



## South China Sea stability vital for maritime-dependent economy

Nearly 40% of Malaysia's trades moved by sea, says deputy transport minister.

Report on page 2

# Trafficked by force



Many Rohingya are snatched from rural villages, taken to holding sites across Myanmar-Thailand border and tortured to 'extract' ransom from relatives in Malaysia or Thailand before being put on boats for perilous sea journeys to Malaysia and beyond.



Report on > page 3

## Any move by MIC to quit BN largely symbolic: Analysts

No drastic shift in political landscape expected as party's influence and electoral support have waned over the years.

Report on page 4

## DAP has not diluted reformist stance, says sec-gen

'Major institutional shifts, particularly in Parliament and governance culture, prove meaningful reform taking place within govt.'

Report on page 5

Rohingya families in Malaysia claimed to be systematically targeted as "ransom banks" by regional trafficking syndicates, with victims abducted in Myanmar and brutalised until relatives here pay for their release. - AFP FILEPIC



# South China Sea stability vital to maritime economy

➤ Deputy minister notes that 98% of national trade moves by water as rising global tensions disrupt supply chains

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's maritime-dependent economy underscores the urgent need to safeguard peace and stability in the South China Sea, said Deputy Transport Minister Datuk Hasbi Habibollah.

According to Hasbi, about 40% of Malaysia's gross national product comes from maritime activities, with more than 98% of its trade by volume transported by sea.

He said Malaysia's maritime trade throughput surpassed 778 million tonnes in 2024, placing the nation's ports among the world's top 20 in container handling.

"Ensuring that the South China Sea remains a sea of peace, not contention, is essential to sustaining regional prosperity," he said.

He delivered his keynote address at the 8th MIMA South China Sea Conference 2025 themed "Regional Unity and Strategic Resolve in the South China Sea".

Touching on global geopolitical tensions, Hasbi said conflicts in Ukraine and the Middle East have disrupted maritime supply chains.

For instance, attacks near the Bab el-Mandeb Strait caused an 80% drop in vessel calls and cargo volumes along the Red Sea in 2024, while sanctions in other conflict zones contributed to the rise of the "dark fleet" that threatens maritime safety and the environment.

"These developments remind us

that instability anywhere can affect maritime security everywhere," he said, stressing the need to shield the South China Sea from similar risks.

He also emphasised Malaysia's long-standing commitment to diplomacy and cooperative engagement in maritime affairs.

Hasbi said Malaysia will keep strengthening strategic partnerships and supporting initiatives that promote regional stability, safety and economic growth.

"Our future is tied to the sea. Protecting it is a collective responsibility that requires unity and resolve."

Meanwhile, China's ambassador to Malaysia Ouyang Yujing said the South China Sea remains one of the world's most critical maritime corridors, with over 500,000 merchant vessels and more than a million civilian aircraft passing through each year.

He said the region has recently faced "abnormal interference" from hyped disputes and manufactured conflicts that threaten stability.

"Unlike places that often use long-term legal tactics to take advantage of territorial claims in the South China Sea, countries in the region have chosen to work together."

"They've upgraded the China-Asean Free Trade Area to version 3.0 and are carrying out the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership effectively, helping drive growth and

prosperity across the region."

"China and Asean countries have also carried out fruitful cooperation in areas such as maritime law enforcement, marine scientific research and maritime protection, disaster prevention and mitigation. Looking ahead, building a community with a shared future in the South China Sea will create greater prosperity for the region," he said.

Yujing noted that China and Asean mark the fifth anniversary of the China-Asean Comprehensive Strategic Partnership this year.

"For more than five and a half years, both sides have remained each other's largest trading partners. Cooperation in the digital economy, infrastructure, agriculture and fisheries is expanding rapidly and continues to

offer vast potential for growth."

He added that survey findings cited by the ambassador show that over 80% of Southeast Asian respondents believe their countries enjoy positive ties with China, while more than 60% support deeper cooperation in maritime-related fields.

"The peoples of the region aspire to peace, stability, cooperation and friendship," Ouyang said.

He warned that negative narratives and biased rhetoric risk undermining these shared aspirations, cautioning that certain external forces are "deliberately sowing discord between China and regional countries," encouraging risky actions in the South China Sea that threaten stability and the interests of all.



Hasbi (centre) receiving a memento from Maritime Institute of Malaysia chairman Datuk Mohamed Suffian Awang (left) during the conference. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

## M'sia boasts low data costs, rapid 5G rollout

**BAKU:** Malaysia has some of the cheapest internet rates per gigabyte, reflecting the government's continued efforts to ensure affordable and inclusive digital connectivity, according to Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil.

He said Malaysia also rolled out its 5G network at an exceptionally rapid pace, making it the fastest in Southeast Asia and the second fastest in the Asia-Pacific region after South Korea.

"We are one of the 10 countries where (internet rates) per gigabyte, the cost is about two sen," he said during a reception with the Malaysian diaspora at Rumah Malaysia on Sunday.

"I think we have not really, before this, seen a situation where the Malaysian telcos can sit together at one table and come to some kind of consensus."

The minister is in Baku from Nov 16 to 19 to lead the Malaysian delegation to the World Telecommunication Development Conference 2025.

Fahmi said his participation is part of efforts to retain Malaysia's seat on the International Telecommunication Union Council for the 2027 to 2030 term, following the announcement of Malaysia's candidacy for re-election in July.

He also updated the Malaysian diaspora on the successful hosting of the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits in October, noting that it showcased the country's diplomatic strength.

"I think we have reset people's perception about not only Malaysia but also Asean. As a region with a population of 660 million, Asean is about one and a half times larger than the European Union."

"And we have a very bright future if we are able to hold together, build up an Asean community and also ensure peace and stability within the region," he said. — Bernama

## Government to amend laws for nationwide MLFF toll rollout

BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The government will amend three key laws to pave the way for the rollout of the Multi-Lane Free Flow (MLFF) toll collection system, said Deputy Works Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan.

Speaking in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday, Ahmad said the Road Transport Act, the Federal Roads (Private Management) Act and the Malaysian Highway Authority

(Incorporation) Act will be updated to allow enforcement of toll non-payment and related offences under the new MLFF system.

"MLFF is designed to remove bottlenecks at toll plazas, as vehicles will no longer need to stop to make payments," he said.

"Transactions will happen automatically without barriers or traditional toll plaza structures, improving travel efficiency for all highway users."

He said MLFF will be implemented

on a business-to-business basis, meaning toll concessionaires – not the government – will manage all procurement and appoint service providers.

This approach is expected to reduce costs for the government and highway users.

Ahmad also gave an update on the pilot rollout of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) system, which is linked to the JustGo app for digital toll payments.

The system is now undergoing

internal testing with selected users to ensure accuracy and reliability before public trials begin.

"Several parameters have been set to evaluate the ANPR pilot," he said.

"These include the system's ability to detect vehicle number plates accurately, improve transaction speed at toll lanes and ensure the security and privacy of users' data in line with the Personal Data Protection Act 2010."

He noted Malaysia has already

implemented the Open Payment Toll Collection System on 26 highways, allowing users to pay a fixed toll rate using bank or prepaid cards.

The new ANPR-linked system will support automatic toll detection on closed highways where charges are based on travel distance.

The MLFF initiative forms part of the government's wider digital infrastructure push to streamline toll operations, cut congestion and enhance the overall experience for highway users.

## Committee formed to iron out Sabah's revenue claim

**KOTA KINABALU:** A special committee comprising federal and state representatives has been set up to discuss the mechanism for implementing Sabah's 40% net revenue claim under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63), said

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

Fadillah, who chairs the MA63 Implementation Action Council Technical Committee, said the new committee will be co-chaired by Sabah State Secretary Datuk Seri

Safar Untong and Treasury secretary-general Datuk Johan Mahmood Merican.

He said the special committee will report to the technical committee, although it may also submit updates directly to the Cabinet.

"The time frame is very short. Negotiations began today, the committee has been formed, and if possible, they will detail the implementation process. I am waiting for the report and the outcome of the discussions," he said

after a meeting at Menara Kinabalu yesterday.

The meeting was attended by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor, Safar, Johan and Sabah State Attorney-General Datuk Brendon Keith Soh. — Bernama

# Rohingya families allegedly hit by ransom gangs

Victims recount being seized in Myanmar and forced through regional trafficking routes for extortion

BY FAIZ RUZMAN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Rohingya families in Malaysia are believed to be systematically targeted as “ransom banks” by regional trafficking syndicates, with victims abducted in Myanmar and brutalised until relatives here pay for their release, a community source has revealed.

Speaking to *theSun* on condition of anonymity, the source said many Rohingya never intended to come to Malaysia but were forced through a trafficking chain cutting across Myanmar, Bangladesh, Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia.

He said victims are snatched from rural villages, taken to holding sites across the Myanmar-Thailand border and tortured while being made to call relatives in Malaysia or Thailand for money.

“If the family cannot pay, they are beaten or worse. Some families are asked for money several times.”

He claimed survivors, who are now in Malaysia, have given near-identical accounts of being detained in Myawaddy, a border town long identified by researchers as a major regional trafficking hub.

“The stories are similar. They were taken from their villages, kept in camps and tortured until money was sent. Many did not choose Malaysia – they were sent here because traffickers have contacts along the route,” he said.

He added that many captives were later forced onto boats without knowing where they were being taken to, leaving them at the mercy of monsoon seas and deadly capsizes.

“People don’t get on those boats because they think Malaysia will give them an easy life. Many say they were moved by force or paid everything they had just for a chance at safety.”

“If the violence at home doesn’t stop, people will keep running. And traffickers will keep taking advantage. Victims need protection and traffickers need to be stopped,” he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia migration scholar Dr Aizat Khairi said trafficking routes into Malaysia have become far more fragmented, with smugglers exploiting both maritime and land gaps.

“Since 2022, we’re seeing a dual pattern. The

sea route into Langkawi and Kedah has surged again – especially during monsoon seasons – while the old land corridors through southern Thailand never disappeared,” he told *theSun*.

He said 2024 findings from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime show Rohingya and Bangladeshis are moved in segments handled by different brokers, not through a single continuous journey.

“Some are taken to Ranong or Songkhla, others through Takua Pa and many are forced through forests before crossing into Perlis. Ransom demands overwhelmingly target relatives in Malaysia. The journey is designed around where money can be collected.”

Universiti Teknologi Mara border-security expert Dr Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad said the survivors’ stories reflect trafficking trends that have repeatedly appeared in enforcement



investigations

He said Thailand has long been a “consistent checkpoint”, with victims moved from Myanmar to southern Thailand before being channelled into Malaysia.

“Malaysia is rarely the starting point, but very often the endpoint. Families, job contacts and Rohingya communities are here, so traffickers know the ransom can be collected here.”

Ramlan said while Myawaddy often functions as an upstream staging area, most smuggling that affects Malaysia occurs later in the chain, once victims reach southern Thailand.

“In many cases, payments don’t just go to one party. There are transporters, middlemen and cross-border agents. Each layer takes a cut and that’s why the cost can reach around RM15,000 per person. Families end up paying in stages throughout the journey and many remain in debt for years even after arriving in Malaysia.”



Victims of cross-border trafficking, some allegedly abducted from Myanmar and forced through forest routes, arrive in Malaysia to seek protection, said Medecins Sans Frontieres, a global medical aid mission.

– MASRY CHE ANI/THE SUN

## Boat tragedy highlights refugee crisis: UNHCR

**PETALING JAYA:** Rohingya refugees are fleeing escalating violence in Myanmar and Bangladesh, with traffickers exploiting their desperation. According to the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR), nearly 200 have reached Malaysia in the past year and many have died at sea.

In an email response to *theSun*, the UNHCR said the conflict in Rakhine state has displaced hundreds of thousands since 2023, forcing thousands more to flee across borders in 2024.

“Since February 2022, an estimated 22,460 Rohingya refugees have embarked on dangerous sea journeys from Bangladesh and Myanmar. Some 782 Rohingya refugees were rescued or safely disembarked in Malaysia since 2022, including 196 in the past 12 months,” it said.

UNHCR noted the largest displacement occurred in 2017, when more than 750,000 Rohingya fled into Bangladesh.

Latest UNHCR data shows Malaysia currently hosts 189,700 Myanmar refugees and asylum-seekers, representing 12% of displaced Rohingya in the region as of Oct 31.

Within the same period, an estimated 21,300 Rohingya arrived in Malaysia after February 2021 alone.

“The Rohingya have long faced violence, discrimination and targeted persecution in Myanmar. They have been denied basic rights and services – including citizenship, healthcare, education and work – and repeatedly driven from their homes.

“Refugees hope to contribute to host communities, but limited access to education, employment and livelihoods – compounded by global humanitarian funding cuts – leaves them vulnerable to despair and exploitation,” UNHCR said.

On traffickers’ role, the agency added that refugees resort to irregular and risky routes because safe pathways are largely unavailable.

“Limited legal pathways for refugees to seek safety and reunite with family members drive them to risky channels, with traffickers preying on desperation through false promises,” it said.

On Nov 6, one of three boats carrying an estimated 300 migrants capsized near Tarutao Island, close to the Malaysia-Thailand border. As of Nov 17, authorities recovered 28 bodies believed to be Rohingya and rescued 14 survivors from a boat carrying roughly 70 people. A total of 42 victims have been found, with the rest still missing.

Police have launched a joint operation with Interpol and Aseanapol targeting an international migrant-smuggling syndicate linked to the incident.

UNHCR said it has “offered support to authorities to identify the international protection needs of the survivors and to extend humanitarian assistance”, but did not indicate whether the offer had been accepted. – By **Faiz Ruzman**

## Survivors traumatised after deadly journey, says medic aid group

**PETALING JAYA:** The boat tragedy off Langkawi has exposed what aid workers call an entrenched trafficking corridor into Malaysia, where the Rohingya, fleeing war and persecution, often arrive traumatised, untreated and terrified of arrest despite seeking safety.

Medecins Sans Frontieres (Doctors Without Borders or MSF) head of mission Aymen Abdullah said Rohingya refugees embark on the journeys “out of desperation”, often lured or forced by traffickers promising safe passage.

“They are fleeing persecution and containment in Myanmar and Bangladesh. They come here hoping for safety but instead find themselves living at the margins – no proper access to care, no protection and in constant fear of being arrested,”

he told *theSun*.

“Most of our patients are from Penang and Kedah, with a smaller number from Perak. When they were forced to be trafficked, it wasn’t only by boat. It’s also by land. They go across forests and it’s very tough.”

Aymen said survivors’ accounts contradict persistent claims that Rohingya willingly choose Malaysia.

“One patient said, ‘I never wanted to come here. I was brought here by traffickers.’

“Others say, ‘If it were safe to go back to Myanmar, I would like to go home.’ So the narrative that people come here just to come here isn’t 100% precise.”

He said the Rohingya remain one of the

world’s largest stateless groups, intensifying their vulnerability.

“Despite everything, many still consider Myanmar home. The public needs to understand why they embark on such journeys.”

MSF mental health supervisor and clinical psychologist Chew Ching Hoay said many patients arrive in critical physical and psychological condition.

“We see people extremely malnourished after months in the jungle. Some are so weak they must be carried. Their skin is damaged with infected wounds and stiff joints.

“During their journey some were believed to have been electrocuted and kept in holes filled with human waste. Some claimed to have

witnessed pregnant women being raped to death. These are unimaginable experiences. They are no longer connected to reality and need immediate psychiatric stabilisation.

“But the suffering doesn’t end in the aftermath. They fear arrest because they have no documents, face language barriers and the cost of healthcare is prohibitive.”

MSF’s Penang-based fixed clinic and mobile teams treat around 12,000 patients a year, mostly Rohingya from Penang and Kedah.

Chew said many are turned away from hospitals for lacking documents while those admitted face foreigner-rate charges – with childbirth costing between RM5,000 and RM8,000. – By **Faiz Ruzman**



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# MIC departure unlikely to shift politics: Analysts

➤ 'Decision would have minimal implications on stability of Unity govt'

BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Analysts say the potential departure of MIC from Barisan Nasional (BN) is unlikely to drastically shift the political landscape despite the historic role of the party in the coalition.

Nusantara Academy of Strategic Research senior fellow Prof Dr Azmi Hassan said the influence and electoral support of MIC have waned over the years, making any move largely symbolic.

"Had this decision been made 10 years ago when BN was at its peak, MIC leaving would have had a very significant effect.

"Now, it would not have a negative impact. In fact, it could even be positive, whether MIC decides to go solo or join Perikatan Nasional (PN).

"Essentially, BN would remain largely unaffected because MIC currently has very little support from Indian constituents."

He added that the decision would have minimal implications for the stability of the Unity government.

"The MIC president has already stated that if the party were to leave BN, they would still support the Unity government. So there is nothing new. They are not planning to pull out."

He cited internal dissatisfaction within MIC as a key motivator.

"The top leaders may eventually leave BN because they feel they have no choice. Their dissatisfaction is understandable as Umno prioritises its own members first when allocating seats," he said, citing Sabah, where MCA secured seats while MIC received none.

When asked if the move could trigger a domino effect among other BN parties, Azmi was sceptical.

"MCA knows its best strategy is to stick with BN and wait for Umno to gain political strength so it could negotiate for more seats.

"MIC leaving is unlikely to prompt similar actions from other component parties."

On how the decision might affect parliamentary arithmetic in the next general election, he said the outcome remains uncertain.

"MIC may leave soon, possibly within a few weeks, depending on the reaction of BN.

"Currently, the party holds two parliamentary seats largely supported by Umno voters. I'm sure Umno would contest these seats if MIC aligns itself with Pakatan Harapan (PH) or another coalition. MIC needs to carefully calculate who its ally is; who its 'big brother' would be, whether it is PN or PH.

"Even so, MIC does not have the bargaining power to demand winnable seats in either scenario."

International Islamic University Malaysia and Iseas-Yusof Ishak Institute political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Syaza Shukri said the exit of MIC would be more symbolic than numerical, affecting BN's multi-ethnic image rather than parliamentary numbers.

"It is one of the founding parties of the alliance and BN, and leaving would turn BN into a mostly Umno Malay-centric coalition with little influence on non-Malay voters."

She added that political stability would not be significantly affected, as MIC has pledged continued support for the government of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"The biggest impact is on BN itself. It would be seen as weakening or declining, potentially losing credibility among its traditional Indian voters and its multi-ethnic identity."

She also said MIC's consideration of leaving BN highlights that component parties are not unconditionally tied to Umno.

"This move gives MIC more leverage with PN, which is looking to expand beyond Malay voters. For MIC, the key calculation is ensuring their conservative Indian voters feel seen and heard.

"Symbolically, PN benefits, but the coalition remains largely Malay-centric."

Syaza said PN may be more willing to engage with MIC than BN, giving the party greater room to negotiate.

"MIC also has less to lose than MCA as its base includes conservative Indians comfortable working with PAS, while urban Indians generally prefer PH.

"MIC may also see PN gaining strength among Malay voters compared with BN, so joining now could be advantageous. Ultimately, this is about ensuring their voters feel represented."



Syaza said MIC's consideration of leaving BN highlights that component parties are not unconditionally tied to Umno. - BERNAMAPIC

## 'Johor election may not favour BN'

**PETALING JAYA:** Amanah deputy president Datuk Seri Mujahid Yusof Rawa said a three-cornered contest between BN, PH and PN in the Johor state election may not automatically favour BN.

He told *theSun* the historical strength of BN in Johor could be undermined by poor coordination and negotiation with the state leadership, leading to dissatisfaction within certain factions.

"Some voices within Johor, especially from the PH bloc, have openly stated that if BN refuses to negotiate over seat allocations, they are prepared to contest independently, even if it means clashing with other parties."

He added that Johor Amanah has expressed dissatisfaction for the past three years, feeling excluded from the Unity government, unlike in other states in which BN and PH work closely together.

"While BN and PH have collaborated in most states, Johor does not seem to share that same experience," he said, adding that local appointments, such as village heads and administrative roles, have not been handled collaboratively.

"Unlike other states, positions are filled in consultation. In Johor, appointments for village heads and other key roles have not involved PH, leaving many local leaders feeling excluded."

