him at some point." - Reuters

Norris takes Brazil's pole

McLaren grabs GP sprint lead, Max suffers setback in push for fifth title

SERIES LEADER Lando Norris (pic) grabbed his first sprint pole position of the season yesterday to keep his title hopes on track as he topped qualifying ahead of Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli and his McLaren teammate and rival Oscar Piastri.

The 25-year-old Briton, who leads Piastri by one point in the drivers' championship with four Grands Prix remaining, clocked a best lap in one minute and 9.243 in the final seconds of a tense session at a warm Interlagos.

Antonelli was second, 0.097 seconds adrift, with Piastri 0.185 behind in third ahead of George Russell in the second Mercedes and two-time champion Fernando Alonso of Aston Martin.

Max Verstappen, who is 36 points behind Norris in the title race, was an unhappy sixth for Red Bull, the four-time champion grumbling about the balance of his car, ahead of Lance Stroll in the second Aston Martin, and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc.

Red Bulls' rookie Isack Hadjar qualified in ninth place ahead of Nico Hulkenberg of Sauber with seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton 11th in his Ferrari.

"A good day for me today," said Norris, who regained the championship lead for the first time in six months by winning in Mexico two weeks ago.

"It's a long weekend and it's only Friday – and it's forecast to be windy and wet so we have to be prepared for that."



"It was a little bit tougher than I would've liked," said Norris. "It's always tricky when you've got the medium and the soft and knowing how much more to push – or not to push sometimes, but we did the job we needed to do, which was to be fastest today."

"It's trickier than Mexico and I've not been feeling quite as comfortable. Therefore, it's a great result."

Verstappen's late bid for a fifth drivers world title suffered a setback

yesterday. "I've got a lot of vibration in the car and a lot of ride problems," said Verstappen.

"It's not what we want, but besides that we also just don't have the grip and the middle sector is terrible."

"I just can't get the car to turn, but at the same time I can't really rely on the rears. So, for us, it's quite poor," he said before adding. "But it is what it is."

Meanwhile, McLaren principal Andrea Stella hailed teammates Norris and Piastri yesterday for working together in a way he said was unprecedented in Formula One history between title rivals.

"I am personally very proud of our two drivers, our engineers."

"They collaborate in a way I think that we have not seen before in the history of Formula One," Stella told reporters ahead of the Sao Paulo Grand Prix.

"We are not naive. We know that the pressure is high, we know that the stake is big. But we will continue leaning on our framework."

"So far what I've seen is that Lando and Oscar have always been very supportive," he added.

Stella said the drivers had to make sure one of them secured the title. "We are having conversations with Lando, with Oscar: 'let's make sure that the winner drives a papaya car (McLaren), OK'. Let's make sure that we collaborate as much as is sensible to do so between two drivers to make sure that the title is a Papaya overall and a Papaya car." – AFP/Reuters

BRIEFS

MUSETTI REACH ATHENS FINAL

LORENZO MUSETTI saved a match point to beat Sebastian Korda in Athens yesterday and kept alive his hopes of squeezing into the season-ending ATP Finals in Turin. The Italian won 6-0, 5-7, 7-5, and in the final will face Novak Djokovic, who ended his run of semifinal losses as he cruised past Yannick Hanfmann 6-3, 6-4. Musetti is ninth in the race to qualify for the eight-man Finals which start today in his home country. He needs to win the Athens tournament to collect enough points to overtake Canadian Felix Auger-Aliassime in the standings. "I think we both played a fantastic match," Musetti said. Earlier, Djokovic took 79 minutes to dispatch German qualifier Hanfmann. "I think it was the best tennis I've played this tournament," Djokovic added. "It came at the right time. Hanfmann poses a great threat because he serves big, has a big game, so I needed to really stay focused."

FLEETWOOD IN TIE FOR LEAD IN ABU DHABI

TOMMY FLEETWOOD produced another strong round yesterday to head into the weekend at the Abu Dhabi Championship tied for the lead with fellow Englishman Aaron Rai. Fleetwood started his second round with three birdies in a row and carded seven in total, shooting a 6-under 66 to climb to 14-under for the tournament. The two-time former winner and reigning FedEx Cup champion began the day in a five-way share of the lead but soon hit the front after catching up with early starter Nacho Elvira. Fleetwood's lone bogey came at the 15th but he gained that stroke back on the next hole with a putt from 12 feet. "Really good day. I got off to the perfect start. Birdie, birdie, birdie," said Fleetwood. Fleetwood is level with Rai, who delivered the highlight of the day with an albatross at the par-five second hole.