He said these grievances are longstanding and have recently surfaced more publicly at party conventions.

"It is not something that just happened today. These issues have been raised before, but now they are being voiced more publicly."

Mujahid acknowledged the complexity of the Johor political landscape, adding that a three-way contest does not guarantee a BN victory. He said in reference to the 2018 election, PH managed a significant win despite multiple contenders.

"It is clear that a three-cornered fight is not always favourable to BN. A divided opposition could often end up benefiting one another, and the same could happen in Johor if all parties do not come together."

He emphasised the need for cooperation and strategic planning, adding that the fragmented approach of BN could backfire if it fails to negotiate effectively with other political groups.

"BN needs to realise that Johor is different from other states, and they must take a proactive approach in addressing the concerns of local leaders. If not, the outcome could be a win for neither side, and voters would be the judge."

During the Amanah National Convention on Nov 8, Johor delegate Ahmad Fadhli Umar Aminolhuda said PH is ready to contest against BN if seat negotiations fail.

"If BN continues to act arrogantly and refuses to cooperate with us, Johor Amanah is fully prepared to mobilise its party machinery," he said, adding that delegates would ultimately leave seat negotiations to party leadership.

Johor Amanah deputy chairman Datuk Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad recently said the party is prepared to face three-cornered fights in the next state election.

He added that while a "unity government" exists at the federal level between PH and BN, the situation in Johor is different. - By **Ikhwan Zulkaflee**

## 'Barisan Nasional risks keeping party that is no longer aligned'

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Umno supreme council member Datuk Lokman Noor Adam said BN risks keeping a party that no longer stands with it, after MIC moved to align itself with PN.

He said the MIC talks with PN make its continued membership in BN untenable and a potential threat to the coalition.

"BN has long known that MIC is no longer fully aligned with the coalition," Lokman told *theSun*.

"The timing of their announcement alone clearly shows ill intent."

The 2025 Sabah state election polling day is set for Nov 29, and Lokman described the MIC

discussions about leaving BN as a "malicious attempt" to disrupt the polls.

He urged BN to take a stand, adding that the decision of MIC to defer its exit, after reportedly receiving "flowers from the prime minister", does not change its mandate to leave.

"For me, the decision to leave BN, which came from the MIC delegates, is final, because it was made at the party general assembly, (which is) the highest decision-making body in the party.

"It is not a decision that its president Tan Sri S.A. Vigneswaran could simply reverse."

He said the original decision of MIC was a collective mandate from grassroots members, while the deferment was the personal decision of the party president.

Lokman said BN should recognise a "hidden threat from within," adding that the coalition should not continue harbouring a party that no longer stands with it.

"Regardless of what the MIC president decides today, we should not keep MIC in BN."

Meanwhile, MCA secretary-general Datuk Chong Sin Woon said the party is focusing entirely on preparations for the Sabah state election.

"At this moment, our focus is entirely on the state election.

"We have two MCA candidates contesting under BN, and that is where our energy and resources are being directed."

He added that any further comment concerning BN would only be made after the

state polls.

"Everything else would be deliberated once the election is over. Right now, we are concentrating on the task ahead."

*theSun* previously reported that both MIC and MCA had been weighing the possibility of parting ways with BN, raising questions about the future of the coalition's iconic *dacing* (scales) symbol.

The 79th MIC annual general meeting on Sunday voted for the Indian-based party to leave BN for PN but decided to give full mandate to the central working committee and the president to make the final decision.

*theSun* has reached out to MIC leaders for comment but had not received any reply as of press time.

# Reformist agenda unchanged

BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** DAP secretary-general Anthony Loke said the party has not diluted its reformist agenda despite claims to the contrary, adding that major institutional shifts particularly in Parliament and governance culture prove meaningful reform is taking place within the Unity government.

In an exclusive interview with *theSun*, Loke highlighted reforms ranging from a more independent Parliament to unprecedented oversight mechanisms, adding that these shifts are strengthening accountability, empowering the voices of the Opposition and transforming the culture of governance.

He said while some may not notice the institutional changes, DAP remains committed to its principles, while navigating the realities and responsibilities of being in the government.

## On criticisms that DAP has diluted its reformist stance

**theSun:** Some critics say DAP has toned down its reformist ideals since joining the Unity government. How do you respond?

**Loke:** This is a question that has always been asked. When you are in the government, you have to deliver and implement. By implementing, of course, it is not just about shouting.

Implementing means getting things done. There is a process in the government. You have to navigate within the system of governance to ensure that what we achieve can be delivered.

Some critics simply criticise but do not acknowledge the changes taking place within society and within the government today because of what we are doing.

Take for example, the Parliament. Parliament has changed tremendously. It is now a more independent institution, in which the oversight of Parliament over the government is unprecedented. These are institutional changes that nobody has acknowledged. Nobody talks about them.

So when you say that we have forgotten our ideals: What did we forget? We have been supporting and implementing all these changes. Parliament, as an institution, plays the most important role in oversight.

Never before in the history of Parliament have you seen the Opposition with so much role and space to oversee the government. They are not only heading the Public Accounts Committee, but also chairing various select committees to question the government.

The prime minister has committed to coming to Parliament every week to answer questions directly from MPs. In a way, the entire culture of Parliament has changed.

From the days when top office bearers tried to avoid scrutiny, now the prime minister himself comes weekly to be scrutinised. On top of that, we have various mechanisms and committees to (inspect) the government.

Again, this is something which,

◆ **DAP secretary-general Anthony Loke said the party has not abandoned its ideals, adding that it is driving some of the most significant institutional changes in Malaysia from within government. In this second part of *theSun's* exclusive interview, Loke addresses criticism, outlines ongoing reforms and explains why staying in government is key to proving DAP's commitment to nation-building.**



Loke said DAP remains committed to its principles, while navigating the realities and responsibilities of being in the government. – BERNAMAPIC

along the process, would create better governance, a more credible and accountable government. These are the changes taking place, and I hope the critics are fair as well.

## On DAP's future leadership and multi-racial engagement

**theSun:** DAP has a strong, relatively young leadership team. How do you see the party evolving to maintain support across all groups?

**Loke:** This is again an ongoing effort that the party is undertaking. From the last congress three years ago, when I took over, of course there was a change, with the younger generation taking over some key leadership roles within the party.

There is a deliberate attempt to make DAP more inclusive and multi-racial. So in the slate of our candidates, we have tried to push a more balanced line-up: more young people, more women and more multi-racial candidates.

For the first time, in the last election we had three Malay candidates on top of six Indian candidates and, of course, the majority were Chinese candidates.

We do not deny that the larger membership within DAP and the support base of the party has always been non-Malays.

We are trying to reach out more to other races as well, especially the Malay community.

Many constituencies represented by DAP are no longer just one race. A lot of them are actually mixed. My

constituency is (an example), with more than half of the voters being Malay.

That has changed our landscape and changed our approach as well.

Like it or not, all our elected representatives have to reach out to the various communities.

We hope that over time, with this engagement and this groundwork at the grassroots level, we will slowly change the perception of Malaysians towards DAP.

Whatever any DAP leader says, I think among the Chinese and Indians (the party) is generally accepted, but among the Malays, it still takes some effort to build understanding.

## On urban-rural perception gaps

**theSun:** Acceptance of DAP may be improving in urban areas, but rural communities remain wary. How do you address that?

**Loke:** Firstly, the DAP electoral base is not really in the rural areas. The rural communities have a different perception of DAP, firstly because we have always been portrayed as the 'bogeyman'.

In fact, because of this, DAP has little presence in the rural areas. We have very little engagement with them. So they do not understand us.

They just see us through what is being told to them – unlike in constituencies where DAP has a presence, especially in urban and semi-urban areas, in which we engage with the public directly.

Those who have engaged with us, those who have dealt with us directly, know what kind of party we are. They do not feel uncomfortable.

For example, my constituency (Seremban). I engage with all the schools in my area, including all the teachers in the various streams through the parents and teachers association. By and large, I do not feel any problem engaging them.

I get invitations all the time from the Malay community for social events and for their places of worship, such as the mosque and *surau*. By and large, people accept us as elected representatives and we do not have any problem.

It is a matter of engagement. Of course in the short term, we do not think things could change overnight.

It would continue to be the same because rural constituencies would believe what they are told, no matter what.

Unfortunately, this is the Malaysian political landscape, which we have to accept for the time being.

But our hope, and my hope, is that DAP could stay longer in the government to prove that we are a Malaysian party. We are a party that is very fair and very objective. And a party that places importance on nation building.

To prove that, we need more time in the government. This is a challenge that we have to face.

We have to continue to win support and the mandate to stay in the government.

## 'Transport safety Bill to be tabled next year'

**PETALING JAYA:** Transport Minister Anthony Loke said the Malaysian Transport Safety Board (MTSB) Bill will be tabled in Parliament next year.

He said the proposal, first mooted more than a decade ago, is now in its final phase of preparation with the Cabinet memorandum expected to be completed "in the near future".

He was speaking at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday in response to Setiu MP Shahrizukirmain Abd Kadir, who asked him to explain the main obstacles that have held back the formation of the board, despite persistently high road accident rates and the need to strengthen safety across the transport sector.

"The Cabinet memorandum on the establishment of the MTSB will be finalised soon and my hope is that we could take it to the Cabinet before the end of the year.

"Once we obtain principle approval, the draft Bill could be prepared by the Attorney General's Chambers and we hope to bring it back to Parliament for tabling."

He added that the ministry is also studying international best practices, including models used by independent transport investigation bodies overseas.

"We are taking into account comparisons with international agencies and will adopt best practices. As with any investigative body, independence is a fundamental principle."

Loke said earlier efforts were hindered by repeated changes of government, the need to update policy direction and the restructuring of agencies under the Transport Ministry.

He also said overlapping investigative powers among existing agencies required thorough review before the new board could be established.

He added that since June, the ministry has renewed efforts to push the process forward.

"Engagement sessions were held with stakeholders from May to October involving federal agencies, industry players and the Sabah and Sarawak governments.

"Work is also underway on staffing proposals, legal amendments and refinement of draft investigation procedures.

"Until the MTSB is formally established, the ministry will continue forming special ad hoc investigative committees, including those convened for the FRU accident in Teluk Intan and the Upsi student bus crash in Perak, comprising subject-matter experts."

Loke said existing task forces operate independently.

"When their reports are completed, they are not edited or amended by the ministry. We present them publicly as they are."

He said accident-reduction efforts are ongoing and not dependent on the creation of the MTSB.

These include mandatory speed limitation devices for heavy vehicles, stricter enforcement against overloaded lorries and continuous road safety campaigns targeting motorcyclists. – By **Harith Kamal**



# Public reminded to use NG999 responsibly

➤ Upgraded AI-enabled system improves emergency response but remains vulnerable to crank calls, says minister

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming has reminded the public to use emergency lines responsibly following the rollout of the new Next Generation Emergency Services 999 (NG999) system.

In a statement yesterday, he said the upgraded platform enhances resource and

data sharing between emergency call centres and key agencies, including real-time tracking of incident locations, which will significantly improve the speed and accuracy of rescue and emergency response operations.

“NG999 also incorporates advanced technologies, including data analytics and artificial intelligence (AI), to deliver emergency assistance more effectively,” he said.

The system officially came into operation yesterday, replacing the Malaysia Emergency Response Services 999 (MERS999).

Nga said a total of 169,015 fake or crank calls – 2.28% of all MERS999 calls – had been recorded as of September this year.

He noted that such calls not only constitute system misuse but also delay response times and pose safety risks by diverting rescue teams from real emergencies.

He urged the public not to misuse the platform, warning that irresponsible actions undermine the effectiveness of the country’s entire emergency response network.

Nga stressed that making a fake emergency call is a criminal offence under Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998, which covers misuse of network services.

Offenders face fines of up to RM50,000, imprisonment of up to one year, or both, Bernama reported.

Perpetrators may also be charged under Section 182 of the Penal Code for giving false information to a public servant, an offence punishable by up to six months’ jail, a fine of up to RM2,000, or both.

“Therefore, I urge the cooperation of all parties to prevent such irresponsible acts, ensure public safety and allow strict legal action to be taken against offenders,” he said.

# Najib, son fail to stay bankruptcy proceedings

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The High Court here yesterday dismissed an appeal by Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and his son, Datuk Mohd Nazifuddin, to stay bankruptcy proceedings initiated by the Inland Revenue Board (IRB) over their failure to settle tax arrears of RM1.69 billion and RM37.6 million respectively.

Judicial Commissioner Suhendran Sockanathan@Saheran Abdullah dismissed the appeal after finding no additional harm that would justify granting a stay of proceedings.

“In these circumstances, both appeals are dismissed with costs of RM7,000 each,” he said.

On Oct 16, 2023, the Federal Court ruled that the former prime minister and his son must settle their outstanding taxes, dismissing their appeal against an earlier High Court decision.

Suhendran said the merits of the tax assessments fall under the jurisdiction of the Special Commissioner of Income Tax (SCIT) and that the court’s role is limited to facilitating the collection and recovery of income tax.

“The claims by Datuk Seri Najib and Nazifuddin regarding the issue of time limit, inaccurate calculation and political donations are matters related to the merits of the tax appeal and should be decided by the SCIT.

“It is also in line with the concept long used in tax collection in Malaysia, namely the ‘pay first, dispute later’ formula under the Income Tax Act, aimed at facilitating tax collection,” he said.

He also dismissed the argument that their pending appeals before the SCIT should justify an adjournment, stressing that such appeals do not suspend the tax collection process.

Meanwhile, lawyer Wee Yeong Kang, representing both appellants, said he had been instructed to file an appeal against the decision.

Najib and Nazifuddin are appealing against the High Court’s decision allowing the IRB’s application to enter a direct judgment in the tax arrears case against them. A direct judgment is a court decision based on written submissions without calling witnesses.

Two separate High Courts had previously granted the IRB’s application for summary judgment to recover tax arrears from father and son for the assessment years 2011 to 2017.

Both later failed in their attempts to set aside these judgments at the Courts of Appeal in September 2021, although on May 10, 2022 the Federal Court granted them leave to appeal the matter further. – Bernama

# Myanmar cook stabbed to death

**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** A female cook from Myanmar was stabbed to death following an argument with several compatriots over the quality of food served at a Thai restaurant in Lorong Bukit Juru on Sunday night.

In the 9pm incident, the woman’s husband and a friend, both also Myanmar nationals, sustained injuries during the altercation.

It is understood the dispute began when the suspect and several fellow countrymen became dissatisfied with the food they were served.

An argument broke out between the group and the victim and her husband, both in their 40s, before the woman ordered them to leave the premises.

The suspect then contacted his brother, returned to the restaurant and allegedly stabbed the woman with a knife, killing her.

Penang police chief Datuk Azizee Ismail confirmed the incident when contacted, saying police had arrested three Myanmar men, including the suspect and his brother, to assist in the investigation. – Bernama



**UNDERAGE CRACKDOWN ...** A Road Transport Department officer questioning a young teenager during an operation in Kuala Lumpur that was carried out to curb extreme motorcycle riding and dangerous stunts. – BERNAMPIC

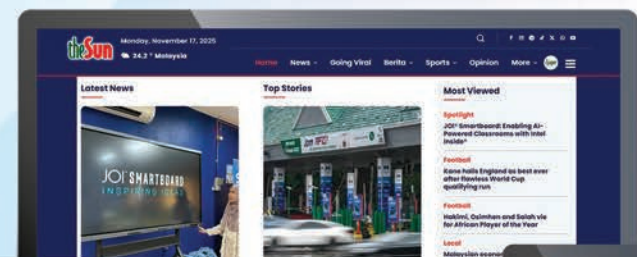
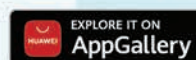


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## Hasina condemns guilty verdict

**NEW DELHI:** Ousted Bangladesh premier Sheikh Hasina called the guilty verdict and death sentence in her crimes against humanity trial "biased and politically motivated".

Hasina, 78, defied court orders that she return from India to attend her trial about whether she ordered a crackdown against the student-led uprising that ousted her.

She was found guilty and sentenced to death yesterday.

"The verdicts announced against me have been made by a rigged tribunal established and presided over by an unelected government with no democratic mandate," Hasina said in a statement.

"They are biased and politically motivated."

The trial centred around the 1,400 people who were killed between July and August 2024, according to the United Nations.

Hasina was assigned a state-appointed lawyer for the trial but she refused to recognise the court's authority and said she rejected all charges.

"Its guilty verdict against me was a foregone conclusion," Hasina said in the statement, claiming she would be willing to attend a fresh trial outside her home nation.

"I am not afraid to face my accusers in a proper tribunal where the evidence can be weighed and tested fairly," she said.

"That is why I have repeatedly challenged the interim government to bring these charges before the International Criminal Court in The Hague."

Bangladesh's Foreign Ministry summoned India's envoy to Dhaka this month, demanding that New Delhi block the "notorious fugitive" Hasina from talking to journalists and "granting her a platform to spew hatred".

The International Crisis Group said the "political repercussions of this verdict are significant".

"The process has not been without critics," ICG analyst Thomas Kean said.

"In absentia trials are often a source of contention, and in this case the speed with which the hearings were conducted and the apparent lack of resources for the defence also raise questions of fairness ... But they should not be used to downplay or deflect from Sheikh Hasina's actions." – AFP



Accused Amir, covered in black cloth, is escorted from a police vehicle at Patiala House Court yesterday. – AFP/PIIC

# Delhi car bomb accused appears in court

## ➤ Alleged attackers from Kashmir, says agency

**NEW DELHI:** Investigators presented in court yesterday a suspect linked to last week's car-bomb in New Delhi, one of two men accused of involvement in the attack.

Officials have not disclosed any details on the motives or organisational backing of the alleged attackers, both of whom they say came from Indian-administered Kashmir.

Kashmir has been divided between India and Pakistan since their independence from British rule in 1947, and both claim the Himalayan territory in full. Tensions remain high between New Delhi and Islamabad.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) said suspect Amir Rashid Ali is accused of having "conspired with the alleged suicide bomber, Umar Un Nabi, to unleash the terror attack" on Nov 10.

The NIA put the death toll at 10, though hospital officials told AFP that at least 12 people had been killed. It remains unclear whether Umar is included in the tally.

An AFP photographer saw Amir being taken under heavy guard from a police truck to a New Delhi court to face charges.

Media reported that the court had ordered Amir be held in custody for 10 days by the NIA.

The blast erupted near a busy metro station close to the Red Fort in Old Delhi, where the prime minister delivers the annual Independence Day address.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has called the attack a "conspiracy" and vowed to bring the "perpetrators, their collaborators and their sponsors" to justice.

Umar was a medical professor at a university in Haryana, just outside the capital, while Amir had allegedly travelled to Delhi to "facilitate the purchase of the car which was eventually used as an explosive device", according to the NIA.

India has provided no further information on the alleged motives or network behind the two suspects.

The bombing was the worst attack since April 22, when 26 civilians were killed at the tourist site of Pahalgam in Kashmir.

New Delhi accused Pakistan of backing that attack, claims Islamabad denied.

In May, India launched strikes inside Pakistan, triggering four days of intense cross-border conflict that killed at least 70 people.

After a ceasefire, Modi vowed that "any attack on Indian soil will be considered as an act of war".

Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi issued yesterday a pointed warning to Pakistan, comparing the brief May conflict to a "trailer" rather than a full-length film.