Sabalenka beats Anisimova in pulsating WTA Finals semi

WORLD No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka had to dig deep to overcome fourth-seeded Amanda Anisimova 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 in a high-octane semifinal at the WTA Finals in Riyadh yesterday.

The Belarusian four-time major winner roared her way to a championship showdown with Kazakhstan's Elena Rybakina (pic), who battled past fifth-seeded Jessica Pegula 4-6, 6-4, 6-3 earlier at King Saud University Indoor Arena.

Sabalenka clocked 12 aces and saved six of nine break points to book her place in the final for a second time in five appearances at the season-ending championships.

"She always pushes me to play my best tennis," said Sabalenka, who gave Anisimova a warm embrace at the net after the match.

"Honestly, I wouldn't care if I would lose this match because we both played an incredible match."

"And we both deserve to be in the final."

"I'm super happy to get the win. I told Amanda that she should be proud of her season, she played incredible tennis

the whole season, but it's just the beginning for her. There are many good things coming her way for sure."

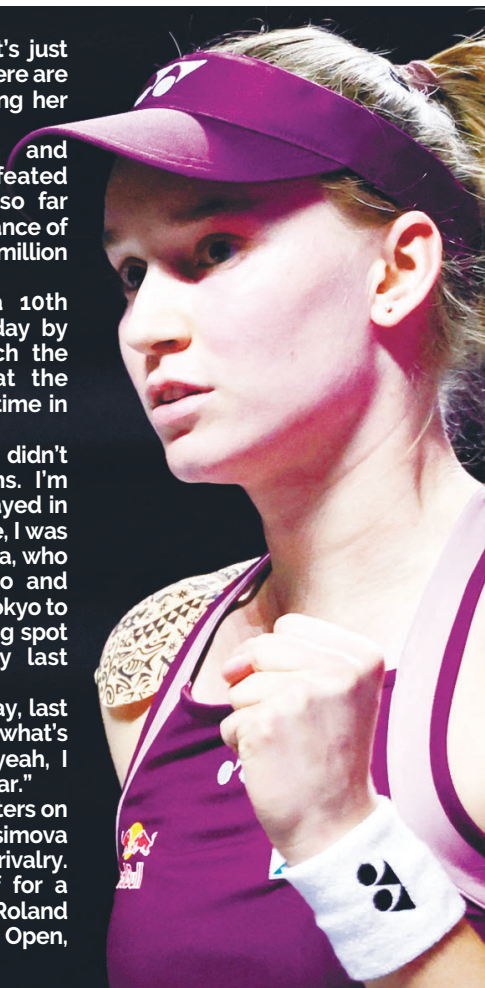
Both Sabalenka and Rybakina are undefeated through four matches so far this week and have a chance of earning a record US\$5.2 million (RM21.7m) in the final.

Rybakina claimed a 10th consecutive win yesterday by beating Pegula to reach the championship match at the WTA Finals for the first time in three appearances.

"When I came here, I didn't have many expectations. I'm very happy the way I played in Asia but at the same time, I was quite tired," said Rybakina, who won the title in Ningbo and made the semifinals in Tokyo to secure the final qualifying spot for Riyadh at the very last chance.

"So, for me, it was okay, last week, last push, let's see what's going to happen. And yeah, I didn't expect to go that far."

Two of the biggest hitters on tour, Sabalenka and Anisimova have built one a riveting rivalry. They were squaring off for a fourth time this season (Roland Garros, Wimbledon, US Open, Riyadh). – AFP



Sinner defends ATP Finals title, Alcaraz in the hunt

JANNIK SINNER will begin his bid to retain his ATP Finals title on Tuesday and cap a turbulent year which could end with another showdown with his great rival Carlos Alcaraz.

World No. 1 Sinner has won two Grand Slams, including a landmark victory in the Wimbledon final against Alcaraz, since cruising to victory in Turin this time last year.

Sinner and Alcaraz are almost certain to qualify from their respective Bjorn Borg and Jimmy Connors groups, and another epic clash between the world's two best players in either the last four or final of the eight-man tournament is a tantalising prospect.