"I'd like to say that the movie hasn't even started - only a trailer was shown, and, after the trailer, it was over within 88 hours," Dwivedi said in a speech at a defence conference in New Delhi. – AFP

### BRIEFS

#### EDITORS PUSH FOR TAX RELIEF FOR MEDIA

**JAKARTA:** Editors-in-Chief Forum is advocating "No Tax for Knowledge", a proposal for tax relief for media outlets to help sustain credible journalism. Forum chief Retno Pinasti was quoted by Antara news agency at the Run for Good Journalism event on Sunday as saying the initiative supports outlets committed to reporting accurate information and public education. She said sustaining credible journalism is vital for the public and the state to access credible news. Finance Minister Purbaya Yudhi Sadewa acknowledged the forum's concerns over a struggling media sector and urged journalists to continue providing criticism and advice. – Bernama

#### SOUTH KOREA PROPOSES TALKS WITH NORTH

**SEOUL:** South Korea proposed yesterday talks with Pyongyang to avoid border clashes, the first such offer in seven years as Seoul seeks to ease military tensions with the North. Deputy Defence Minister Kim Hong-cheol said military-to-military channels can help avert an escalation. "To prevent accidental clashes and ease military tensions, our military officially proposes that the two sides hold military talks to discuss the establishment of a clear reference line for the MDL," he said, referring to the military demarcation line on the border. Kim said there had been repeated crossings of the demarcation line by soldiers "while installing tactical roads, fences, and laying mines". – AFP

## Filipino protesters press for accountability

**MANILA:** Tens of thousands of protesters returned to the streets of Manila for a second straight day yesterday, pressing their demands for accountability over alleged corruption in flood-mitigation projects.

The protest, which started on Sunday and drew over 600,000 people, will run until today. It is organised by Iglesia Ni Cristo, a two-million-strong church known for bloc voting, which mobilised members nationwide.

Many in Sunday's crowd expressed frustration at what they described as ineffective inquiries into irregularities in major infrastructure projects.

"We are calling for the government to carry out a real, sincere, investigation and not cover up

for anyone involved in this anomaly," said 60-year-old Freddie Beley.

The scandal has widened since President Ferdinand Marcos Jr disclosed in August the results of an internal audit into flood-control projects, revealing troubling irregularities.

It has implicated public works officials, executives of major construction firms and lawmakers, who allegedly enriched themselves through substandard, or in some cases non-existent, flood-control projects.

The controversy has hammered investor confidence and is seen by some analysts as a factor behind economic growth hitting a four-year low in the third quarter, as public spending slowed.

Marcos has created a commission to investigate the alleged corruption in infrastructure projects, focusing on flood-control facilities.

The president, son of a former leader accused of widespread corruption during his rule, has framed his crackdown as part of a broader push for accountability and transparency.

Protester Armelyn Bandril, 35, said there was a lack of accountability.

"Almost a hundred days have passed since the process began, yet no one has been jailed. There's plenty of proof," she said.

Marcos on Thursday vowed that those responsible for the flawed projects would be jailed before Christmas. – Reuters



# Schools closed over asbestos fears

## ► Play sand products recalled after lab tests

**SYDNEY:** More than 70 schools in Australia and New Zealand were closed yesterday for cleaning after asbestos was discovered in widely used children's play sand products.

Recalls have been issued for several colourful play sand products after laboratory testing detected traces of tremolite and chrysotile asbestos.

A number of schools and preschools in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) and one in Brisbane shut on Friday after the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) issued a national recall notice on Wednesday for products supplied by Educational Colours.

Further recalls were then issued by Kmart and Target on Saturday for a 14-piece sand castle building set as well as blue, green and pink magic sand.

As of yesterday, more than 70 schools in the ACT were closed to allow for assessment and clean-up, the territorial government said.

"We have found that use of this product is widespread across ACT public schools," it said.

"In the interest of the safety of our students, staff and community we have decided to close some schools that have this product."

Asbestos is a prohibited substance in Australia and New Zealand that can cause several types of cancer when its fibres are inhaled or ingested.

The sand products used in sensory play at school were sold by retailers in Australia between 2020 and 2025, the ACCC said.

The ACCC said respiratory asbestos had not been detected in any of the tested samples.

"While the risk that any asbestos found is likely to be airborne or fine enough for inhalation is low, this may still pose a risk," it said.

In New Zealand, local media reported at least five schools that used Kmart's sand products were closed for asbestos testing yesterday.

More than 120 have also contacted the government over fears they used one of the recalled sand products.

"We appreciate that the presence of asbestos in products that are used by children will be concerning to parents and caregivers," said Ian Caplin, the Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment's product safety spokesperson.

"We urge families who have bought these products to stop using them immediately." – Reuters



Asbestos removalists attend to a school in Canberra yesterday. – LUKAS COCH/AAP/VIA REUTERS

## Taiwan to distribute security handbook

**TAIPEI:** Taiwan will begin distributing millions of civil defence handbooks to households to prepare residents for potential emergencies.

The handbook, unveiled in September, includes for the first time instructions on what to do if citizens encounter enemy soldiers and stresses that any claims of Taiwan's surrender should be considered false. It also provides guidance on bomb shelters and preparing emergency kits.

This marks Taiwan's latest effort to prepare its population for crises ranging from natural disasters to a Chinese invasion, as Beijing steps up military and political pressure to assert its sovereignty claims over the democratically governed island.

"This booklet shows our determination to defend ourselves," said Lin Fei-fan, deputy secretary-general of Taiwan's National Security Council who oversaw the effort.

"We need people across the

Taiwan Strait to understand that there will be a huge cost if China makes the wrong decision because Taiwanese people have the resolve and very clear commitment in defending ourselves and people are willing to take that action to protect each other."

The distribution to more than 9.8 million mailboxes across the island will start this week and handbooks in English and other foreign languages will also be handed out soon, Lin said.

After the distribution, Lin said the government will help people prepare their personal emergency kits through promotional campaigns, though he did not give details.

The handbook outlines scenarios Taiwan might face, from sabotage of undersea cables and cyberattacks to inspections of Taiwanese vessels by an "enemy nation" as a prelude to conflict, and even an all-out invasion. – Reuters



A printer checks the printed handbook cover in Taoyuan. – REUTERS/SPIC

## Trump reverses stance on Epstein files

**WASHINGTON:** US President Donald Trump said on Sunday he backed lawmakers' efforts to release more files related to sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, despite his previous opposition to the measure.

"House Republicans should vote to release the Epstein files, because we have nothing to hide," Trump wrote on his Truth Social platform.

The 79-year-old Republican has accused Democrats of pushing an "Epstein hoax" after emails emerged in which the financier suggested Trump "knew about the girls".

Some critics have accused Trump of trying to conceal details about his own alleged wrongdoing – something the president denies – by looking to block the vote.

The issue has driven Trump away from some of his closest allies within his Make America Great Again movement.

"Some 'members' of the Republican Party are being 'used', and we can't let that happen," Trump said in his post, in reference to some Republican lawmakers breaking from his previous stance.

Trump has demanded Attorney General Pam Bondi and the FBI investigate links between Epstein and ex-president Bill Clinton, a Democrat, along with former Harvard president Larry Summers, who served as Clinton's treasury secretary.

Before he died in prison in 2019, Epstein had been required to register as a sex offender in Florida after pleading guilty in 2008 to two counts of solicitation of prostitution. – AFP

## Vinted faces French probe over porn content

**PARIS:** Vinted faces an investigation in France over allegations that some accounts on the second-hand clothes platform are being used to promote pornographic content, the government's child protection commissioner said.

French news website *L'Informé* and other media reported last week how some users are posting advertisements for lingerie or swimwear to attract users to their profiles on adult-content sites such as *OnlyFans*.

Their profiles also contain contact details encouraging viewers to message them on WhatsApp or Telegram.

Even though the practices are against Vinted's rules, French High Commissioner for Childhood, Sarah El Hairy, said on Sunday she had filed a complaint with the country's online and media regulator Arcom.

"Where there are children and adolescents, there are predators," El Hairy told the France 3 channel.

"They're using the sale of pretty

classic objects to send people towards pornographic content."

Online platforms that make adult content available in France are obliged to have age verification systems under a law passed in 2024.

The legislation has led to a major battle with leading pornography websites, some of which have suspended their services in France as a result.

Vinted told AFP that it has "a zero-tolerance policy regarding unsolicited communications of a

sexual nature or the promotion of sexual services".

It said it had "more than 23 million registered members" in France and had "proactive detection tools to identify suspicious behaviors, such as inappropriate remarks, and we encourage anyone who notices concerning content to report it".

The fast-growing company, founded in 2008 and based in Lithuania, has become a leading platform for selling second-hand clothes. – AFP

# Israel restates policy on Palestine

## ➤ Peace plan up for UN vote

**TEL AVIV:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and members of his government underscored their opposition to a Palestinian state ahead of a UN Security Council vote yesterday on a resolution endorsing a US-backed Gaza peace plan.

The draft resolution would follow up on the ceasefire deal between Israel and Hamas brokered by US President Donald Trump, giving the council's blessing for a transitional administration and a temporary international security force in the devastated territory.

Unlike previous drafts, the latest version of the resolution mentions a possible future Palestinian state, which the Israeli government is vehemently against.

"Our opposition to a Palestinian state on any territory has not changed," Netanyahu said at a Cabinet meeting on Sunday.

Netanyahu had come in for criticism from coalition members, including far-right Finance Minister Bezalel Smotrich, who had accused him of failing to respond to a recent wave of recognition of Palestinian statehood by Western countries.

"Formulate immediately an appropriate and decisive response that will make it clear to the entire world – no Palestinian state will ever arise on the lands of our homeland," Smotrich urged Netanyahu on X.

The premier replied on Sunday that he did "not need affirmations, tweets or lectures from anyone".

Other ministers likewise expressed their opposition to Palestinian statehood, though



A displaced Palestinian cares for her child inside a tent in central Gaza Strip. – REUTERSPIC

none explicitly referred to the resolution.

"Israel's policy is clear: no Palestinian state will be established," Defence Minister Israel Katz wrote on X.

Foreign Minister Gideon Saar also said on X that the country would "not agree to the establishment of a Palestinian terror state in the heart of the Land of Israel".

National Security Minister Itamar Ben Gvir

called the Palestinian identity an "invention".

The Security Council resolution would effectively usher in the second phase of the US-backed deal reached last month, which brought about a ceasefire after two years of war.

The first phase has seen the release of the last 20 living Israeli hostages and nearly all of the 28 dead captives held in Gaza.

In exchange, Israel has freed nearly 2,000

Palestinian prisoners and returned 330 bodies.

Late on Sunday, the Israeli military said in a statement that it had killed a gunman in northern Gaza after the individual was "identified crossing the yellow line and approaching IDF (Israeli) troops".

The so-called yellow line demarcates where Israeli troops have withdrawn to inside the Gaza Strip as part of the ceasefire. – AFP



HMS Prince of Wales docked at Marina Bay earlier this year. – AFPIC

## British aircraft carrier placed under Nato command

**LONDON:** A British aircraft carrier has been placed under Nato command in a European first, as two senior British ministers visit Italy to mark the occasion.

The Royal Navy aircraft carrier *HMS Prince of Wales*, one of two in service, and its advanced F-35 fighter jets, are now committed to a Nato exercise in the Mediterranean, announced British Defence Secretary John Healey.

Healey and Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper were visiting Naples yesterday, where they will host their Italian counterparts on board the ship.

The move for the first time means that Nato

will have a carrier strike group under its command: a group of vessels which includes *HMS Prince of Wales*, its support ships and an advanced fleet of F-35 fighter jets.

The F-35s have already been taking part in a joint exercise with Italian jets, Nato Exercise Falcon Strike.

Healey insisted that placing the carrier strike group under Nato command was an example of the United Kingdom's "Nato-first" plan, set out in the Strategic Defence Review earlier this year.

That plan called for the UK to move towards being ready to fight a war, and centre its preparations in Europe, and on arming the

Western alliance's joint forces.

"We are in a new era of threats that demands a new era for defence. Our strength comes from hard power and strong alliances, so it is fitting to mark this moment alongside one of our closest Nato allies in Italy," Healey said.

Healey and Cooper will hold talks with Italian Defence Minister Guido Crosetto and Foreign Minister Antonio Tajani, on board *HMS Prince of Wales* as it sits off the coast of Naples.

Efforts to bolster Europe against Russia, and to counter hybrid threats to the continent's security, will be at the heart of the discussions. – Bernama

## Australia rejects offer to co-host climate summit

**SYDNEY:** Australia rejected yesterday Turkiye's offer to co-host next year's UN climate summit, as their rival bids for COP31 distract from this year's negotiations in Brazil.

Canberra and Ankara are under pressure to break the impasse and avoid a scene in Belem, where Brazil is desperate to show that diplomacy still works.

The host must be chosen by consensus, so unless Australia or Turkiye withdraws its bid for the 31st UN Climate Change Conference (COP31), or they come to an agreement about sharing the duty, both countries will miss out.

That would be unprecedented and would see COP31 hosting rights default to Germany.

German officials have said they do not want to host.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese was firmly opposed to the suggestion of co-hosting with Turkiye.

A Turkish diplomatic source told AFP over the weekend that Ankara "continues to advocate a co-presidency model" but was willing to go it alone should consensus not be reached.

Australia is bidding to host the summit in the southern city of Adelaide.

Brazil has appointed a representative to help resolve the disagreement but diplomats say that no progress has been made yet toward reaching an agreement before COP30 wraps up on Friday.

Australia's Climate Change Minister Chris Bowen arrived in Belem on Sunday, which "has been a shot in the arm for Australia's bid", said Thom Woodroffe, a senior fellow with the Smart Energy Council in Australia.

The annual COP, or Conference of the Parties, is the world's main forum for driving climate action. But it has grown over the years from diplomatic gatherings into vast trade shows where host countries can promote economic prospects. – AFP/Reuters



# Accountability crisis behind KLIA leak

COMMENT  
by Chin Yew Sin

**T**HE viral video of water cascading through the ceiling of KLIA Terminal 1 – less a leak and more a sudden, unwanted water feature – initially had the bizarre look of fake news. Unfortunately, the swift confirmation by Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) was all too real.

While the MAHB report quickly pointed the finger at the roofing contractor for an “unacceptable lapse” in leaving plywood safety covers over drainage points, this attribution – factually accurate regarding the immediate cause – feels like a strategic dilution of institutional accountability.

KLIA, as the premier gateway into Malaysia, is a vital national asset. Its reputation must not be allowed to erode through repeated incidents – whether water leaks, recurring Aerotrain failures or past power outages.

Blaming the contractor is easy but it obscures a fundamental truth about managing critical infrastructure: the ultimate responsibility for oversight rests with the owner and operator.

MAHB’s statement positions the incident as a failure of a specific team during a scheduled maintenance and upgrade project, a narrative that neatly frames the event as a minor, isolated procedural slip during an overall positive “infrastructure renewal plan”.

While decisive action against the contractor is necessary, this response fails to address the deeper systemic and supervisory weaknesses that allowed the lapse to occur.

The finding that workers failed to remove plywood used to cover drainage for safety reasons during a sudden storm evacuation is alarming, pointing directly to a failure in the project’s Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment and Risk Control process.

For instance, questions must be raised about

the initial risk assessment: Was the procedure of using plywood to seal off critical drainage points during working hours adequately assessed?

In a high-consequence environment like an international airport, the risk of blocking essential water run-off, especially with known high-intensity weather, must surely outweigh the temporary safety benefit of sealing a hole, suggesting that safer, more temporary or non-obstructive safety measures should be considered.

Furthermore, when a lightning warning mandates an emergency evacuation from the rooftop, a critical checkpoint must be the integrity of all temporary protective measures, especially drainage. This procedural failure is not just the contractor’s; it highlights a failure in the MAHB-mandated and supervised work permit system and safety protocols.

The approach to all maintenance work in a critical facility like KLIA must adopt a zero-tolerance mindset for foreign object debris.

Procedures must be treated with the same meticulousness and rigour as work on an aviation engine, where a simple leftover screw can have catastrophic implications.

In this case, the leftover plywood served as a catastrophic blockage, a reminder that a lapse in seemingly minor standard operating procedures can lead to major operational disruption and reputational damage.

Crucially, the core issue is the lack of independent, high-consequence verification. The best industry practice, often applied in the oil and gas sector, is “trust but verify”.

For work in a critical area that can directly impact operations and national reputation, safety cannot be left entirely in the hands of the contractor.

This raises the question of where the independent quality and safety checks by MAHB’s project team were, and where the site supervision was whose duty it was to ensure the immediate environment was secured

*“Visitors’ first and last impression of Malaysia is KLIA, and a video of a leaking ceiling suggests a lapse in the fundamental upkeep expected of a modern international hub.”*



KLIA, as the premier gateway into Malaysia, is a vital national asset. Its reputation must not be allowed to erode through repeated incidents. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN

before the team departed the area.

Beyond the immediate work site, given that KLIA is a highly sensitive and secure area, this incident serves as a valuable lesson to reassess the standards for contractor competency and background checks.

While not the direct cause of the leak, ensuring that all personnel accessing critical zones have the necessary expertise and a thoroughly vetted background is a foundational security measure.

High operational standards require equally high standards for the partners entrusted with maintenance. This incident comes on the heels of other highly publicised operational hiccups – from the Aerotrain’s repeated disruptions to power issues. Each event chips away at the nation’s image.

Visitors’ first and last impression of Malaysia is KLIA, and a video of a leaking ceiling suggests a lapse in the fundamental upkeep expected of

a modern international hub.

The true accountability lies not merely in punishing the worker who left the plywood but in the leadership ensuring that the systems, procedures and oversight mechanisms – the very fabric of the airport’s operational integrity – are robust enough to prevent such “unacceptable lapses” in the first place.

MAHB must be transparent about the systemic checks they will implement, not just concerning contractor procedures, but also within their own supervision and validation processes.

Only by adopting a rigorous, “trust but verify” approach to all high-risk, high-consequence work can MAHB begin to repair the reputational damage and ensure that the KLIA gateway reflects the professionalism and high standards the nation deserves.

Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

## EDUCATION

FOCUS 2025

Education matters remain an important component of Malaysian society. Today the landscape is fast paced with new exciting developments in technology such as AI, coding, virtual reality, and cybersecurity, leading the way for changes in curriculum development. To showcase the latest and most updated content, we invite you join us in 2025, and be part of our Education Focus!



**A**S Sabah gears up for its state election and politicians rush to fine-tune their manifestos polishing promises, ironing slogans and practising smiles that say “I care about you, *bah*” – this *Makcik* decided it is only fair she draws up her own version too.

Not to compete with anyone (*walaupun* if I join, sure *menang* aura category), but because while Sabah is preparing to choose a direction for itself, the rest of Malaysia is also quietly drifting – like a boat that forgot to tie itself to the jetty.

So, while candidates over there refine their visions for the future, *Makcik* is here refining the visions for your kitchen, your wallet, your WiFi and your sanity. Because let’s be honest, sometimes the real crises are not in Parliament; they are in your house and school where incidents had happened just because children had tough times to figure out what is real and what is not.

If Sabah is setting its political compass, Malaysia as a whole may as well decide what kind of country we want it to be:

- ➔ One built on common sense?;
- ➔ One where kids aren’t raised by tablets?;
- ➔ One where inflation isn’t explained away with shrug emojis? or
- ➔ One where WhatsApp uncles can no longer terrorise the nation?

So, while manifestos are being drafted over in Sabah, here’s *Makcik*’s own – marinated, spiced and cooked long enough to sting, soothe and maybe even save us from burning the whole kitchen down.

Let’s begin.

#### The ‘screen-time tax’ (aka parental ignorance levy)

If your kid’s been playing Roblox for 14 hours while you tell neighbours, “*Dia tengah belajar* coding”, boom – 5% tax on your WiFi bill.

# Makcik’s hot, humorous, hard-hitting manifesto

Children today can construct Minecraft skyscrapers, run a TikTok account and buy Robux with surgical precision but cannot pronounce “Good Morning” without buffering. We need a policy that penalises digital neglect and rewards digital balance.

How about we introduce a “tax rebate for actual parenting”? Spend one hour talking to your child about feelings instead of “Fortnite” – RM10 off your Unifi bill. Parenting but incentivised – very Malaysian.

*Bonus clause:* anyone who says “games build creativity” while their child commits virtual homicide gets sent to compulsory parenting workshops. *Makcik* will supervise with *rotan* in hand – not to hit, but to emphasise her scolding with Olympic-level pointing.

*Extra idea:* mall screen-time officers. If your toddler is blasting *Baby Shark* on an iPad the size of Kota Kinabalu, you get a yellow card. Two yellow cards = parenting detention.

#### The ‘inflation reality check act’

Because *nasi lemak* shouldn’t require a bank loan. Every policymaker must live on RM100 a week:

- ➔ No bodyguards;
- ➔ No official cars;
- ➔ No *towkay datin* discounts; and
- ➔ No shortcut to VIP groceries.

Just you and Malaysian economics fighting for survival together. We hear, “the economy is strong!” but

our wallets are quietly whispering Morse code: S...O...S...

*Implementation rule:* attach one minister to one experienced *pasar* aunty. Whatever she complains about while shopping – *harga sayur*, chicken sizes shrinking, petrol *naik*, *ikan mahal* – becomes the official inflation indicator. If she rolls her eyes at the minister, all policies freeze until further notice.

*Bonus clause:* whenever a minister says “global factors” while giving a vague wave of the hand, RM50 vanishes from their pocket and lands in a household that could really use it.

#### The ‘WiFi for wisdom’ initiative

We have MyDigital, MyGov, MySejahtera but where is MyCommonSense? Let’s create a national digital literacy curriculum because right now Malaysians are becoming part-time victims, full-time forwards machines.

Modules include:

- ➔ How not to believe TikTok quacks;
- ➔ Recognising a scam before it recognises you;
- ➔ Why that WhatsApp forward from Uncle Ali is not breaking news; and
- ➔ How to know when “DM for side income” means you are about to get scammed.

*Rewards system:* Earn *Makcik* points for every hour your child spends offline. Redeem them for bookstore vouchers, schoolbook discounts and free *nasi lemak* Fridays.

Parents who let their toddlers scroll

YouTube until 2am get sent to digital rehab bootcamp – hosted by *Makcik*. Bring water, tissues and prepare for withdrawal symptoms.

#### Ministry of Common Sense (MOCS – pronounced Moks)

A brand-new ministry dedicated to stopping nonsense before it escapes into the wild.

This elite panel includes:

- ➔ Five *makciks* with eyes sharper than *gaharu* knives;
- ➔ Three uncles with arms permanently folded;
- ➔ One aunty who mutters “Aiyoo!” every time a budget proposal appears.

*Their role:* filter out nonsense initiatives, including giving teenagers free VR headsets “for education”.

*Official motto:* “We test before you stress.”

*Official dress code:* *Baju kurung* with deep pockets for receipts from 1998.

The “empathy is a subject” programme.

- ➔ Moral studies? Check.
- ➔ Islamic studies? Check.
- ➔ Civics? Check.
- ➔ Empathy studies? Vanished faster than free parking in KL.

*Teach children that:*

- ➔ stabbing someone is not a conflict-resolution strategy;
- ➔ screaming online is not activism;
- ➔ being kind is not optional.

Finland teaches patience and emotional regulation. Japan teaches teamwork and civic responsibility. Malaysia teaches creative problem-

solving under extreme everyday stress.

Time to flip that *nasi goreng*.

Syllabus:

- ➔ Week 1: How not to be a jerk online.
- ➔ Week 3: Apologising without saying “but actually...”
- ➔ Week 6: Why forwarding WhatsApp messages doesn’t make you a journalist
- ➔ Week 9: How to lose gracefully without breaking furniture

*Final exam:* Comfort a crying friend without Googling “what to say when someone is sad”.

Bonus marks for helping your mother without dramatic sighing.

#### Makcik’s final verdict

While Sabah sharpens its political choices and candidates polish their manifestos, the rest of Malaysia should not just sit around waiting for magic.

We need policies grounded in common sense, humour and empathy – not more task forces that feel like rejected scenes from “The Fast and the Bureaucratic”.

So, dear policymakers – whether you are campaigning in Sabah or working in Putrajaya – stop stirring the pot without tasting the soup.

Because the *rakyat* are hungry, not for more slogans, but for sanity, compassion and leadership that finally tastes like it knows what it’s cooking.

*Azura Abas is the*

*associate editor of theSun.*

*Comments: letters@thesundaily.com*

## A treasure we cannot afford to lose

COMMENT  
by Sheila Ramalingam

**NESTLED** in Malaysia’s lush rainforests is a true gem – the Malayan tapir (*Tapirus indicus*). It is the largest of the five extant tapir species, and the only one native to Asia.

It has a large, flexible proboscis, which it uses to grasp vegetation. The species’ characteristic black and white coloration is thought to help break up its outline in the dense forest undergrowth, aiding in camouflage, a survival mechanism that is becoming increasingly useless as its habitat disappears.

Its solitary nature and nocturnal habits make it difficult to study, contributing to gaps in our understanding of its behaviours and needs.

This gentle creature is a symbol of the incredible biodiversity that thrives across the country. Despite its unique status and ecological importance, the Malayan tapir is disappearing before our very eyes.

The Malayan tapir is officially listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list. Fewer than 2,500 mature tapirs are estimated to remain in the wild, and that number is declining fast. The culprits are painfully familiar: deforestation for palm oil and timber,

infrastructure expansion and land conversion.

As forests are cleared and fragmented, tapirs are forced into human-dominated landscapes, where they are killed in road accidents or poached.

In 2023 alone, official records indicate that at least ten tapirs were killed on Malaysian roads, a figure that likely underrepresents the true toll. These animals are often struck while attempting to cross highways that now cut directly through their territories.

The ecological consequences of the tapir’s decline are significant. As a keystone species, the Malayan tapir plays a critical role in maintaining forest health by dispersing seeds over large areas, thereby aiding in forest regeneration.

Its disappearance would accelerate forest degradation, threatening biodiversity and weakening natural defences against floods, droughts and climate change.

Malaysia is a signatory to international conservation agreements, including the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity and has outlined its national commitments in documents such as the National Policy on Biological Diversity 2022-2030 and the Malaysia Policy on Forestry 2021, as well as laws such as the Wildlife Conservation Act 2010.

Yet, these laws and policies remain insufficient to protect this gentle giant.

Fragmented protected areas, insufficient ecological connectivity and weak monitoring mechanisms continue to undermine conservation goals.

What is urgently needed is coordinated, science-based action. Forest reserves must be expanded and effectively connected to enable viable wildlife populations.

Road networks in ecological hotspots must incorporate mitigation measures such as wildlife crossings and fencing. Local communities must be empowered and incentivised to participate in conservation efforts, and the public must be better informed about the tapir’s plight.

Saving the Malayan tapir is not simply about preserving one species, it is a litmus test for Malaysia’s commitment to environmental stewardship. It is about whether we are prepared to act decisively to protect our natural heritage before it vanishes.

Time is running out. If urgent measures are not taken, the Malayan tapir may follow the path of extinction, not because we lacked the knowledge to prevent it, but because we failed to act when it mattered most.

**Sheila Ramalingam** is the deputy executive director at Universiti Malaya Centre of Leadership and Professional Development and senior lecturer at the Faculty of Law, Universiti Malaya. *Comments: letters@thesundaily.com*



The Malayan tapir is officially listed as endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature red list. – SUNPIC



The BSN Care Grassroots Cup brought out the best in the 120 selected players from the football clinics held in selected schools.

# BSN nurtures young football talent

➤ Shaping future national players through competitions

BY DHARSHINI GANESON

**BANK** Simpanan Nasional (BSN), through its BSN Care Sports Pillar, continues to nurture young talents and promote community empowerment with the successful implementation of the BSN Care NextGen Strikers programme.

Through a strategic collaboration with KL Rangers Football Club (KLFC), a community football club that plays an active role in nurturing grassroots football talent, BSN brought together 300 young participants aged between 6 and 12 from schools across the Klang Valley, including 120 students from BSN's adopted schools.

This collaboration reinforces BSN's CSR commitment to youth empowerment and community development, while enhancing the bank's visibility and impact in the sports and education sectors.

The BSN Care NextGen Strikers programme is designed to nurture young football talent while instilling values of teamwork, discipline and sportsmanship. The structured coaching also strengthens community ties, while promoting active lifestyles for students in schools.

The grassroots development programme was designed as a series of four football clinics conducted between July and October 2025 at various schools and sports centres, culminating in the Grassroots Cup tournament.

BSN conducted a series of four football clinics at SMK Taman Sri Rampai, KLFA Sports Centre, Padang Arena Sukan Azman Hashim UKM, and SK Taman Koperasi Polis Fasa 2, engaging a total of 300 students. By identifying and nurturing young footballers, through training and exposure, the programme supports the development of emerging talent,

contributing to the future growth of Malaysian football.

A total of 120 outstanding players from the football clinics were selected to participate in the BSN Care Grassroots Cup, which took place on 9th Nov at the Pusat Pembelajaran BSN field in Bangi.

The BSN Grassroots Cup crowned champions in two categories — Under-12 and Under-9. Adding to the excitement was a friendly match between BSN Care FC and Chalho FC, graced by former national footballer Zaquan Adha, Astro Arena sports commentator Nafis Abdullah, BSN's mascot, 'Kucing Happy' and mascots from the popular cartoon, Didi & Friends.

The players demonstrated the skills and knowledge they developed during the training sessions. Their selection from different schools reflected their showmanship, commitment, and strong football skills.

"This initiative reflects BSN's dedication to building a stronger, healthier and more resilient community. By investing in grassroots sports, BSN aims to nurture well-rounded

individuals and instil lifelong values that go beyond the football field," said Datuk Jay Khairil, Chief Executive of BSN.

Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad, patron of KL Rangers, lauded the collaboration between BSN and KL Rangers FC, noting that such partnerships play a vital role in providing structured opportunities for youth development at the grassroots level.

"Through programmes such as this, we are not only shaping future football players but also nurturing individuals who are more disciplined and motivated in life," said Nik Nazmi.

Through the BSN Care NextGen Strikers, BSN reinforces its commitment to empowering young talent while creating meaningful community engagement, ensuring that every child, regardless of background, could learn, play, and grow.

BSN has played a key role in developing financial services and providing solutions to ensure broad access to financial opportunities for all segments of Malaysian society. For further information, visit [www.bsn.com.my](http://www.bsn.com.my)



(Back row, left) Nik Nazmi and Mujibburrahman Abd Rashid, Deputy Chief Executive, BSN posing with the under-9 winners.



The criteria for the students selected for the BSN Grassroots Cup was based on football talent, determination and discipline.



Liew (centre) at the Asean International Fair for Trade in Services 2025 yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

# Raise wages, job quality in services sector, Asean urged

BY HAYATUN RAZAK  
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia has called on Asean countries to raise wages and job quality in the services sector as artificial intelligence (AI) advances and several member states run services-trade deficits.

Deputy Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Liew Chin Tong cited economist Dani Rodrik's article in Project Syndicate who argued that the global economy needs to pay more attention to raising standards within services jobs and not just focusing on manufacturing or high-tech sectors.

"Because services very often hire the most number of people in an economy. It is important to improve the conditions of services jobs, improve the skills, improve the intellectual content and also to ensure that services jobs will pay well and they will not be inflated by the advancements of AI and technology," he said at Asean International Fair for Trade in Services 2025 yesterday.

While AI and technology will advance, Liew said, they will aid and create better services jobs which pay better and give more meaning to workers. "So that we can not just deal with our services deficit, but create something interesting for our workers, for our businesses and also for Asean and for the world."

In the piece, Rodrik argued that three of the greatest economic challenges facing the world – climate change, erosion of the middle

► Important to improve skills and intellectual content amid advancements in AI and technology, says Liew

class and persistent global poverty – require new thinking and approaches.

"These challenges are intertwined and demand integrated solutions rather than isolated policy fixes," he said.

He suggested that many solutions already exist at the local level but are under recognised or under scaled.

Rodrik emphasised that the services sector matters a lot in this context as it is where most people work, yet it often receives less policy attention compared to manufacturing or high-tech sectors.

He argued for upgrading services jobs: better skills, higher wages, and better quality of work, so that the services sector can be a driver of inclusive growth rather than a zone of precarious employment.

Rodrik warned that technological change and AI should not simply displace workers or lead to a "race to the bottom" in services jobs; instead, the gains from technology should be shared and used to raise job quality.

He called for policy innovation: local innovations in service delivery, regulatory design, business models should be identified and scaled up so that these "neglected solutions" become mainstream.

He linked services-job quality with broader issues like inequality, middle-class security and the stability of democratic institutions – if large swathes of people are stuck in low-quality, low-pay services jobs, then the middle class erodes, which creates political and economic risks.

Liew said the two-day inaugural Asean International Fair for Trade in Services 2025 serves as a collaborative platform that reflects Asean's shared commitment to shaping the future of the Asean Economic Community.

He added that the event aligns closely with Malaysia's priorities as Asean Chair in 2025.

The minister stressed that strengthening trade in services is essential for Asean's next phase of economic growth and regional integration, particularly through talent development, technology adoption, regulatory reform, and industrial collaboration.

"The themes of innovation, inclusiveness and sustainability resonate strongly across this programme," he said.

Liew noted that adopting advanced technologies such as AI and blockchain, improving Asean-wide standards and strengthening mutual recognition agreements would help elevate the region's services sector.

## Sarawak's first locally developed EV charging app, flagship station launched

**KUCHING:** Sarawak yesterday marked a major milestone in its green mobility journey with the soft launch of Fast-EV, the state's first locally developed electric vehicle (EV) charging application (app).

The launch, led by SDEC Karuna JV Sdn Bhd (SKJV), also saw the official opening of the Fast-EV flagship 120-kilowatt (kW) DC (direct current) charging station at Plaza Merdeka here, alongside a 22kW AC (alternating current) charger at the nearby The Waterfront Hotel.

Developed entirely in Sarawak, Fast EV represents more than a technological milestone; it symbolises the state's bold commitment to advancing a sustainable, digital, and low-carbon mobility ecosystem.

"The app enables users to locate, activate, and pay for EV charging sessions conveniently, combining modern functionality with locally driven innovation," SKJV said in a statement yesterday.

It said the company is tasked with accelerating the adoption of electric mobility across the state by ensuring an extensive and reliable network of EV chargers, especially along inter-city routes connecting major population and economic hubs, in line with revving up Sarawak's Green Mobility Network and the Post Covid-19 Development Strategy 2030 (PCDS 2030).

"This initiative will enable seamless inter-city EV travel and is expected to be fully realised by 2030, with a target of 400 chargers strategically deployed across Sarawak.

"Fast-EV is fully committed to supporting this transformative vision, serving as a catalyst in advancing Sarawak's ambition to become a regional leader in sustainable mobility and green technology," it said.

SKJV general manager Muhammad Fai'zul Zaidi said Fast-EV represents Sarawak's capability to innovate locally while supporting the state's clean energy and digital transformation goals.

"This initiative demonstrates how Sarawak-born technology can deliver practical, sustainable solutions that empower both the community and the economy," he said.

In conjunction with the launch, new Fast-EV users will receive RM100 worth of free charging credits, redeemable via the Fast-EV app, valid until Feb 17, 2026.

The Fast-EV initiative is a key enabler under the PCDS 2030, under the digital economy and energy transition pillars.

"It aligns with Sarawak's vision of becoming a prosperous, inclusive, and sustainable digital economy by 2030, anchored in innovation, local talent, and green technology," the statement added. – Bernama

## Malaysia advancing palm oil nutrition research through MPOB: Johari

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia is strengthening its position in science-based nutrition research through the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB), which is conducting studies to assess the nutritional value, bioactive components and health effects of palm oil.

Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani said the research aims to ensure that its findings provide meaningful contributions to public health and dietary guidance.

He said these efforts are reinforced through strong partnerships with leading universities, hospitals and research institutions, and one flagship initiative is the PEACE Study, a collaborative research programme between

MPOB and Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

"This large epidemiological study examines how palm oil consumption influences cardio-metabolic risk, inflammation, microbiome and nutrigenomics in our population.

"The PEACE Study will provide Malaysia with evidence-based foundation to shape dietary guidance, product standards and future investment decision," he said at the Nutrition Satellite Symposium, held in conjunction with MPOB International Palm Oil Congress and Exhibition 2025 here yesterday.

His opening speech was read out by Ministry of Plantation and Commodities secretary-general Datuk Yusran Shah Mohd Yusof.

Johari noted that MPOB is leading in advancing scientific understanding of palm oil's functional properties through studies on tocotrienols, carotenoids, and structured lipids, translating laboratory discoveries into real-world applications that benefit consumers.

"Our commitment to research and innovation ensures that responsible practices in the field translate into measurable benefits in the kitchen, the clinic and the marketplace," he said.

At the national level, Johari said, the 18th Special Meeting of the National Nutrition Council, chaired by the Minister of Health has formally endorsed "The Implementation of Red Palm Oil (RPO) and RPO-based Biscuit

Supplementation" through relevant ministries and agencies involving children on an optional basis, with an initial focus on undernourished and vulnerable groups.

Two key strategies have been approved under this initiative – first, incorporating red palm oil into menus at schools, hospitals and preschools; and second, distributing red palm oil-based biscuits through agencies and ministries involving children.

The opening ceremony also witnessed the signing of memorandums of agreements between MPOB and 11 institutions of higher learning and research organisations. – Bernama

**PETALING JAYA:** The Employees Provident Fund (EPF) recorded a total investment income of RM63.99 billion for the nine months ended Sept 30, 2025 (9M 2025), an 11% increase from RM57.57 billion in the corresponding period in 2024.

Total investment income for the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2025 (Q3 2025) was RM25.07 billion, representing a 27% increase from RM19.67 billion in the same quarter last year.

EPF CEO Ahmad Zulqarnain Onn said, "The 11% growth in total investment income, alongside 12% growth in asset under management, is a result of execution of our strategic asset allocation, which allowed the EPF to participate in the recovery of equity markets post- 'Liberation Day'. We are encouraged by the strength of the Malaysian economy, which supports 61% of the EPF portfolio, while simultaneously pursuing a global investment strategy that generated 53% of total investment income this quarter.

"While the nine-month performance has been encouraging, we are cautious heading into the fourth quarter. The rally in global equity markets has elevated valuations, while mixed signals from global economic indicators may temper the pace of interest rate reductions. The EPF is actively managing these risks by accelerating the locking-in of profits at a pace that may be hard to match in Q4."

During the quarter under review, Equities remained the largest contributor to investment income, generating RM16.95 billion, or 68% of total investment income. Although slightly lower than the RM18.35 billion recorded in Q3 2024, this reflects a recovery from the more

# EPF records higher quarterly, 9-month investment income

➤ Markets show resilience as investors look beyond policy uncertainties

subdued performance in Q1 and Q2 of 2025. The rally in global equity markets during the quarter enabled EPF fund managers to capture market opportunities and lock in gains.

Fixed Income continued its role in capital preservation, generating RM6.75 billion, or 27% of the total investment income for the quarter. This asset class, comprising Malaysian Government Securities and Equivalents, as well as Loans and Bonds, provided a steady income stream and helped cushion short-term market volatility, supporting overall portfolio stability.

Real Estate and Infrastructure contributed RM1.14 billion (4%), while Money Market Instruments recorded gains of RM0.23 billion (1%).

Of the total investment income for Q3 2025, RM20.48 billion was generated for *Simpanan Kon-*

EPF Q3 2025 RESULTS			
Portfolio	Assets % of total investment assets	Total investment income (RM billion)	% of income
Equities	46	16.95	68
Fixed income instruments	45	6.75	27
Real estate and infrastructure	7	1.14	4
Money market instruments	2	0.23	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>25.07</b>	<b>100</b>

*vensional* and RM4.59 billion for *Simpanan Shariah*.

As of Sept 30, 2025, total investment assets stood at RM1.37 trillion, representing a 12% year-on-year growth. International investments accounted for approximately 39% of total assets, supported by resilient global equity market valuations. During the quarter, international investments generated RM13.33 billion, representing 53% of the total investment income.

Malaysia's labour market is expected to be resilient in the final quarter, underpinned by Budget 2026 measures, macroeconomic stability, and both domestic and foreign direct investments. The unemployment rate declined by 0.2 percentage points to 3.0% in September 2025 as compared to a year earlier, according to the

Department of Statistics Malaysia Labour Force Report, September 2025.

Reflecting this labour market strength, the EPF registered 427,329 new members during 9M 2025, raising total membership to over 16.5 million. Of these, 9.07 million are active members. Active members refer to members who contributed at least once in the last 12 months, representing 51.7% of the 17.54 million labour force as of September 2025.