"If I manage to do it great, if not I've still had an incredible season, one with not a lot of tournaments but with a lot of matches played and plenty won," Sinner told reporters yesterday.

"The first match is really important because usually you don't play against one of the best eight players in the world, and that's what makes it different for everyone."

Sinner goes into the Finals first in the world rankings but he could

lose top spot even if he wins the tournament. Alcaraz can grab the year-end summit by improving on his performance in last year's event.

Alcaraz trained with Sinner yesterday ahead of his attempt for a first Finals crown. The Spaniard is also looking to add to two Grand Slams won this year, with the Roland Garros final won against Sinner one of the best matches ever played.

There is little tension between the two players despite even though they are by some distance the best two players on the planet.

"Probably the people might be surprised about it because when they think about our rivalry, when they think about fighting for great things, fighting for the number one spot, (they think) we have to hate each other."

"And I think that's not true," Alcaraz said yesterday.

"Once we step on the court, we have our goals, we want to do our best just to win the match. But afterwards, when we shake hands off the court, we are the same person. And I think that's a really healthy rivalry that we have." – AFP

THIS WEEKEND the pundits drooled over two Premier League midfielders in particular. Micah Richards called Declan Rice “one of the best players in world football,” while Jamie Redknapp described Moises Caicedo as “the best of his type in world football.”

Jamie Carragher hailed both and said: “Right now we are watching two of the best midfielders in world football, there’s no doubt about that.”

Putting aside how annoying the phrase “world football” has become, they have a point. Rice and Caicedo are both doing exceptional midfield things every week.

Last weekend, Rice arrived on the scene with a flying leap into the box to power in a header at Burnley and, a couple of hours later, Caicedo was tackling three Tottenham players in six seconds, the third of which set up Joao Pedro to score.

Watching Caicedo is a bit like watching N’Golo Kane in his prime, running past his own teammates to put out fires all over the pitch, and he is presumably irritating beyond belief to play against.

His ability not only to fill the right space but to effect the game when he gets there, usually with a timely interception or tackle, is extraordinarily rare and unlike anyone else in the Premier League, as the numbers show.

“He’s an actual animal,” said Chelsea goalkeeper Robert Sanchez after the 2-0 win at Spurs. “He’s the best player on the planet in his position... who is better than him in that position? He’s a beast. Every 50-50, every challenge he wins and he is so composed on the ball.”

You can understand the appreciation – when Caicedo plays well, Sanchez has real hope of keeping a clean sheet.

Caicedo is essential to Chelsea, just as Rice is vital to everything Arsenal do right now.

The comparison between the two is not entirely fair, given Caicedo is the most defensive player in Chelsea’s midfield and Rice plays alongside a holding player – usually Martin Zubimendi – and that difference is borne out in the data. Rice contributes significantly in defence but his impact is

Who’s the best midfielder in Premier League?

Rice and Caicedo have been so impressive they have sparked debate about who is the top-flight’s outstanding player

increasingly in the attacking half.

Rice ranks second in the Premier League for ball-carry distance behind only Nottingham Forest’s Elliot Anderson (more on Anderson later), and on top of those driving runs with the ball he has added other threats over the past 12 months, like his knack of timing off-the-ball runs into the box and his ability to deliver dead-ball missiles plum on Gabriel’s forehead.

Just as Caicedo stands out for defensive actions, Rice comes out on top of the pile for expected assists among Premier League midfielders.

There are some notable omissions from this season’s data.

Rodri has barely played over the past year but he will no doubt return to the conversation, as the only Premier League player with a *Ballon d’Or* at home.

Ryan Gravenberch and Alexis Mac Allister have missed a few games and so don’t have the minutes to make the cut, though both were pivotal in Liverpool’s title win.

Dominik Szoboszlai has recorded some impressive numbers and Liverpool are a better side when he plays in midfield rather than makeshift right-back.

It is worth considering some other players in the conversation for the Premier League’s outstanding midfielder.

Bruno Fernandes has adapted well to his deeper role this season, or perhaps he’s simply not adapted at all, still playing high-risk passes and instigating most of Manchester

United’s attacking play (1.31 expected assists, ranking second among central midfielders).

Combined with his high tally of ball recoveries (61, joint second), Fernandes’s all-round output is exceptional, even if he occasionally gets caught out in his defensive positioning.