The EPF's active-to-inactive member ratio remained stable at 55:45 in 9M 2025.

New employer registrations reached 62,401, increasing total active employers registered with the EPF to 628,321 as at September 2025. On a quarterly basis, total contributions increased by 10.5% to

RM27.84 billion, from RM25.20 billion in Q3 2024.

Voluntary contributions increased by 47.5% to RM15.30 billion in 9M 2025, from RM10.37 billion a year earlier. For the nine months, the number of formal sector members contributing above statutory rates through i-Topup (formerly known as Voluntary Excess) was 231,034, compared to 172,829 in the same period last year.

Following the implementation of mandatory contributions for non-Malaysian citizen employees starting with October 2025 wages, the EPF is addressing transitional challenges to ensure full compliance. The EPF remains committed to engaging stakeholders and facilitating a smooth transition through ongoing guidance and support.



CelcomDigi closed the third quarter with 20.5 million subscribers.

## CelcomDigi declares dividend of 3.6 sen on steady Q3 performance

**PETALING JAYA:** CelcomDigi Bhd posted RM3.125 billion revenue for the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2025 (Q3'25).

Service revenue increased 1.5% year-on-year (y-o-y) to RM2.728 billion, driven by good performance across its core segments of postpaid, prepaid, home and fibre, and enterprise solutions, reflecting the company's effective market execution and continued focus on delivering value to customers.

Postpaid revenue rose 4.2% y-o-y to RM1.091 billion, supported by a 300,000 (+5.3% y-o-y) increase in high-value subscribers and continued migration to convergence plans. Prepaid revenue was stable at RM1.051 billion (+0.1% q-o-q), despite a slightly lower subscriber base (-221K q-o-q), from effective base management and a focus on retaining quality subscribers.

Home and fibre revenue increased 40.8% y-o-y to RM69 million, marking the eighth consecutive quarter of subscriber growth (+100,000, +62.5% y-o-y).

Enterprise solutions revenue

climbed 10.4% y-o-y, underpinned by robust demand for connectivity, ICT and cybersecurity solutions, alongside a steady flow of enterprise contract wins. Enterprise mobile revenue lowered -12.7% y-o-y, impacted by reduction in bulk SMS volume and one-time MFRS adjustments.

During the quarter, disciplined cost management helped mitigate the impact of higher provision for doubtful debts, cost of goods sold, depreciation and amortisation and a higher effective tax rate.

As a result, earnings before interest and tax moderated 16% y-o-y to RM648 million, while profit after tax eased 20.5% y-o-y to RM350 million, reflecting the company's continued focus on long-term financial resilience amid ongoing investments.

CelcomDigi declared a third interim dividend of 3.6 sen per share.

The company closed the quarter with a total of 20.5 million subscribers.

As of end-September CelcomDigi's network integration and modernisation reached more than 90% completion.

## Public Bank posts third-quarter net profit of RM1.84 billion

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Public Bank Bhd's net profit slipped to RM1.84 billion in the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2025 (Q3'25), from RM1.91 billion a year ago due to lower non-taxable income.

In a Bursa Malaysia filing yesterday, Public Bank said revenue increased to RM7.41 billion from RM6.80 billion previously.

For the first nine months ended Sept 30, 2025 (9M'25), Public Bank recorded a net profit of RM5.34 billion, while revenue rose to RM22.08 billion from RM20.14 billion in the previous corresponding period.

"During 9M 2025, the Public Bank group's total loan portfolios expanded by an annualised rate of 5.4% to RM441.2 billion.

"The domestic loan portfolios grew at a stronger rate of 6.1% on an annualised basis to RM416.0 billion, outperforming the Malaysian industry's annualised loan growth of 4.5%.

"This was mainly contributed by the Public Bank Group's core financing segments, including domestic residential property financing, hire purchase financing and small and medium enterprise (SME) financing, which grew at annualised rates of 5.7%, 11.4%, and 10.7%, respectively," it said.

Regarding the funding side, Public Bank said that the group's total customer deposits grew at an annualised rate of 4% to

RM446.2 billion, supported by sustained growth in core deposits.

"The group's current accounts and savings accounts registered 3.9% annualised growth, which further strengthened its low-cost funding base," it said.

Public Bank Group's 9M'25 non-interest and non-financing income posted strong growth of 19.0% year-on-year to RM2.53 billion, led mainly by the general insurance business of the LPI Capital Group, which contributed 9.3% to the group's total non-interest and non-financing income.

It stated that non-interest and non-financing income was further enhanced by higher investment income, banking fees and commission incomes, as well as foreign exchange business, with Public Mutual registering a nine-month pre-tax profit of RM624.5 million.

"Public Mutual continued to capture a leading domestic retail market share of 34.0%, with a net asset value of RM107.1 billion from 185 unit trust funds under its management as at end-September 2025," it added.

Public Bank managing director and CEO Tan Sri Dr Tay Ah Lek said, amid a challenging backdrop, the Public Bank group continued to record consistent growth in loans and deposits.

"Underpinned by proactive management of cost of funds and

synergistic growth in non-interest income, the group continued to deliver stable performance throughout the first nine months of the year.

"The group's resilience is further reflected in its healthy net return on equity of 12.6%, underscoring the group's strong fundamentals and capacity to sustain value creation," he said.

On prospects, Public Bank said, despite challenges from the global environment, Malaysia's economy is expected to continue growing, anchored by domestic demand, investment activities, steady exports and healthy tourism spending.

It said, however, that global developments such as trade-related tariffs and commodity price volatility remain a potential downside risk to the domestic economic outlook.

Tay said that in a more complex operating environment with renewed challenges, resilience is the key to sustainability and stability.

"The Public Bank group will continue to remain vigilant in its business approach while building on its core competencies.

"The group will remain focused on synergistic growth, sound risk management and good corporate governance to stay relevant in today's dynamic business environment," he said. - Bernama

# Latest digital enhancements for seamless travel experience

Improved features across its airlines and loyalty platforms provide passengers with smarter, more intuitive connectivity



**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) is advancing its digital transformation journey with a series of enhancements across its airlines and loyalty platforms.

In a statement yesterday, MAG said by combining smarter technology with real-time connectivity, these developments give passengers a faster, more intuitive connected way to travel.

Since early 2025, MAG has rolled out digital innovations that enhance its end-to-end travel ecosystem, from booking to boarding, driving greater efficiency, convenience and personalisation.

MAG said these efforts form part of a broader transformation to integrate technology across the customer journey, reflecting its vision to be a future-ready aviation and travel services group powered by innovation and Malaysian Hospitality. Malaysia Airlines is the first airline in Southeast Asia to introduce the TravelReady feature, integrating digital passport and visa verification directly into its

online and mobile check-in process.

Travellers can now upload and validate their documents before arriving at the airport, streamlining check-in and ensuring a smoother start to their journey.

MAG said Malaysia Airlines' Express Booking simplifies the purchase process with one-click flight booking for returning customers. To make payment just as effortless, integration with Apple Pay offers a secure and convenient payment option for users booking flights on both the website and mobile app.

Customers now receive timely alerts on boarding gate changes, flight status and baggage carousel information directly through the Malaysia Airlines mobile app, providing timely insights and reducing travel stress.

Mavis, Malaysia Airlines' Virtual Interactive Service, available on the website, provides instant answers on Enrich privileges, in-flight offerings, and general queries. It can also escalate cases to live agents, generate links for check-in or bookings, share real-time flight updates, and deliver round-the-clock support, including weekends

and public holidays.

Enrich members can now redeem flights across the oneworld alliance directly through the Malaysia Airlines website, unlocking access to over 900 destinations worldwide on a single platform.

The new Carrier Connect feature also enables online check-in for oneworld-operated flights, marking a key step toward a more connected alliance-wide digital experience.

MAG Group chief digital and IT officer Clarence Lee said, "Digital transformation is central to MAG's strategy to deliver a modern, seamless travel experience. We are investing in technologies that simplify every touchpoint, from booking to post-travel, ensuring convenience, personalisation, and greater operational efficiency as a digitally empowered aviation group."

Behind these customer-facing enhancements, MAG has strengthened its digital backbone with advanced tools, agile practices, and streamlined processes.

A key milestone is the proprietary Online Check-in Pro-

duct developed through the Digital Services Platform (DSP) for greater control, scalability, and responsiveness. Building on this, the recent DSP Booking cutover marks the first phase of MAG's transition to its own internet booking engine, a major step towards more seamless and innovative digital experiences.

Reaffirming its position as a digital leader in the aviation industry, MAG's Digital Technology Office (DTO) was honoured in Taipei with the Asocio Outstanding Digital Transformation Organisation Award 2025 at the Asocio Digital Summit.

The award ceremony, part of the Asian-Oceanian Computing Industry Organisation's (Asocio's) flagship event, recognised MAG DTO's significant achievements in leveraging digital technology to drive fundamental business transformation.

Adding to these digital achievements, MAG has been awarded Platinum for Best Customer Experience in Contact Centre at the Contact Centre Asia Pacific Awards 2025 in Hong Kong.

Through continuous investment and innovation, MAG is shaping a smarter, more connected, and future-ready travel ecosystem.

AI-driven support, real-time self-service, predictive analytics, and enhanced mobile and web platforms streamline processes while enabling highly personalised interactions.

## Geohan unveils IPO prospectus, issues 123m new shares at 55 sen each

**PETALING JAYA:** Geohan Corporation Bhd, a foundation and geotechnical specialist, yesterday launched its initial public offering (IPO) prospectus in conjunction with its listing on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities on Dec 5.

Geohan is expected to raise RM72.6 million through the issuance of 132 million new ordinary shares at 55 sen per share, representing 30% of its enlarged issued share capital of about RM204.25 million comprising 440 million shares. Some 55.1% of the proceeds are earmarked for the expansion of the company's fleet of machinery, specifically for the acquisition of 17 new machines. Meanwhile, 35.26% of the proceeds will be allocated towards working capital, and the remaining 9.64% will be utilised to defray listing expenses.

Based on the enlarged number of issued shares and IPO price of 55 sen per share, Geohan's market capitalisation works out to RM242 million upon listing.

The company's order book stood at RM390.39 million as at Oct 22, 2025. The existing order book is sufficient to provide strong revenue visibility for at least the next two financial years, reflecting a healthy flow of projects and steady business momentum.

On-going projects include Ativo Annexe (a mixed development in Kuala Lumpur), Causewayz Square @ JBCC and Astaka Arden Residence (both are residential developments in Johor), Veridian Residence (a mixed development in Selangor), Blossom Suites (a residential development in Penang), ParkCity Tower (a commercial development in Kuala Lumpur), and Penang Hill Cable Car (an infrastructure project in Penang).

Managing director Lee Kim Seng said as they continue on their growth journey, they need to purchase more machines to be able to get more business as they strengthen their presence in Malaysia and Singapore.

He added, "Being in this business for 30 years, we have survived the ups and downs of economic cycles and ended up stronger, always keeping our fighting spirit."

Application for the public issue are available until 5pm on Nov 21.

Alliance Islamic Bank Bhd is the principal adviser, sole underwriter and placement agent for Geohan's IPO.

## Cyberjaya awarded Gold Rating for Smart Township 2025

**PETALING JAYA:** Cyberjaya has received the Gold Rating for the Smart Township 2025 Certificate of Recognition, awarded by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT) through PLANMalaysia, showcasing the city's comprehensive transformation into a digitally empowered, sustainable, and inclusive ecosystem.

In a statement, Cyberview Sdn Bhd said this year marked the inaugural introduction of the Smart Township category, and Cyberview

had the honour of being the first recipient of the award, which was received by Cyberview's CEO Kamarul Ariffin Abdul Samad.

"This milestone is a proud moment for all of us at Cyberview and a testament to the collective effort driving Cyberjaya's growth. Building a smart and sustainable city is never a solo journey, as it depends on strong collaboration with Majlis Perbandaran Sepang (MPSepang), government agencies, innovators and the vibrant Cyberjaya

community," said Kamarul.

He added, "While this recognition is meaningful, what truly matters are the real impacts – creating opportunities, enhancing liveability, and driving innovation that fuels national progress. Our focus is on turning this momentum into lasting outcomes for Cyberjaya and for Malaysia."

The Smart Township 2025 Certificate of Recognition forms part of the Malaysia Smart City Rating Programme introduced by

the KPKT.

The initiative establishes an official rating framework for both local authorities (PBTs) and private developers, aligning with international smart city standards such as MS ISO 37122:2019.

With this recognition, Cyberview will continue working closely with various stakeholders and the community to sustain this momentum and strengthen Cyberjaya's position as a vibrant, future-ready Global Tech Hub.

## Wood Expo 2025 generates potential exports worth RM177.5m

**PETALING JAYA** The Malaysian Wood Expo 2025 (MWE 2025) held in Kuala Lumpur on Nov 10 and 11 facilitated 358 business meetings between 50 Malaysian exporters and 78 foreign buyers from 27 countries, generating RM177.56 million in potential exports through its International Sourcing Programme.

Organised by the Malaysian Timber Council (MTC), the exhibition brought together global buyers, industry leaders and innovators keen to forge sustainable partnerships and explore Malaysia's growing expertise in value-added wood products.

Participating buyers came from

diverse markets including Australia, China, Egypt, Germany, India, Mexico, South Africa, Turkiye and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) CEO Datuk Seri Mohd Mustafa Abdul Aziz said strategic partnerships are important in driving sustainable export growth for Malaysian industries.

"This collaboration demonstrates how collective effort can propel Malaysia's wood industry to new heights. Malaysia's timber and wood-based exports, including wooden furniture, recorded a 5% increase to RM22.92 billion in 2024, reflecting the

industry's resilience and sustained demand from global markets. This growth reflects how Malaysian exporters are successfully embracing sustainable and value-driven practices to meet global demand."

He added, "As global buyers increasingly value sustainability and traceability, it is crucial that Malaysian wood-based products are sourced responsibly and certified to meet international environmental standards and long-term market trust. Major export destinations included Japan, Singapore and Australia, where buyers increasingly recognise the quality and credibility of Malaysia's

certified wood products."

Mustafa said the strong participation of buyers from key growth markets such as Egypt, Pakistan, the UAE and Turkiye does not only reflect the success of Malaysia's ongoing market diversification efforts, but also underscores the growing interest and confidence in Malaysia's high-quality, sustainably produced wood-based products.

MTC CEO Noraihan Abdul Rahman highlighted the industry's growing focus on innovation and technology. "The Malaysian wood-based industry continues to evolve in line with the changing global market trends that

emphasise design innovation and integration of new technologies."

"Through initiatives like the Malaysian Wood Expo, MTC aims to help our industry players adapt to these shifts whether through advanced manufacturing systems, automation, or the use of digital platforms to reach global buyers. Malaysian wood-based products are not only known for their quality and durability, but also for their innovative designs and responsible sourcing. By embracing technology and sustainable practices, our exporters can position themselves as world-class players," she said.

# Thai economy grows at slowest pace in four years

➤ Q3 GDP weighed down by weaker tourism, manufacturing during period of uncertainty

**BANGKOK:** Thailand's economy grew at its slowest pace in four years in the third quarter, weighed down by weaker tourism and manufacturing during a period of domestic political uncertainty and a border conflict, official data showed yesterday.

Gross domestic product grew 1.2% in the July-September quarter from a year earlier, the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC) said.

That was slower than annual growth of 2.8% in the June quarter, and missed the median forecast of 1.6% growth in a Reuters poll.

On a quarterly basis, Southeast Asia's second-largest economy contracted by a seasonally adjusted 0.6%, the first decline in nearly three years.

NESDC head Onfa Vejajiva said she expected the economy to grow in the current quarter as consumption and tourism recovered, and therefore avoid a technical recession.

"In the third quarter, the main issue was economic confidence. There was considerable political volatility, and then the conflict with Cambodia," she told a press conference.

A border dispute with Cambodia erupted into five days of fighting in late July.

In August, the Constitutional Court removed Prime Minister Paetongtarn Shinawatra for an ethics violation.

New Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul has promised to dissolve parliament by the end of January, with a general election likely to be held in late March.

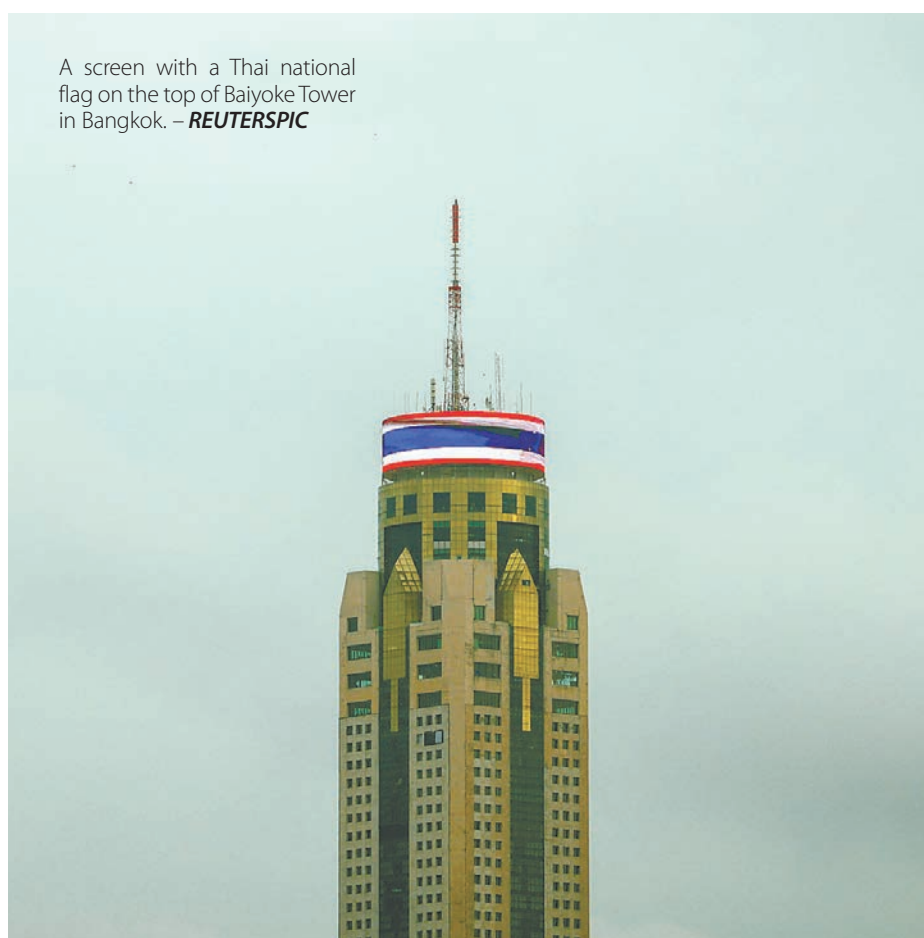
Shivaan Tandon, Asia economist at Capital Economics, said the economy was likely to struggle in coming months.

"We expect the economy to grow at a below-trend pace in the coming quarters, and the central bank will want to do its part to revive activity," Tandon said.

The economy grew 2.4% annually in the first nine months of 2025, and the council adjusted its full-year forecast to 2% from a previous estimate of 1.8% to 2.3%.

It predicted growth of 1.2% to 2.2% for next year.

However, government stimulus measures



A screen with a Thai national flag on the top of Baiyoke Tower in Bangkok. – REUTERSPIC

so far and forthcoming programmes have not been fully reflected in the forecasts, Onfa said.

The government has rolled out a 44 billion baht (RM5.6 billion) consumer subsidy scheme, among other measures.

Finance Minister Ekniti Nitithanprapas said yesterday he was confident that the economy would grow above 2% this year.

The economy, which has lagged regional peers since the pandemic, has faced multiple headwinds this year, including US tariffs, high household debt, and a strong baht.

"The impact of tariffs will be clear next year, but that would also depend on negotiations," Onfa said.

The US tariff on Thai imports is 19%, in line with regional peers.

The NESDC forecast exports to rise by 11.2% this year and fall 0.3% next year.

The central bank held its key rate steady at 1.50% last month after four cuts totalling 100 basis points since October 2024.

The next rate meeting is on Dec 17.

Tandon is expecting the rate to be cut to 1% in the coming quarters. – Reuters

## Japan GDP contracts as govt readies stimulus

**TOKYO:** Japan's economy shrank almost 2% in the three months through September, as a drop in exports in the face of US tariffs resulted in the first contraction in six quarters, government data showed yesterday.

Shipments from automakers in particular plummeted, following a period of hiking exports before tariffs came into effect.

Still, as the overall contraction was not as acute as expected, it likely represents a temporary setback rather than the start of a recession, economists said.

"The contraction is largely due to one-time factors such as housing investment" affected by regulatory change, said economist Kazutaka Maeda at Meiji Yasuda Research Institute.

"Exports also reacted. Overall, the economy lacks strong underlying momentum, but the trend still points to a gradual recovery over the next year or two."

Economists generally viewed this quarter's GDP figures as having a marginal impact on

Bank of Japan thinking when next deciding interest rates versus factors such as inflation.

However, an economist close to Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi gave the data more weight.

Given the contraction, it "would be misguided for the BOJ to decide to raise interest rates" in December, Credit Agricole chief Japan economist Takuji Aida, who is on Takaichi's flagship panel tasked with laying out the country's growth strategy, said in a report to clients.

Gross domestic product contracted 1.8% in July-September.

That compared with revised growth of 2.3% in the previous three-month period, as well as the 2.5% contraction that economists on average estimated in a Reuters poll.

The reading also translated into a quarterly contraction of 0.4% versus the median estimate of 0.6%.

Exports constituted the main drag as the impact of higher US tariffs intensified.

Automakers saw shipment volume plunge, reversing earlier front-loaded exports ahead of tariff hikes, though they mostly absorbed tariffs by cutting prices.

Net external demand, or exports minus imports, knocked 0.2 of a percentage point off growth, versus a 0.2 point positive contribution in April-June.

The US and Japan formalised an agreement in September that implemented a baseline 15% tariff on nearly all Japanese imports, versus an initial 27.5% on autos and 25% for most other goods.

The weak GDP data comes as Takaichi's government compiles a stimulus package to help households manage rising living costs.

Advisers to Takaichi have cited a likely sharp GDP contraction as a reason for aggressive stimulus measures.

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama told reporters on Sunday that proposed economic stimulus would exceed ¥17 trillion (RM456 billion), media reported. – Reuters

## Indonesia plans taxes of up to 15% on gold exports from 2026

**JAKARTA:** Indonesia will charge taxes on exports of gold of between 7.5% and 15% in a plan that will be implemented sometime next year, a senior Finance Ministry official said yesterday.

The tax policy, currently being finalised, is being designed so that lower rates are applied to processed goods to help encourage domestic processing, Febrio Kacaribu, the ministry's director general of fiscal strategy, told a parliamentary hearing.

For example, a higher rate for gold dore – bars or ingots with impurities – and a lower rate for minted bars would be charged, he said.

Global gold prices will also be a factor in determining the taxes, he said, noting that higher rates are likely to be applied when prices are at or above US\$3,200 per troy ounce to capture miners' windfall profits.

Spot gold has been trading above US\$4,000 per ounce since early November.

It is up more than 50% so far this year.

The bull run has helped Indonesia's gold exports hit US\$1.64 billion for the first nine months of 2025, much higher than the US\$1.1 billion shipments for all of last year.

Singapore, Switzerland and Hong Kong are the top buyers.

Resource-rich Indonesia has the world's fourth-largest unmined gold reserves, including in the Grasberg mine in the country's east, operated by a local unit of Freeport-McMoRan.

However, many domestic investors have found it difficult to find gold bars to buy amid the boom in gold investment, Febrio said.

"We want production in Indonesia, as well as liquidity in and ample circulation of gold in Indonesia. And we want as much value added as possible so that gold can be enjoyed by Indonesians."

The government's plan to impose a tax on coal exports is still under discussion, he said. – Reuters

## New Zealand court rules that Uber drivers are employees

**WELLINGTON:** New Zealand's highest court sided yesterday with a lower court's ruling that drivers of Uber who brought a case against the rideshare company should be treated as employees, a decision that could pave the way for collective bargaining.

The Supreme Court unanimously dismissed Uber's appeal of a 2022 ruling by the Employment Court, which had said four Uber drivers were employees of the business rather than contractors.

The case had been brought by two unions on behalf of the four Uber drivers.

Uber had argued its drivers are independent contractors using its platform, not employees.

The top court's decision could give Uber drivers similar rights to those in a number of countries.

The Workers First Union said the judgement "paves the way for thousands of Workers First Union members to pursue full employment rights, including restitution for historic underpayment of wages and entitlements" and that it would now be advancing collective bargaining.

Emma Foley, managing director of Uber Australia & New Zealand, said the company was disappointed with the decision as it casts significant doubt on contracting arrangements across New Zealand.

Uber had earlier challenged the lower court's decision in the Court of Appeal.

While rejecting Uber's appeal, the appeals court's judges had noted that whether a person qualified as an employee was of "increased importance in light of growing fragmentation, casualisation, and globalisation of work and workforces".

They described the value of having employment status as "the gate through which a worker must pass before they can access a suite of statutory minimum employment entitlements, such as the minimum wage, minimum hours of work, rest and meal breaks, holidays, parental leave". – Reuters

# Japan-China spat sinks tourism stocks

## ▶ Tokyo seeks to defuse row sparked by Takaichi's comments on Taiwan

**TOKYO:** Japanese tourism and retail shares dived yesterday after China warned its citizens to avoid the tourist hotspot in a spat over Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's comments on Taiwan.

A senior Japanese official meanwhile arrived in China, reports said, seeking to defuse the row sparked by Takaichi's suggestion that Tokyo could intervene militarily in any attack on the self-ruled island.

Asia's two top economies are closely entwined, with China the biggest source of tourists - almost 7.5 million visitors in the first nine months of 2025 - coming to Japan.

Drawn by a weak yen making shopping cheaper, they collectively splurged more than a billion dollars a month in the third quarter, accounting for almost 30% of all tourist spending.

Japan was also the fourth-most popular destination for Chinese tourists last year, helping the land of Mount Fuji, sushi and geishas set new records for foreign arrivals.

But in fears that this may now stop, investors wiped 9% off Japanese cosmetics firm Shiseido's market value yesterday.

Department store group Mitsukoshi fell 11.3% and Pan Pacific, behind discount retail chain and tourist magnet Don Quijote, slid 5.3%.

Japan Airlines, whose shares nosedived 3.4%, has not seen any major cancellations on flights to and from China, a spokesperson told AFP.

Before taking power last month, Takaichi was a vocal critic of China and its military build-up in the Asia-Pacific.

If a Taiwan emergency entails "battleships and the use of force, then that could constitute a situation threatening the survival (of Japan)", Takaichi, 64, told Parliament on Nov 7.

Under Japan's self-imposed rules, an existential threat is one of the few cases where it can act militarily. Taiwan sits around 100km from the nearest Japanese island.

Japan said yesterday it scrambled aircraft

after detecting a suspected Chinese drone near its southern island of Yonaguni, which is close to Taiwan, on Saturday.

Beijing insists Taiwan, which Japan occupied for decades until 1945, is part of its territory, and the prime minister's comments have sparked a furore.

This has included a Chinese diplomat stationed in Japan threatening to "cut off that dirty neck", apparently referring to Takaichi, and China and Japan have summoned each other's ambassadors.

Beijing also advised its citizens to avoid travelling to the country and warned the roughly 100,000 Chinese students in Japan that there were risks to their safety.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Minoru Kihara told reporters yesterday that the announcements were "incompatible with the broader direction agreed upon by the leaders of the two nations".

On Sunday, Chinese coast guard vessels spent several hours in Japan's territorial waters around the disputed Senkaku Islands, known as the Diaoyu in China and a frequent flashpoint, Kihara said.

In Beijing, tech worker Daniel Feng called the Chinese government's responses "very

restrained" given Takaichi's "extremely unreasonable" remarks.

"If she spouts words, that's not a problem ... but if they take real action, our country's military will definitely defeat them," the 40-year-old told AFP.

Japanese media reports said the top official in the Foreign Ministry for Asia-Pacific affairs arrived in China yesterday.

Masaaki Kanai was due to hold talks with his Chinese counterpart Liu Jinsong, the reports said.

The diplomatic spat could spell further bad news for Japan's economy, which shrank by 0.4% in the third quarter, official data showed yesterday.

Marcel Thieliant, head of Asia Pacific at Capital Economics, warned that the tensions risked escalating "into a full-blown trade spat" similar to a previous episode in the early 2010s.

This could include China restricting exports of rare earths or imposing restrictions on Japanese exports.

"Carmakers look particularly vulnerable as they are already under enormous pressure from the ascent of Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers," Thieliant added. - AFP

## Hyundai pledges record US\$85.8b investment in South Korea

**SEOUL:** South Korean auto giant Hyundai Motor Group pledged yesterday an unprecedented US\$85.8 billion (RM356 billion) investment in the country over the next five years, a move that comes on the heels of Seoul's trade deal with Washington.

In a press release, Hyundai called it "the company's largest-ever domestic investment commitment".

"A significant portion of the investment will focus on new businesses based on advanced AI technologies, such as robotics, contributing to the development of Korea's AI and Robotics innovation ecosystem."

The roadmap "highlights the Group's agility in actively responding to the rapidly changing global business environment", it added.

Around 40% of the total spending will go into developing "AI, software defined vehicles (SDVs), electrification, robotics, and hydrogen", the company said.

It added that the investment would help boost exports of South Korea-made vehicles by 13% to 2.47 million units by 2030.

The announcement follows a similar pledge by Samsung Group, another major conglomerate whose flagship firm is Samsung Electronics, which vowed to invest US\$310 billion over the same period, largely in artificial intelligence technologies.

Samsung Electronics is already one of the world's top memory-chip makers, providing crucial components for the AI industry and the infrastructure it relies on.

Hyundai Motor Group, which includes Kia, sold more than 7.2 million vehicles last year in South Korea and overseas combined.

The investment commitments follow Seoul's conclusion of a new trade deal with Washington, under which South Korean exports, including Hyundai vehicles, will face a reduced tariff rate of 15%, down from 25%.

But the new rate still remains significantly higher than the previous 2.5% applied under an existing free trade pact. - AFP



A man walks past a signboard of Samsung Electronics outside the company's Seocho building in Seoul. - AFP/IC

## Samsung hikes memory chip prices by up to 60%

**SEOUL:** Samsung Electronics this month raised prices of certain memory chips - now in short supply due to the global race to build AI data centres - by as much as 60% compared to September, two people with knowledge of the hikes said.

Shares of Samsung, SK Hynix and US chipmakers rallied sharply on the news which underlines how the boom in artificial intelligence has stoked intense demand for chip units specifically designed for AI tasks as well as the memory chips used in those units.

The price hike follows a decision by Samsung, the world's biggest memory chipmaker, to delay a formal announcement of pricing for supply contracts in October, the people said, adding that pricing details are typically announced each month.

Soaring prices for these memory chips, which are mainly used in servers, are likely to add to stress for big companies building out data infrastructure.

They also threaten to increase the costs of other products like smartphones and computers in which they are also used.

Many of the largest server makers and data centre builders are "now accepting that they won't get nearly enough product. The price premiums being paid are extreme", Tobey

Gonnerman, president of semiconductor distributor Fusion Worldwide, told Reuters.

The South Korean firm's contract prices for 32 gigabyte(GB) DDR5 memory chip modules jumped to US\$239 in November, up from US\$149 in September, he said.

After Reuters' initial report on Friday, shares in US chipmakers jumped with Micron Technology climbing 4%.

In yesterday's morning trade, Samsung's shares advanced 3% and SK Hynix surged 6%.

All three stocks were regaining ground after earlier falls on concerns about stretched AI valuations.

DDR memory chips are used in servers, computers and other devices, assisting with computing performance by temporarily storing data and managing rapid data transfer and retrievals.

Samsung also lifted prices of 16GB DDR5 and 128GB DDR5 chips by about 50% to US\$135 and US\$1,194 respectively. Prices of 64GB DDR5 and 96GB DDR5 have gone up by more than 30%, Gonnerman said.

The price hikes were confirmed by another source who was briefed by Samsung.

The source declined to be identified as the information is not public.

Samsung declined to comment.

It separately announced on Sunday that it will build a new chip production line at its plant in South Korea, as it expects AI will drive demand for the mid- and long-term.

The chip crunch has been so severe that it has spurred panic buying by some customers, according to industry executives and analysts.

China's top contract chipmaker SMIC said on Friday that the memory chip shortage has meant that customers are holding back orders for other types of chips that are also used in their products.

Xiaomi, a Chinese smartphone, electronics and auto manufacturer, also warned last month that the surging prices have raised the cost of making phones.

The shortage is, however, a boon for Samsung which has lagged rivals in offering advanced AI chips and had, until recently, not seen its profits climb nearly as much.

Its slower shift to AI chips has also meant Samsung has better pricing power than smaller rivals in memory like SK Hynix and Micron, according to Jeff Kim, head of research at KB Securities.

TrendForce analyst Ellie Wang said Samsung is likely to raise quarterly contract pricing by 40% to 50% in the October-December period, higher than the average 30% expected for the wider industry. - Reuters



# US hedge funds trim stakes in 'Mag 7'

**NEW YORK:** Wall Street's largest hedge funds reduced exposure to "Magnificent Seven" stocks including Nvidia, Amazon, Alphabet and Meta in the third quarter, while taking new positions in application software, e-commerce and payments companies, according to regulatory filings last week.

During the quarter ended Sept 30, several funds also reduced their exposure to prominent names in healthcare and energy.

The latest positions marked a shift from the second quarter when several leading stock-picking firms were much more bullish on Big Tech names after witnessing a boom in artificial intelligence valuations.

Since then, those lofty valuations have started to descend.

Markets were broadly up during the third quarter, with the S&P 500 rising by nearly 8%.

## ➤ Regulatory filings show new positions in application software, e-commerce and payments companies

The tech-heavy Nasdaq 100 index rose about 9% during the quarter.

Bonds also posted gains on expectations of monetary easing that pushed benchmark 10-year yields down about seven basis points.

Yields decline when bond prices rise.

During the quarter, Bridgewater increased its stake in Fiserv, and Discovery initiated a position in the payments software firm.

Both funds made their moves before Fiserv reported disappointing results and cut its revenue guidance for the second consecutive quarter.

The news led to its market capitalisation dropping about US\$30 billion in a single day.

Bridgewater increased its exposure to sectors such as application software and payments, as it upped its holdings in Adobe, Dynatrace and Etsy.

Lone Pine Capital and Tiger Global cut their stakes in Facebook parent Meta Platforms by 34.8% and 62.6% respectively, while Bridgewater and Coatue were among the funds that reduced their exposure to Nvidia.

The latest positions were revealed in filings known as 13-Fs, which

hedge funds and other institutional investors file at the end of each quarter.

While they are backward-looking and do not reveal current holdings or short positions, the filings offer investors a glimpse of the portfolios of often-secretive funds.

Bridgewater, which enjoyed a stellar run during the first nine months of the year as it outperformed its top peers, slashed its stake in Nvidia by nearly two-thirds to 2.5 million shares and in Alphabet by more than 50% to 2.65 million shares.

Discovery Capital, which was founded by Rob Citrone, took new positions in names like Alphabet, steel maker Cleveland-Cliffs, and health insurers Cigna and Elevance Health.

Dmitry Balyasny's multi-strategy hedge fund Balyasny Asset Management increased its stake

several-fold in iPhone maker Apple.

Several changes at billionaire Philippe Laffont's Coatue Management were around big AI names.

The firm reduced its holdings in AI industry bellwether Nvidia by 14.1% to 9.9 million shares, joining some other high-profile firms such as Bridgewater and Michael Burry's Scion Asset Management which have reduced their exposure to the company.

Berkshire Hathaway revealed a US\$4.3 billion stake in Google parent Alphabet and further reduced its stake in Apple, detailing its equity portfolio for the last time before Warren Buffett ends his 60-year run as chief executive officer.

A Bridgewater spokesman declined to comment on the fund's latest positions.

The other funds did not immediately respond to requests for comment. - Reuters



A L'Oréal sign is displayed at the beauty products section of a department store inside a shopping mall in Beijing. - REUTERS/SPIC

## France nets €9 billion in new corporate investments

**PARIS:** Companies have pledged to invest €9.2 billion (RM44.4 billion) in France, the Finance Ministry said yesterday, as the government seeks to show the euro zone's second-biggest economy remains a top business destination despite political turmoil.

French firms in sectors from energy to health and agri-food made the commitments ahead of a government-organised "Choose France" summit, modelled on President Emmanuel Macron's annual meeting with global corporate leaders.

The new money adds to €21.2 billion flagged over the past year, bringing the total to €30.4 billion for 150 projects, the ministry said.

Macron's pro-business agenda has frayed since a snap election last year produced a hung Parliament, with opposition parties eager to undo his supply-side reforms.

France has since lurched from crisis to crisis, struggling to pass its budget and leaving companies with little policy visibility, especially on taxes.

Corporate leaders have condemned lower-house votes to hike business taxes in the 2026 budget to plug France's gaping deficit rather than cutting spending - the highest among developed economies.

In such an environment, "it takes real courage to keep moving ahead without wavering", L'Oréal chairman Jean-Paul Agon told a conference last week.

"If you can succeed in France, you can succeed anywhere."

Lawmakers have added billions in tax hikes on top of those in the government's draft budget, though the Senate may strike some down in coming weeks.

Finance Minister Roland Lescure sought to reassure executives that restoring public accounts would not rely solely on tax hikes.

"That would stifle the economy and jobs. The government will do everything to ensure the final text preserves growth." - Reuters

## L'Oréal buys second Chinese skincare stake

**BEIJING:** Cosmetics giant L'Oréal said yesterday it has taken a minority stake in mass-market Chinese skincare brand Lan, marking its second investment in recent months in China, where local brands have grown rapidly.

L'Oréal did not disclose the size or cost of the stake, but L'Oréal North Asia president and China CEO Vincent Boinay said it highlights how central China is to the firm's global strategy.

"We firmly believe investing in China is investing in the future, and we will continue to cultivate the Chinese market, work with more Chinese brands to create a beautiful future and meet the expectations of sophisticated Chinese consumers," he said in a statement.

Reuters was unable to contact Lan for comment for this story.

The investment in Lan comes after L'Oréal paid 442 million yuan (RM257 million) for a 6.67% stake in Chando, as disclosed by the Shanghai-based company last month in its prospectus for an IPO in Hong Kong.

China has been challenging for international players, as an increasing proportion of its US\$75 billion beauty and personal care market has been won in recent years by domestic brands, dubbed C-Beauty.

At the same time, overall growth has slowed, with consumer confidence hit by a prolonged property crisis and widespread concerns about job stability.

Buying stakes in well-known domestic names could be a shortcut for L'Oréal to piggyback on C-beauty's momentum, said Ben Cavender, managing director at Shanghai-based China Market Research Group.

"L'Oréal and other international brands face a tremendous amount of pressure from domestic brands that are iterating new products faster, and often have been more aggressive at marketing new skincare ingredients, concepts, and routines," he said.

Following its third-quarter earnings last month, L'Oréal CEO Nicolas Hieronimus said the group's China business grew around 3% in the quarter, its first increase in two years.

According to data from consultancy Frost & Sullivan, Chando Group is China's third-largest home-grown beauty player - in terms of retail sales - behind Proya and Chicmas.

Both Chando and Lan market natural, clean ingredients as selling points.