Then there is Anderson,

making superhuman contributions at Forest. Thomas Tuchel had no hesitation in handing over England’s No. 6 shirt earlier this year and saying “it’s yours” ahead of the 2026 World Cup.

Anderson’s figures are hugely impressive in a poor Forest team, driving forwards with entries into the final third (121, first among central midfielders) while also topping the league’s midfielders for ball recoveries (84) – albeit there is a little more recovery required for a team 19th in the table.

Who is the best midfielder in the Premier League right now? Rice is undoubtedly the outstanding all-rounder, but Caicedo might just edge it by the

sheer volume of steals – no player in Europe’s top five leagues has recorded more tackles and interceptions and it is a freakish talent.

Caicedo is a relentless

destroyer of attacks, but he is also a creator in the sense that his interventions routinely spark Chelsea’s own forward moves, often dangerous ones when opponents thought they had control.

Their goal against Sunderland last weekend was a case in point as Caicedo hustled the ball in midfield before feeding Pedro Neto, who played in Alejandro Garnacho to score.

The 24-year-old has also begun adding goal contributions to his game, like Rodri and Rice have done, with four goals this term.

The tackle-assist at Tottenham was perhaps the most Caicedo-ish thing to happen all season long.

Of course they are different profiles with different roles in different teams, and the cop out would be to conclude that the best midfield in the league would be a mouth-watering combination of Caicedo holding, Rice carrying the ball upfield and Fernandes there to inject some creativity.

And then there’s Anderson, who can do a bit of all three. – The Independent



Declan Rice (left) and Moises Caicedo. – REUTERS/PIC

Napoli chairman says team’s home stadium is a ‘dump’

BY LAWRENCE OSTLERE

NAPOLI chairman Aurelio De Laurentiis yesterday called their home ground “a dump,” arguing that the club needs a modern stadium to boost revenue and improve the fan experience.

Napoli last season celebrated their second Serie A title in three years after a battle with Inter Milan.

They play their home games at the Diego Armando Maradona stadium, named after the Argentine who led them to two league

titles in 1987 and 1990, which belongs to the city municipality.

Speaking at an event hosted by Milan’s Bocconi University, De Laurentiis contrasted Napoli’s matchday earnings with those of the Milan clubs, saying AC Milan and Inter can generate €14 million (RM67m) from the European Champions League competition, while his team had much more limited perspectives.

“We can only get up to three million in that Maradona dump. That’s quite a difference, isn’t it?” he said, referring to the

stadium as he spoke at the event.

Italy is struggling to improve its stadiums, pressed by foreign investors who have acquired a number of clubs, ahead of Euro 2032 that it will co-host with Turkey.

This week, AC Milan and Inter completed the acquisition of the San Siro stadium and surrounding land from the city authorities, in a further step towards demolishing the venue and building a new one.

Over the summer, De Laurentiis strengthened the squad with high-profile signings, including Belgian midfielder Kevin

De Bruyne, but said such investments are hard to sustain without greater stadium revenue.

“I would like a stadium with 70,000 seats, 120 skyboxes and 8,000 parking spaces,” De Laurentiis said.

He added that renovating the Maradona – encircled by an athletics track – would take six years.

Closing parts of the stands and further limiting income.

“We need 30 hectares to build a beautiful stadium,” De Laurentiis said. – Reuters

'Reds must keep fighting'

LIVERPOOL need to maintain their fighting spirit if they hope to get their Premier League title defence back on track, midfielder Dominik Szoboszlai (pic) said ahead of a trip to Manchester City on Monday. They are third in the standings with 18 points from 10 matches, a point behind City in second; both

teams are well behind leaders Arsenal (25 points).

The Merseyside club endured a torrid spell in October during which they lost six of seven games in all competitions, but they appear to be



out of the doldrums after beating Aston Villa and Real Madrid, keeping clean sheets in both games. Szoboszlai, of Hungary, said Liverpool had shown a tenacity in their

hard-fought 1-0 Champions League victory over Real Madrid on Tuesday that they had previously been missing. "Everybody could see against Real, all of us running, fighting, being there for each other, covering each other's backs," he told the British media on Friday. "The most important thing is to keep going like this." "There is a long way to go. Now it's all about the Premier League

and facing City at the weekend. We know how good they are now. The season is long. If we were seven points clear at this stage, nobody would be saying that we had won the league already." "Last season, when we were leading the way, we just stayed calm and kept on going because anything can happen. We just need to focus on ourselves, win our games and then let's see what other teams are doing." -Reuters

Maresca stands firm

Blues manager defends Chelsea rotation policy after Rooney criticism

CHELSEA MANAGER Enzo Maresca has defended his policy of making regular wholesale changes to his Chelsea team after criticism from Wayne Rooney that his approach is disruptive.