Chando's strength in the mass-market price range - mainly selling between 49-390 yuan - and access to China's smaller cities, are resources that can support L'Oréal's recovery in the country without directly competing with the group's core brands, said Yang Hu, APAC insight manager at Euromonitor International. - Reuters

# MARKET ROUND-UP: NOV 17

17-Nov-2025

Bursa Malaysia

## Trade Statistics

	Net (in RM million)	Participation
<b>Retail</b>	<b>-15.61</b>	<b>16.52%</b>
<b>Institutions</b>	<b>-2.03</b>	<b>42.84%</b>
<b>Foreign</b>	<b>17.64</b>	<b>40.64%</b>

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

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- One-to-One trading coaching (available upon request)

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

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

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

## Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	12,073.00 +18.24
FBMKLCI	1,627.43 +1.76
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	539.30 +1.13
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	167.29 +0.30
CONSTRUCTION	313.25 +3.29
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,496.10 +64.78
ENERGY	761.00 +5.39
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	494.30 +1.29
HEALTH CARE	1,562.31 -9.86
TRANSPORTATION	1,012.89 -3.17
PROPERTY	1,027.46 +5.48
PLANTATION	8,118.14 -21.94
FBMSHA	12,074.00 +14.87
FBMACE	5,015.27 +31.51
TECHNOLOGY	60.21 -0.23

**TURNOVER: 3.769 bil**      **VALUE: RM2.467 bil**

## FBM KLCI up slightly, aided by buying in selected heavyweights

**BURSA** Malaysia's benchmark index ended slightly higher yesterday in choppy trading throughout the day, lifted by mild buying interest in selected heavyweights.

The FBM KLCI gained 1.76 points, or 0.11%, to 1,627.43 from Friday's close of 1,625.67. It moved between 1,626.23 and 1,633.84 throughout the trading session.

Market breadth was negative, with decliners outpacing advancers 604 to 482, while 560 counters were unchanged, 1,092 untraded and 11 suspended.

Turnover rose to 3.77 billion units worth RM2.47 billion against Friday's 3.64 billion units worth RM2.68 billion.

SPI Asset Management managing partner Stephen Innes said the FBM KLCI inched higher yesterday, but the tone is more a "holding pattern" than a breakout.

He added that the Malaysian bourse was essentially drifting with the regional tide - modestly firmer, yet restrained - as investors remain reluctant to take on meaningful risk ahead of a heavy slate of delayed US economic data.

Meanwhile, Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng said comments made by Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on Taiwan had elevated the geopolitical tension in the East Asian region.

"On the bright side, buying activities are seen in emerging markets, which provide cheaper valuations amid the strengthening of local currencies against the US dollar.

"On the domestic front, the benchmark index is hovering around the 1,630 level, and we reckon a clear breakthrough above this level will pave the way towards the 1,650 level. We anticipate the FBM KLCI to trend within the range of 1,620-1,650 for the week," he added. - Bernama

## Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-PWLG	0.185	+0.005	+2.78	2,742,111
HSI-CWK7	0.100	-0.015	-13.04	2,427,538
HSI-CWKJ	0.130	-0.030	-18.75	2,311,386
HSI-PWL1	0.205	+0.005	+2.50	1,911,644
MMAG	0.060	-0.015	-20.00	1,205,578
HSI-PWL4	0.155	+0.010	+6.90	1,056,243
HSI-CWK4	0.130	-0.020	-13.33	999,090
TANCO	0.965	+0.010	+1.05	828,862
HSI-CWIQ	0.335	-0.090	-21.18	732,678
HSI-CWKO	0.410	-0.065	-13.68	599,636
PHARMA	0.235	-0.025	-9.62	487,865
TWL	0.025	-	-	447,580
HSI-PWNP	0.580	+0.020	+3.57	392,400
PTRANS	0.285	+0.020	+7.55	382,656
CATCHA-WA	0.100	-	-	357,246
ZETRIX	0.825	-0.020	-2.37	341,098
OCR	0.040	-	-	318,741
HSTECH-H41	0.455	+0.020	+4.60	306,050
VS	0.505	-	-	303,421
GENM	2.360	-0.010	-0.42	289,410



## Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MPI	31.500	+0.800	3,293
F&N	33.020	+0.560	4,238
UTDPLT	26.800	+0.500	7,067
HEIM	22.820	+0.420	1,778
ALLIANZ-PA	18.520	+0.320	360
HLIND	15.100	+0.300	1,610
DLADY	29.740	+0.240	220
KOTRA	4.390	+0.190	2
HSI-PWNH	0.295	+0.145	100
WPRTS	5.530	+0.140	16,530
SUNCON	5.850	+0.130	19,184
ALLIANZ	18.200	+0.120	220
NSOP	5.680	+0.120	184
CSCSTEL	1.290	+0.110	24,969
SBAGAN	5.720	+0.110	10
SUNWAY	5.490	+0.110	41,974
HI	2.500	+0.100	14,530
ELRIDGE	0.945	+0.095	135,042
ABMB	4.500	+0.090	10,843
PADINI	1.900	+0.090	5,783

## Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
SNTORIA	0.010	+100.00	859
HSI-PWNH	0.295	+96.67	100
EVD-PA	0.025	+66.67	1,014
TEOSEN-CE	0.025	+66.67	301
CMSB-C63	0.015	+50.00	200
D&O-C21	0.135	+50.00	20,693
NDX-HM	0.030	+50.00	2,000
OVH-WA	0.030	+50.00	2,080
SPSETIA-C1B	0.015	+50.00	6,600
YENHER-WA	0.150	+50.00	73
SPSETIA-C1C	0.050	+42.86	13,711
ECOWLD-C38	0.055	+37.50	6,000
BPPLAS-WA	0.020	+33.33	10
EDEN-WC	0.040	+33.33	43,521
GAMUDA-C3W	0.040	+33.33	15,682
HIBISCS-C78	0.020	+33.33	200
HSI-PWJG	0.020	+33.33	150
HSI-PWLS	0.105	+31.25	290
HSI-PWJW	0.045	+28.57	650
AXIATA-C1U	0.070	+27.27	350

## World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	47,147.48	-309.74	-0.65
S&P 500 [US]	6,734.11	-3.38	-0.05
NASDAQ [US]	22,900.59	+30.23	+0.13
NYSE [US]	21,470.26	-64.13	-0.30
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,674.66	-19.11	-0.34
FTSE 100 [UK]	9,686.70	-11.67	-0.12
DAX [GER]	23,849.49	-23.68	-0.10
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	50,323.91	-52.62	-0.10
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	3,347.53	-12.28	-0.37
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	26,384.28	-188.18	-0.71
CSI 300 [CHN]	4,598.05	-30.09	-0.65
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,972.04	-18.46	-0.46
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	4,089.25	+77.68	+1.94
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	84,909.13	+346.35	+0.41
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,636.40	+1.87	+0.02
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,915.74	+8.73	+0.10
FBM KLCI	1,627.43	+1.76	+0.11
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	4,543.59	-2.48	-0.05
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	226.27	-3.49	-1.52
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	59.63	-0.46	-0.78
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	63.89	-0.50	-0.78
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	4,086.70	-8.10	-0.20
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	50.90	+0.21	+0.39
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	1,552.2100	+6.76	+0.39
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	504.50	-1.80	-0.36
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	10,852.00	-104.00	-0.95
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	444.75	+0.75	+0.17
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	545.25	+3.75	+0.69
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	50.57	+0.08	+0.16
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	5,408.00	-50.00	-0.92
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	172.30	+1.30	+0.76

As at 6pm, Nov 17.

## Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
KLK	20.760	-0.500	4,891
NESTLE	113.000	-0.500	1,156
BIPORT	5.010	-0.340	30
HSI-CWKG	0.655	-0.180	41
MCEMENT	6.540	-0.160	7,107
VSTESK	4.100	-0.160	5,307
HSI-CWKE	0.240	-0.150	243,470
SAM	4.310	-0.150	3,531
TENAGA	13.280	-0.140	38,114
PANAMY	7.600	-0.120	534
HSI-CWI1	0.070	-0.115	200
HSI-CWI4	0.655	-0.115	700
YTL-C10	0.330	-0.110	1,350
HSTECH-C38	0.035	-0.105	50
FCW	2.000	-0.100	14
HSI-CWIQ	0.335	-0.090	732,678
HSI-CWMB	1.100	-0.090	600
HSI-CWKH	0.305	-0.085	60
HSI-CWKQ	0.345	-0.080	60
MANULFE	2.250	-0.080	286

## Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWI6	0.010	-77.78	1,000
HSTECH-C38	0.035	-75.00	50
IJM-C1G	0.005	-75.00	1,000
NEXG-C76	0.020	-75.00	2,500
HSI-CWI2	0.005	-66.67	6,860
HSI-PWLU	0.010	-66.67	3,000
HSI-CWI11	0.070	-62.16	200
HSI-CWI8	0.020	-55.56	14,775
YTLPOWER-C84	0.050	-54.55	2,500
BIOHLDG-WB	0.005	-50.00	509
BORNOIL	0.005	-50.00	30,367
HSI-CWI9	0.005	-50.00	1,000
SIMEPROP-C48	0.005	-50.00	2,000
UEMS-C1X	0.005	-50.00	700
HSI-CWIP	0.040	-46.67	131,552
PMETAL-C2G	0.080	-46.67	500
HSI-CWKV	0.065	-40.91	120
KLK-C38	0.030	-40.00	2,346
HSI-CWKE	0.240	-38.46	243,470
AHB-WC	0.010	-33.33	1



# MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

SUNBIZ presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by SunBiz Team

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## Malaysia records RM476m net foreign inflows

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia was among four Asian markets to record net foreign inflows last week, posting RM476.1 million and reversing a five-week consecutive net selling streak.

MBSB Investment Bank Bhd's (MBSB IB) *Fund Flow Report* for the week ended Nov 14 showed that foreign investors were net buyers on four out of five trading days last week, with Tuesday being the highest net buying activity at RM198.2 million.

This was followed by Wednesday (RM193.9 million), Monday (RM60.1 million), and Thursday (RM56.3 million), while Friday was the only day that recorded outflows at RM32 million.

Sector-wise, consumer products and services, financial services and industrial products and services led inflows, each recording RM240 million, RM227.4 million and RM181.4 million, respectively.

However, local institutions ended a five-week consecutive streak of net purchases, recording outflows of RM318.1 million, while local retailers extended to a two-week consecutive streak of net selling, recording outflows of RM158.5 million.

MBSB IB noted that average daily trading volumes experienced a broad-based decrease last week, with local retailers and foreigners recording decreases of 5% and 2.5%, respectively, while local institutions saw an increase of 19.7%.

Across Asia, only India, Indonesia, and the Philippines saw net foreign buying, while the rest experienced net selling activity, led by Taiwan, which posted the largest outflow in the region.

It said India registered net foreign inflows of US\$729.9 million, while Indonesia logged its sixth straight week of foreign net buying (US\$229.9 million) as consumer confidence climbed to 121.2, its highest level since April 2025 and well within optimistic territory. – Bernama

## Ringgit ends lower as Fed signals steady rates

**THE** ringgit declined against the US dollar yesterday as expectations for a United States interest rate cut in December have diminished.

This is due to comments by key Federal Reserve (Fed) officials who signalled that interest rates are likely to remain unchanged.

At 6pm, the ringgit edged down to 4.1480/1515 versus the greenback from Friday's close of 4.1290/1345.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said that such remarks from influential Fed officials appear to have lent the needed support to the US dollar, with the DXY Index rising by 0.10% to 99.400 points.

"Apart from that, technical indicators have shown that the ringgit is already in an overbought condition. This might compel traders to cash their gains in the currency market," he told Bernama.

At the close, the ringgit traded lower against a basket of major currencies.

It depreciated versus the yen to 2.6805/6829 from 2.6690/6728 at last Friday's close, fell against the euro to 4.8125/8166 from 4.7983/8047 and slipped vis-a-vis the British pound to 5.4608/4654 from 5.4313/4385 previously.

The ringgit traded lower against Asean currencies.

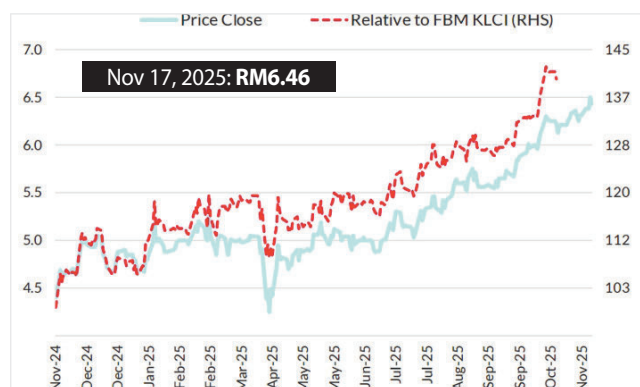
It weakened against the Thai baht to 12.7847/8018 from 12.7356/7580 at last Friday's close, edged down versus the Singapore dollar to 3.1864/1893 from 3.1720/1765, eased vis-a-vis the Indonesian rupiah to 247.8/248.1 from 247.1/247.5 and shed against the Philippine peso at 7.04/7.05 from 6.99/7.00 previously.

## Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.2095	4.0645	4.0545
1 Australian Dollar	2.7530	2.6420	2.6260
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2320	3.1310	3.1230
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9920	2.9090	2.8970
1 Euro	4.8800	4.7230	4.7030
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.3880	2.3000	2.2840
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2320	3.1310	3.1230
1 Sterling Pound	5.5320	5.3560	5.3360
1 Swiss Franc	5.3210	5.0950	5.0800
100 UAE Dirham	115.6800	109.6900	109.4900
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4900	3.2720	3.0720
100 Chinese Renminbi	59.4900	56.9900	56.9900
100 Danish Krone	66.9900	61.6500	61.4500
100 Hongkong Dollar	54.6000	51.8900	51.6900
100 Indian Rupee	4.8100	4.5200	4.3200
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0260	0.0235	0.0185
100 Japanese Yen	2.7260	2.6280	2.6180
100 New Taiwan Dollar	14.6000	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	42.6200	39.2200	39.0200
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5200	1.4100	1.2100
100 Philippine Peso	7.2100	6.7900	6.5900
100 Qatar Riyal	116.4900	110.5900	110.3900
100 Saudi Riyal	113.2300	107.4900	107.2900
100 South Africa Rand	25.4400	22.9800	22.7800
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4100	1.2900	1.0900
100 Swedish Krona	45.7500	41.6800	41.4800
100 Thai Baht	13.5300	12.0000	11.6000

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

### Press Metal Bhd Buy. Target price: RM7.20



Source: Bloomberg, RHB Research

**PRESS** Metal is on a stronger footing to book stronger QoQ earnings for 3Q25, mainly driven by higher aluminium prices and stable alumina rates. Its valuation, whilst approaching the 3-year historical mean of 22.7x, remains compelling, in our view - given its low-cost structure vs that of global players, while it acts as a proxy for global aluminium supply and demand dynamics.

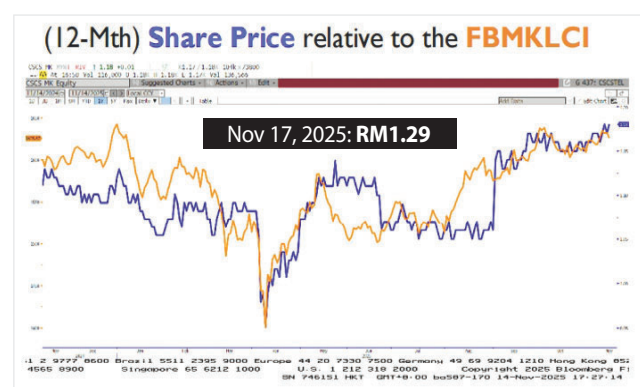
PMAH is expected to announce 3Q25 results on 20 Nov. We expect core PATAMI to grow QoQ to RM520-580m, thereby outperforming our estimate. This should be achieved mainly on a higher London Metal Exchange (LME) price (up 7% to USD2,620/tonne), while the price of alumina stayed flattish (+1%). This takes its alumina-to-aluminium cost ratio to 13% (2Q25: 14%), which is comfortably below the 3-year historical average of 16%. However, this may be offset by a lower Main Japanese Port or MJP premium of USD81/tonne (-37% QoQ). YoY, we expect earnings to expand by 9-22%, led by the LME price (+10%) and lower price of alumina (-30%) - although this may be partially offset by a higher carbon anode price (+27% YoY).

Following the recent Federal Funds Rate cut of 25bps and the continuing de-dollarisation trend, the USD/MYR rate is now down 7.5% YTD. RHB Economics expects another 50bps cut in 2026, which could further bring down the USD/MYR rate. As over 90% of PMAH products are exported, this may weigh down on its earnings. Based on our sensitivity analysis, a 2% appreciation in the MYR could lower earnings by an estimated 5%, assuming no hedging is done.

Global production remains subdued (+1% YoY in 9M25), as China nears its 45m-tonne production cap (Aug 2025: 44.5m tonnes). Outside China, new capacity is limited.

Keep BUY, new RM7.20 TP. – RHB Research, Nov 17

### CSC Steel Holdings Bhd Buy. Target price: RM1.40



Source: Bloomberg, TA Research

**CSC Steel's** 9MFY25 core earnings of RM45.0mn outperformed our expectation at 89.0% of our full-year projections. The earnings beat was primarily underpinned by a strong-than-expected expansion in PBT margin, which increased 350bps YoY. This margin uplift reflects sustained operational efficiencies and tighter cost controls, supported by more optimised raw material utilisation and improved procurement effectiveness.

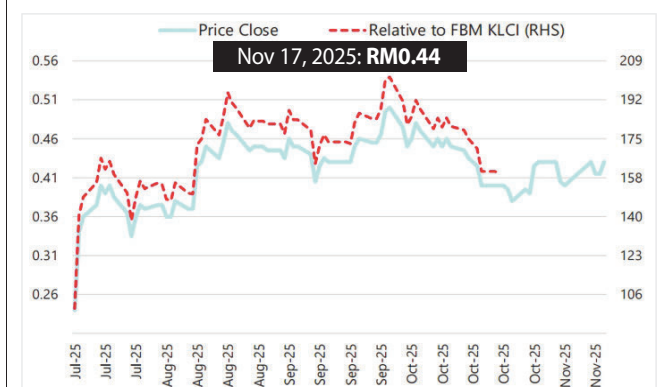
YoY, revenue contracted 10.1% due to the weaker ASPs across the steel products caused by the downtrend in the global steel price. Nevertheless, lower input costs attributable to the more effective cost control measure on materials cost and strengthening of the Ringgit against the US Dollar supported profitability, lifting core earnings by 148.7%.

For QoQ, adjusted net profit also improved 36.3% despite weaker revenue (-1.6% QoQ). Core PBT margin expanded by 160 bps in 3QFY25 versus 2QFY25, while core net margin improved by 140 bps, attributable to a lower effective tax rate (21.8% in 3QFY25 vs. 22.1% in 2QFY25) and stronger operating leverage.

The management remains cautiously optimistic about the outlook for the steel sector, driven by improving global dynamics and evolving domestic cost structures. Globally, steel prices are showing signs of stabilisation, aided by China's production rationalisation efforts despite elevated export volumes. Domestically, structural cost pressures arising from the impending carbon tax framework and the continued rationalisation of energy subsidies are expected to be partially offset by sustained government commitments to infrastructure development and industrial decarbonisation.

Maintain Buy, TP revised to RM1.40. – TA Research, Nov 17

### iCents Group Bhd Not rated.



Source: Bloomberg, RHB Research

**ICENTS** Group, a cleanroom specialist, is primed for strong earnings growth - supported by a solid construction orderbook, record pipeline of tenders and rising enquiries at its higher-margin manufacturing arm. It is well-positioned to benefit from South-East Asia's accelerating data centre (DC) boom and semiconductor sector recovery. Trade tensions also drive supply chain diversification to neutral manufacturing hubs, creating new greenfield opportunities for cleanroom players.

As of end-October, ICENTS' cleanroom and other facilities construction arm, VC Engineering, had an orderbook worth RM60m for FY26 and a tenderbook valued at RM600m with an estimated 25% hit rate. The pipeline includes several hyperscale DC projects, setting the stage for robust growth from a low base. It has also seen a surge in semiconductor-related tenders, including new front-end clients that demand higher cleanliness standards, translating into premium-margin contracts. Roughly 40% of tenders are derived from fast-track DC jobs, 40% from semiconductor-related contracts, and the remainder from the pharmaceutical and F&B industries.