The Blues made seven changes for Thursday's disappointing 2-2 draw against Qarabag in Baku in the Champions League - the fifth game in a row in which the Italian had made at least that number of changes.

In all this season, Chelsea have made 85 alterations to their starting line-ups in all competitions, far more than any other Premier League side. The next closest are Liverpool, with 69.

Rooney used his *BBC Sport* show to question whether players can build relationships when they rarely know who they will line up alongside.

But Maresca stood by his decisions ahead of Chelsea's meeting with managerless Wolves on Saturday, pointing out that football has changed from the days when the former England and Manchester United forward played.

"We are in an era where anyone can say what they want," he said on Friday, referring to

Rooney's remarks. "Since I joined the club, it's my view to rotate players. No one complains when you win. When you don't win I can understand no one is agreeing.

"I loved rotation as a player. Football is a bit different compared to years ago in terms of physicality and intensity. It's impossible to play with the same players 65 games in one season.

"You cannot say: 'Why, years ago, was it possible?' Because it was different. It was not so physical. I played for 20 years. Now it's changed. You need to rotate.

"If you want to see the season like a marathon - when you are in February and March, the last sprint, you have to think in a different way. But it's a long race."

There was particular criticism directed at Maresca in Baku over his decisions in defence, with 19-year-old Jorrel Hato at fault for both goals conceded.

"When the rotation is Andrey Santos, a Brazil international, and Jorrel Hato, Holland international, and Estevao, Brazil international, then it's not about rotation," he said.

"They are talented, they are young. When they are young you have to give them chance to make mistakes. But when you don't win games, the problem is rotation." - AFP



Wayne Rooney (left) and Enzo Maresca. - REUTERS/PIC

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS
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4D
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 2nd Prize **1204**
 3rd Prize **0766**

Special	Consolation
9585 0602	7150 7065
0916 5888	1280 4657
8509 7872	8443 4490
4275 4897	7105 7545
6864 4365	6567 6119

4D JACKPOT
 Jackpot 1 **RM 15,012,097.64**

9841 1204	1204 9841
9841 0766	0766 9841
1204 0766	0766 1204

Jackpot 2 **RM 470,028.15**
 Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Zodiac

1st Prize 9841	DOG
2nd Prize 1204	
3rd Prize 0766	
4th Prize Special Prize	
5th Prize Consolation Prize	
6th Prize Any 4D drawn number	

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

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 1ST **9 6 9 0 2**
 2ND **2 0 4 5 2**
 3RD **7 1 0 1 6**
 4TH **6 9 0 2**
 5TH **9 0 2**
 6TH **0 2**

6D
 1ST **0 6 4 4 9 9**
 2ND **0 6 4 4 9** or **6 4 4 9 9**
 3RD **0 6 4 4** or **4 4 9 9**
 4TH **0 6 4** or **4 9 9**
 5TH **0 6** or **9 9**

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1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	9460
2nd Prize	2357
3rd Prize	3708

Starters Consolation

6050 4327	7649 9143
6246 8184	4125 5753
2611 1865	3107 1293
2182 6910	3892 8761
9554 2279	5788 5825

1-3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM7,940,557.60**

9460 + 2357	2357 + 9460
9460 + 3708	3708 + 9460
2357 + 3708	3708 + 2357

Jackpot 2 **RM277,980.50**
 Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3+3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
539 460 +	SNAKE	RM80,000.00
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
672 357 +	OX	RM500,000.00
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
803 708 +	MONKEY	RM669,097.10

Starters Consolation

356 050 614 327	627 649 319 143
846 246 448 184	694 125 265 753
222 611 541 865	563 107 811 293
822 182 406 910	043 892 618 761
739 554 152 279	245 788 345 825

3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
460	357	708

3D Jackpot

Jackpot **RM619,050.90**

460 + 357 + 708	357 + 708 + 460
460 + 708 + 357	708 + 460 + 357
357 + 460 + 708	708 + 357 + 460

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RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH CHAMPIONSHIP: Watford 1

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	14	9	4	1	39	13	31
Stoke	14	8	3	3	21	9	27
Mid'boro	14	7	5	2	17	12	26
Preston	14	7	4	3	19	13	25
Millwall	14	7	3	4	16	19	24
Charlton	14	6	5	3	16	11	23
Bristol City	15	6	5	4	22	18	23
Hull	14	6	4	4	23	22	22
Birmingham	14	6	3	5	19	15	21
Ipswich	13	5	5	3	22	15	20

LA LIGA: Elche 1 (Rodriguez 57) Real Sociedad 1 (Oyarzabal 89-pen).

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
R. Madrid	11	10	0	1	26	10	30
Barcelona	11	8	1	2	28	13	25
Villarreal	11	7	2	2	22	10	23
A. Madrid	11	6	4	1	21	10	22
Real Betis	11	5	4	2	18	12	19
Espanyol	11	5	3	3	15	13	18
Getafe	11	5	2	4	12	13	17
Alaves	11	4	3	4	11	10	15
Elche	12	3	6	3	13	14	15
R. Vallecano	11	4	2	5	12	14	14

SERIE A: Pisa 1 (Toure 75) Cremonese 0.

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Napoli	10	7	1	2	16	8	22
Inter Milan	10	7	0	3	24	12	21
AC Milan	10	6	3	1	15	7	21
Roma	10	7	0	3	10	5	21
Bologna	10	5	3	2	16	8	18
Juventus	10	5	3	2	14	10	18
Como	10	4	5	1	12	6	17
Lazio	10	4	3	3	13	7	15
Udinese	10	4	3	3	12	15	15
Cremonese	11	3	5	3	12	13	14

BUNDESLIGA: Werder Bremen 2

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B. Munich	9	9	0	0	33	4	27
RB Leipzig	9	7	1	1	19	10	22
B. Dortmund	9	6	2	1	15	6	20
Stuttgart	9	6	0	3	14	10	18
B. Leverkusen	9	5	2	2	18	14	17
Hoffenheim	9	5	1	3	18	15	16
W. Bremen	10	4	3	3	15	18	15
Cologne	9	4	2	3	16	12	14
E. Frankfurt	9	4	2	3	22	19	14
Union Berlin	9	3	2	4	11	15	11

FRENCH LIGUE 1: Paris FC 0 Rennes 1.

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	11	7	3	1	21	9	24
Marseille	11	7	1	3	25	11	22
Lens	11	7	1	3	17	10	22
Lille	11	6	2	3	23	13	20
Monaco	11	6	2	3	23	17	20
Lyon	11	6	2	3	16	12	20
Strasbourg	11	6	1	4	22	16	19
Rennes	12	4	6	2	19	17	18
Nice	11	5	2	4	16	16	17
Toulouse	11	4	3	4	17	15	15

Wee Kiong commits to Nur Mohd Azriyn partnership

A REUNION between Malaysia's Rio 2016 Olympic Games men's doubles silver medallists Tan Wee Kiong and Goh V Shem is not on the cards, as the former remains fully committed to his current partner Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub.

The speculation arose after Wee Kiong and Nur Mohd Azriyn became the latest shuttlers to sign with Malaysia's homegrown badminton brand (Felet), which also has V Shem under its roster.

"At the moment, there's no plan for that. Although we're both under Felet now, my partnership with Azriyn has been going very smoothly.

"I'm grateful for the sponsor's trust and support. We'll continue to work hard and aim for even better results in upcoming tournaments," Wee Kiong said. - Bernama

Emma Firyana clinches Lawn Bowl singles title

NATIONAL women's lawn bowler Emma Firyana Saroji achieved a historic milestone yesterday after winning the singles title at the 2025 World Cup Lawn Bowls Championship.

In the gold medal match held at the National Lawn Bowls Centre at Juara Stadium in Bukit Kiara, the world's 12th-ranked player was engaged in a tooth-and-nail fight with England's Kathrine Rednall, with the first set tied at 5-5, thus dragging the match to the deciding set.

In the deciding set, Kathrine, who is ranked 43rd in the world, briefly led 3-2 before the Selangor-born bowler charged back to claim a 6-5 victory at the end of the round.

The triumph also fulfilled Emma's desire for revenge, as she lost to the same opponent in the group stage.

"I am very happy and excited to be able to fulfil my mission to win a gold medal for the country.

"This victory is very meaningful. This is the third time this year that I have represented the country after being dropped from the squad



Emma Firyana. - BERNAMAPIC

(during Covid-19)," she told reporters after the match.

The Sultan of Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, who is also the royal patron of the Malaysian Lawn Bowls Federation, graced the final match with his presence.

Meanwhile, in the men's singles, Izzat Shameer Dzukeple, who only finished fourth in the group stage, had to be content with sharing the bronze medal with Australian Corey Wedlock.

Another bronze medal for the country was contributed by Jariah Zakaria in the women's singles, sharing it with Scottish player Pauline Wilson. - Bernama

Putera Adam makes history

... as first Asian to win Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe pro category

MALAYSIA'S young racer Putera Adam Halim Muazzam created history after being crowned the overall champion in the Pro Category at the 2025 Lamborghini Super Trofeo Europe Championship, following his victories in both final races at the Misano World Circuit Marco Simoncelli on Friday.

The success made him the first Asian driver to win the most competitive category in the Lamborghini series in Europe.

The 19-year-old from Subang Jaya displayed exceptional skill, composure and maturity throughout his debut season with the Vincenzo Sospiri Racing (VSR) team.

Despite competing against experienced drivers such as Enzo Geraci and Josef Knopp, as well as participants from the Lamborghini Young Driver Programme, Putera Adam managed to accumulate a total of 114 points through consistent performances in every round.

His season began on a difficult note

after being involved in an accident during the opening round at Paul Ricard, but his fighting spirit brought a surprise victory in Monza, where he and teammate Paul Levet won their first race of the season.

His positive form continued with a podium finish at Spa-Francorchamps, followed by a victory in Barcelona, before closing the season in Misano with two consecutive wins, sealing the overall championship title.

"This season has been full of challenges and learning. I may be the youngest and least experienced driver on the grid, but I learned from every race, every round and every mistake.

"This title is for Malaysia, my family, and everyone who has supported me from the very beginning," he said in a statement.

Putera Adam's victory also helped VSR clinch the 2025 Team Championship. - Bernama

Taiwan star shuttler Tai announces retirement

TAIWAN'S badminton star and Olympic silver medallist Tai Tzu-ying has announced her retirement, saying her era "has come to an end" but that she hopes her spirit stays with fans.

"A beautiful chapter has come to an end. Thank you, badminton, for everything you have given me," Tai, 31, said in a Facebook post late Friday.

Born in the southern Taiwanese city of Kaohsiung, Tai has been struggling with injuries since last year and unable to return to the international circuit.

"Before the Olympics, I wasn't sure if my injured foot would allow me to compete, but I gave it my all. Others didn't give up on me, so I couldn't give up on myself," she wrote.

"I couldn't end my career the way I had hoped, and it took me a while to come to terms with that".

Tai added that she underwent surgery and lengthy rehabilitation on both legs, and thanked everyone who supported her recovery.

"I haven't decided what I'll do next, but for now, I'm going to enjoy a life without alarm clocks".

Tai ended the announcement by saying: "The TTY (her initials) era has come to an end, but I hope the spirit of TTY stays with you always."

Taiwan President Lai Ching-te in a message posted under Tai's retirement announcement on her Facebook page, said: "Thank you for your hard work! Thank you for letting the world see Taiwan's strength through your sweat and perseverance.

"Your dedication and smile have long been a source of pride for all Taiwanese people." - AFP

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0329	8657	8107	1101
4008	8238	3423	4404
1927	7159	3913	8757
0992	2349	7916	4547

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 2781 + 5005 | 2781 + 3146
 3146 + 5005 | 3146 + 2781

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Jackpot 2 **RM148,322.75**
 Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

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GROUP 2 **05814** OR **58146**

GROUP 3 **0581** OR **8146**

GROUP 4 **058** OR **146**

GROUP 5 **05** OR **46**

OR **81**

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England need Bellingham edge

Foden earns recall for World Cup qualifiers, no return for Grealish

ENGLAND head coach Thomas Tuchel recalled Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham and Manchester City's Phil Foden when naming his squad on Friday for next week's World Cup qualifiers at home to Serbia and away against Albania.

Both players missed out last time as England sealed their passage to next year's finals in North America with two games to spare following a 5-0 victory over Latvia.

There was no place once again for Everton winger Jack Grealish despite his impressive start to the season and Tuchel also overlooked Brighton & Hove Albion's veteran striker Danny Welbeck who has scored six Premier League goals this season.

In all, Tuchel has made six changes to his last squad in October with Arsenal full back Myles Lewis-Skelly the most notable absentee. Aston Villa striker Ollie Watkins was also omitted because of fitness issues.

Watkins scored in the friendly win over Wales last month and his omission means captain Harry Kane is England's only specialist striker in the 25-man squad.

There was a first call-up for Bournemouth midfielder Alex Scott, while Manchester City full back Nico O'Reilly, who replaced the injured Reece James in the last squad, retains his place. Crystal Palace midfielder Adam Wharton also returns.

Tuchel says Bellingham has "that edge" that England need, and that the "target" now he is recalled is to create an environment that maximises that.

The coach insisted that previously dropping Bellingham and Phil Foden was not a "message" to either of them but to the entire group that his England are not about individuals, and the expectation is to "contribute" to the right atmosphere.

Tuchel similarly added that the country's abundance of No. 10s does create a specific issue in that area, as he intends to build a "six-eight-10" midfield – but that he will slightly deviate from that in order to incorporate Foden's best role and potentially use him as "a nine and a half".

The manager enthused that he has a "fantasy" about the Manchester City forward excelling in a specific role for

England, and that they need to bring out the natural joy in his game.

One of England's advantages, as Tuchel intimated, is that they have No. 10s of different qualities.

"Jude has the edge," the manager said, "which is a very good thing because you need a certain edge to reach the heights that he

October squads had been to whip Bellingham into shape as regards certain squad standards, Tuchel re-iterated: "I think it was more of a message to the guys who were in camp rather than a message for Jude because there was no need for that, for the guys to keep their place even if a guy

where they compete. If you use the example that we bring four No. 10s in.

"Because all four individually deserve to be in camp. And then we have four on the No. 10 position but only one left-winger, for example. This does not make sense.

"And I think clarity is very, very important. So for this camp, Jude will be on the 10 position. For this camp, Phil will play – a bit of exception of the rule – he will be in the No. 9-10ish position, in the middle of the pitch.

"And let's see. Because I have this fantasy about him since a long time. I think it suits him the most. The second goal against Borussia Dortmund in last week's Champions League is for me a key trademark Phil Foden goal.

"So he comes and supports Harry (Kane) more or less, plays maybe for Harry or whatever, in the 9 and a half-ish role."

Tuchel pointed to how he would expect different qualities from Foden and Bellingham as 10s, pointing to how the latter brings a game-breaking ability.

"I think I can expect it from Jude. I cannot expect it so much from other types of players, because it's just not their characteristics. I think it's a key quality of Jude, to have this hunger, the sense for it, the movements and then the time to be in this space for tap ins.

"For different players in the same position, I would have different expectations. For Phil Foden in that position, I would have the expectation of him to be around the box in a half-open body position, to turn and open on the spot to assist and shoot. Like he did against Dortmund. It's different expectations."

As Tuchel had brought up Foden as a potential "nine and a half", Tuchel was asked about the fact that Kane and Bellingham have only combined for one goal in 35 games for England. That was a 3-1 victory away to Scotland in September 2023.

"At some point it's the responsibility of the players to show the connection. We can put them there, we can make it clear, we can train them and whatever, and prepare them in a certain way.

"But at some point they need to connect. And then we need to observe if the connection is there. If it suits the team. Of course that is then our job to adjust it. Or to keep the thing going, or to change it." – AFP/The Independent

England's Phil Foden (left) and Jude Bellingham in action. – REUTERS/SPIC



reached and I think we all need to help him, and to encourage him, or to create an environment that he can live this edge towards the opponent, towards the goals that we are building as a team. That is the main target.

"It is now necessary that we provide an environment and he lives up to this environment, to provide this edge for us in a positive way, and win football games."

Asked about whether the previous omission from the September and

like Jude, like Phil, like other big names are knocking on the door and claiming their right to be back which is their right to claim that.

"The message is now 'make sure you keep this thing going and make sure you accelerate the thing because we have something going here, we are building something, we are super-excited that you are back but the message is – contribute to it.

"But yeah, there is competition. And the players will know camp by camp