Its subsidiary, Maytech, which operates mainly on a purchase order basis, fields robust enquiries. Its expansion into Vietnam's DC market and its plans to boost production capacity should drive further growth. Going forward, Maytech will focus on expanding external sales to third-party clients. The continued growth in this business is important, as it brings margins that are 5% higher than that of construction projects, and enhances the group's overall sales mix.

In line with Bursa's Industrial Products and Services Index, we ascribed a P/E of 18x on CY26F earnings to derive a FV of RM0.64. – RHB Research, Nov 17



# the Sun **LYFE**

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# Man of hope

'Brazilian Superman'  
cheers kids with cancer - P24



## WEEKLY FOCUS

### MONDAY

Technology and  
social media

### TUESDAY

Family  
and parenting

### WEDNESDAY

Fashion  
and beauty

### THURSDAY

Home  
and living

### FRIDAY

Travel  
and leisure

### SATURDAY

Food  
and beverage

**INSIDE**

**p22**

Are vapes compromising  
children's human rights?

**p23**

English chess grandmaster  
coaches Malaysian talent

**p25**

Michelle Yeoh to receive  
lifetime achievement award

- AFP/IC



**V**APES are “compromising children’s human rights”, academics have said as they called for more regulation of e-cigarettes to protect teenagers, PA Media/dpa reported.

Experts said some children are missing lessons to vape and are unable to concentrate in classrooms due to nicotine dependence.

In a new analysis, published in *The BMJ*, a team of researchers from UK, Australia and Netherlands highlight how teenagers are particularly sensitive to nicotine exposure, which may have long-term effects on attention, cognition, memory and mood.

Teenagers are also more susceptible to nicotine addiction, which can lead to more problems with addiction and substance abuse later in life, the group said.

Academics, including researcher Tom Gatehouse from the University of Bath, also highlighted how vape use may act as a gateway to tobacco smoking.

But they said that governments often overlook the harms to children, influenced by industry claims around reducing harm to adults who smoke.

They said any potential benefit of vapes is for current smokers who switch to e-cigarettes.

“The potential to increase cessation among this group should not be misconstrued as reducing harm for the population entirely, it

# Experts call for vape regulation

➤ Children’s human rights being compromised, say researchers

acknowledging that it does not justify making harmful and highly addictive products widely available to larger populations of mostly non-smokers, including children,” they wrote.

They point out that children are now using e-cigarettes at higher rates than adults.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) called for urgent action to tackle youth vaping in 2023, and the academics added: “Such action is not only crucial from a public health perspective but is required by international human rights law.”

They said the UN Convention on The Rights of The Child has “helped shape policies affecting the health of children”.

“Along with the tobacco framework provided by WHO, a legal basis for e-cigarette regulation which puts children’s health first can be devised,” they said.  
- Bernama-PA Media/dpa



Experts say some children are missing lessons to vape and are unable to concentrate in classrooms due to nicotine dependence.

## Terrorists enlisting via online games, kids targeted

**TERRORIST** groups are increasingly using online games to enlist children globally, including Indonesia, raising alarms over a growing wave of digital extremism and criminal activities, experts have warned.

During a recent visit to Jakarta, Abu Dhabi-based Hedayah chairman Dr Ali Rashid Al Nuaimi stressed that children often see games as harmless entertainment, making them particularly vulnerable to extremist messaging.

“Terrorism is a global issue, a global threat. Violent ideological groups once recruited through direct contact or social media and now, terrorist groups are recruiting fighters through online games,” he said.

Meanwhile, Indonesia’s National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) issued a similar warning, saying that the agency has outlined measures to address that threat.

“We’ve seen local terrorist networks recruiting young people through social media and online games, and we’ve taken steps to counter terrorism,” BNPT chief Eddy Hartono said in a recent statement.

The agency’s Peace Ambassador programme encourages youth to promote messages of peace online with the aim of countering extremist narratives.

Hedayah, an international centre of excellence for countering violent extremism, includes representatives from 12 countries under The International Counterterrorism Forum, which consists of Canada, Egypt, Indonesia, US, UK and Turkiye. - Bernama

## Trust key to raising upright individuals, says chief secretary to govt

**TRUST** should serve as the foundation in building families, guiding children to grow into principled individuals who uphold the responsibilities entrusted to them, said Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Shamsul Azri Abu Bakar.

He said a family founded on the values of love and trust not only fosters *sakinah* (harmony and peace) in the household, but also nurtures a generation of faithful and morally upright individuals.

“When the value of trust forms the core of a family, it will serve as the basis for every action and decision. We must understand that the family is the foundation of society’s well-being.

“The cultivation of morals must start at home, where the values of love and discipline are first instilled. Parents serve as key role models in raising children who are faithful, morally upright and responsible. A *sakinah* family is not merely a peaceful home but an institution that educates with love and wisdom,” he said.

He said this in his speech at the closing ceremony of the Annual Religious Conference of the Association of Wives of Civil Servants and Women Civil Servants (Puspanita) recently.

The programme, themed “Keluarga Sakinah, Generasi Amanah”, was held to discuss family management issues based on religious values, while also providing guidance and knowledge sharing for Puspanita members nationwide. In the public service context,



Shamsul says the family is the foundation of society’s well-being. - ALL PICS FROM 123RF

Shamsul said that *amanah* is one of the M.A.L.A.Y.S.I.A. values under the Public Service Reform Agenda, which underpins the cultivation of a work culture emphasising integrity, ethics and responsibility among civil servants.

“When every member of the public sector strongly upholds the principle of trust, whether in performing duties, making decisions or managing

resources, the entire organisation and national administrative system will operate more transparently, fairly and equitably,” he said.

The Puspanita adviser also commended the association for its initiatives to empower civil servants and women in general.

According to him, Puspanita is not just a welfare organisation, but a movement that nurtures the mind and soul while

integrating the intellectual, spiritual and social aspects in a harmonious balance.

“Organising programmes such as this proves that Puspanita is attuned to current needs in instilling religious and moral values within the framework of modernity. This is the face of Puspanita we are proud of, yet grounded in Islamic values, yet progressive,” he said. - Bernama

**ENGLISH** chess Grandmaster (GM) Daniel Howard Fernandez recently conducted two coaching workshops in Kuala Lumpur for 12 young Malaysian chess players.

These young chess talents, the majority ranging between 11 to 15 years old, included recently titled player Candidate Master Shen Ree Herng, 15, and former Penang chess prodigy Tin Shan Wen. Eleven of them were boys, hailing from across the Klang Valley and Penang, who are regulars in the Malaysian chess tournament circuit.

Given Fernandez's background of being a FIDE Master at the age of 10 before becoming International Master at age 15, he is well-positioned to talk about the do's and don'ts, and discuss the trials and tribulations of competitive chess as a teenager.

During the two sessions, he unveiled the secrets of how grandmasters prepare for competitive games and highlighted the formulation of plans and calculation of moves during games.

"Fernandez is the ideal mentor to these young talents, especially those aged 11 to 15, given his own background as a child chess prodigy 20 years ago," said Edwin Lam Choong Wai of Proctoids Consulting Malaysia, which supported the chess mentorship programme by Fernandez for Malaysian youth.

# England's 11th ranked player coaches chess talents in KL

➤ Young Malaysians attend workshops by grandmaster

Although he is based in England, 30-year-old Fernandez is no stranger to this region as he had grown up in neighbouring Singapore as a then young chess prodigy who had blazed the trails of chess strategies by winning the Asean Boys Under-10 championships in 2005.

With the right amount of support and mentorship, young Fernandez blazed the trail ahead.

Eventually, he became an International Master at the age of 15. He continued playing throughout his college and university days balancing it with academic priorities, especially during the later years when he was studying at Cambridge University.

Recalling his final year at university, he told the young talents at the workshops that he took a full year away from chess.



The Penang Chess Association's handpicked young talents work hard to try and answer Fernandez's (right) questions during the workshop.

Once he got through the final exams, he pursued chess and the GM title relentlessly and finally got the GM title at the age of 22.

Since then, he has been

actively competing in chess events all over the world and became a prolific chess author who reports about chess events for a specialist chess news site, besides authoring

chess books and recording instructional chess videos. He also conducts chess coaching and workshops for students all around the world.



Top 10 winners and special award recipients of the Claytan National Design Competition receive their recognitions from MuzArt founder and CEO Shannics Teh (second from left) and Claytan Group executive director Joseph Tan (centre).

## Winning ceramic designs turn into real products

ART education brand MuzArt International has partnered with ceramics manufacturer Claytan Group to launch the CPO Youngpreneur Programme and celebrate 10 outstanding young creators whose artwork has been transformed into real ceramic products by Claytan's artisans.

The winning designs, selected through the Claytan National Design Competition in September, were produced as genuine ceramic pieces, underscoring that creativity guided by intention, skill and discipline can leave a lasting impact.

The collaboration between MuzArt and Claytan represents more than an art programme. It is a nation-building mission to inspire the next generation of Malaysian creators, thinkers and innovators.

Through factory learning visits, hands-on ceramic workshops and future student showcases, both

institutions are preserving Malaysia's century-old ceramic legacy while nurturing young minds to appreciate quality, culture and purposeful creation.

Through the MuzArt x Claytan Youngpreneur Programme, students experience the full journey of creation, from concept to finished ceramic product, mirroring the process of Claytan's artisans.

By visiting Claytan's historic factory in Johor, observing artisans at work and engaging in guided workshops, children witness how discipline, creativity and responsibility come together to create meaningful work.

This collaboration empowers children to realise that art is not only expression. It is a life skill module that shapes children to become mindful, creative and capable citizens – the future innovators of Malaysia.

## Celebrate World Children's Day with Mechamato, compete for prizes at Petrosains, The Discovery Centre

IN conjunction with World Children's Day, Petrosains, The Discovery Centre, invites families to experience a day filled with fun, imagination and discovery until Nov 20. The celebration brings together science, creativity and play in a package that promises to spark curiosity in children and the young at heart.

Visitors can look forward to a special appearance by Malaysia's beloved animated hero Mechamato. Children can also take part in the Mechamato Contest, which could win them one of 15 Mecha-Prizes worth RM300. Among the prizes are a one-year Petrosains Family Membership worth RM170, Petrosains merchandise and Mechamato collectibles.

Besides Mechamato, the celebration continues with a series of hands-on workshops that combine science, art and creativity. Children can explore the Stamp-a-licious Keychain activity, where they will use fruits and vegetables to create colourful keychains. The Clickity Tapper workshop invites kids to design their own fidget toys, while the "Future Me! Buttons Making" session at the Sustainability Gallery Thinking Spot! provides a creative platform for children to express their dreams and aspirations. Visitors can sketch, paint, colour and craft their own button badges to take home as a memorable keepsake, centred around the theme "What I Wish to Be..."

Over at the Speed! Gallery Thinking Spot!, visitors can also join the Speedy Quiz Activity – a quick and fun quiz that uses the Speed! Gallery exhibits to test your knowledge in celebration of World Children's Day. Score 100 points to win a token! For

those who love a touch of magic, the Bubble Show will bring wonder to life through giant floating bubbles and shimmering shapes that will delight audiences of all ages.

Families in Johor Bahru, Kuantan and Kota Kinabalu can also join in the fun through activities at the Petrosains PlaySmart Centres. In PlaySmart Johor Bahru, children can participate in the LED Bug and FutureBites workshops. PlaySmart Kuantan offers the Soma Cube Challenge, Tetra Tower and mini shows such as Light Works, Finger First and the popular Balloon Show. Over in PlaySmart Kota Kinabalu, young visitors can create Climbing

Critters, Pop-Up Cards and Perler Bead Keychains to take home as souvenirs of their day of discovery.

Visitors are also encouraged to stop by the Xplorasi – Petrosains Gift Shop for special Mechamato value buys, which include stationery sets, A4 folders, lanyards, keychains and T-shirts. There are also discounts on selected Space-themed merchandise, including a "buy two, get 10% off" offer on Space magnets.

This World Children's Day, celebrate the joy of learning through play. Bring your family, meet Mechamato and experience a day where curiosity and creativity come together.



Mechamato and Arif share some fun-filled moments together.



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Muylaert, known as the Brazilian Superman, greets a patient during a visit at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Accra.



Muylaert takes a selfie with patients and their relatives during a visit at the Orthopaedic Training Centre in Nsawam.



Muylaert plays with patients during a visit at the Orthopaedic Training Centre.



Muylaert holds a prosthesis during a visit at the Orthopaedic Training Centre.  
- ALL PICS FROM AFP

# Man of steel brings joy

► 'Brazilian Superman' cheers child cancer patients in Ghana

**T**HE three-storey Child Health Department of the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital in Ghana's capital Accra is a place with hushed corridors, laboured breathing and parents clutching on to hope.

But recently, the gloom gave way to shrieks of joy as children with drips taped to their arms sat upright for the first time in days.

Others, too weak to stand, managed faint but determined smiles. Nurses paused mid-rounds, phones raised in the cancer ward. Even exhausted mothers lit up.

The reason was nearly six feet seven inches tall, dressed in the iconic blue-and-red Superman suit and cape.

In real life, Leonardo Muylaert is a lawyer specialised in civil rights who needs reading glasses to work.

Muylaert - known worldwide as the "Brazilian Superman" - was rounding up his one-week maiden visit to Ghana, his first trip to Africa, and the cancer ward erupted into life.

Everywhere he walked, children reached for his hands. Parents scrambled for selfies. Medical staff crowded the hallways.

"He moved from bed to bed, giving each child attention. For some of them, this is the first time we've seen them smile in weeks," a nurse whispered.

For 35-year-old Regina Awuku, whose five-year-old son is battling leukaemia, the moment was miraculous.

"My son was so happy to see Superman. This means a lot to us. You saw my son lying quietly on the bed, but he had the energy to wake up as soon as he saw him," she said.

"I chose Ghana to visit for my birthday. I feel I identify with the



Muylaert poses with patients and their relatives during a visit at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.

culture, with the heritage, with the happiness," Muylaert, who studied in the US on a basketball scholarship, said.

**'Brought such positive change'**

His sudden fame began in 2022 at the Comic-Con convention in Sao Paulo when a stranger surreptitiously shot a cell phone video of him, amazed at his resemblance to Superman film star Christopher Reeve.

"Am I seeing Clark Kent?" asked the star-struck comic book fan, in a clip that soon racked up thousands of views on TikTok - unbeknownst to Muylaert, who did not even have a social media account at the time.

Weeks later, Muylaert learned through friends that he had become an online sensation.

"It was funny and crazy to read that so many people think I look like Superman," he said then.

That is when an idea took root in the back of his mind, he said: get a Superman suit and try the alter ego on for size. He ordered an old-fashioned costume online and started travelling around Brazil as Superman.

Muylaert visits hospitals, schools and charities, poses for pictures with

commuters on random street corners and generally tries to be what he calls a symbol of kindness and hope - all free of charge.

He now visits vulnerable people worldwide.

In Accra, after leaving the hospital, he went to a prosthetics workshop on the city's outskirts, where amputee children screamed "Superman! Superman!" as he joined their football match.

For Akua Sarpong, founder of Lifeline for Childhood Cancer Ghana, the impact was immediate.

"It has been a fun-filled day. I have seen so many children smiling and happy, even children undergoing treatment sitting up that I haven't seen in a long time. He has brought such positive change," she said.

Muylaert said the visit reinforced his belief in small acts of kindness. "Everybody can be a hero... you don't need a cape. The smile on their faces changes the world," he said.

As he prepared to fly back to Brazil, he said: "The idea is to spread happiness all over..."

"Maybe we won't change the whole world, but as long as we inspire one person, that person inspires the other." - AFP



Muylaert interacts with a group of patients during a visit at the Korle Bu Teaching Hospital.



Paloma Morphy posing with a Labubu at the 26th Annual Latin Grammy Awards.

## Labubu movie in early stages of development

**THE** popular Labubu dolls that have ignited a global frenzy may light up movie screens sometime down the road, the *Hollywood Reporter* recently said.

Sony Pictures closed a deal last week to develop a movie based on the toothy monsters, the media outlet reported.

The film is in the early stages of development and it has not yet been decided whether it will be live action or animation.

Labubus, sold by China's Pop Mart, became a phenomenon this year. They were carried by celebrities including Rihanna and Lisa from South Korean group Blackpink. Shoppers lined up to buy the dolls in "blind boxes" that keep the exact model a secret until opened.

Sony has produced the *Jumanji* movies as well as animated Netflix hit *KPop Demon Hunters*, rallying anticipation for the Labubu movie. – Reuters



Labubu dolls enjoy wild popularity since they were spotted being carried by celebrities.



Yeoh poses on the red carpet upon arrival for the European premiere of the film *Wicked: For Good* in central London.

## Lifetime achievement

**M**ALAYSIAN actress Tan Sri Michelle Yeoh will be honoured with a lifetime achievement award at next year's Berlinale film festival, organisers said recently.

Yeoh, 63, will receive the Honorary Golden Bear in recognition of her "outstanding achievements in film and cinema," the festival said in a statement.

"Yeoh is a visionary artist and performer whose work defies boundaries - be it geographic, linguistic or cinematic," Berlinale director Tricia Tuttle said.

The award will be presented at the festival's opening ceremony in the German capital on Feb 12, 2026.

The Berlinale - running February 12-22 - is Europe's first big cinema showcase of the year and ranks along with Cannes and

► Michelle Yeoh to be honoured at Berlinale film festival

Venice among the continent's top film festivals.

Yeoh was a member of the jury in 1999 and was celebrated at the festival for *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and more recently, *Everything Everywhere All at Once*.

"Berlin has always held a special place in my heart," she said, crediting the event as "one of the first festivals to embrace my work with such warmth and generosity".

Yeoh won the best actress Oscar in 2023 for her portrayal of Chinese-American laundromat owner Evelyn Wang in *Everything Everywhere All at Once* - becoming the first Asian woman to win

the award.

Her film credits stretch back to the 1980s, but her Hollywood breakthrough came when she was cast as the first ethnically Chinese Bond girl in 1997's *Tomorrow Never Dies* opposite Pierce Brosnan.

She also starred in the Oscar-winning 2000 martial arts film *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, the 2005 period drama *Memoirs of a Geisha* and the 2018 romantic comedy *Crazy Rich Asians*.

Last year's Honorary Golden Bear went to Scottish actress *Tilda Swinton* while previous recipients include Martin Scorsese and Steven Spielberg. – AFP

## Japan manga powerhouse *Dragon Ball* launches outlet in Tokyo

**THE** world's first *Dragon Ball* outlet opened in Tokyo last week, celebrating more than 40 years of the internationally beloved Japanese manga, anime and video franchise.

Initially published in 1984 in Japan's Shonen Jump magazine, *Dragon Ball* is one of the best-selling manga franchises of all time and has spawned countless anime series, films and video games.

The outlet was launched to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the franchise last year, according to anime studio Toei Animation.

On Friday, the studio shared images of the outlet, located at a mall near Tokyo's main railway station, with a huge *Dragon Ball* ceiling decoration and statues of the main character Son Goku.

Key rings, T-shirts and pin badges featuring iconic characters are among the merchandise for sale.

In the original *Dragon Ball* manga, a boy named Son Goku collects magical balls containing dragons to help protect the Earth from torment.

The comic books have sold more than 260 million copies in Japan and worldwide by November last year, 40 years since the franchise's birth, according to publisher Shueisha.



A passerby takes photo of a figurine of Son Goku displayed in front of the *Dragon Ball* outlet at a shopping mall near Tokyo Station. – PICS FROM AFP

The first part of the manga series was turned into a TV anime from 1986. Dubbed in different languages, the show captured children's hearts with its madcap battles.

Films, video games and other spin-offs followed, as the franchise grew into an international phenomenon and stays a money maker to date. – AFP

# Rise in global standing for excellence

➤ MSU leads the way by climbing up the ladder for QS stars rating

**M**ANAGEMENT and Science University (MSU) strengthened its global standing with an outstanding achievement in the QS Stars Rating System, earning 5 Stars for excellence in nine metric categories for the period 2025 to 2030.

The international recognition was awarded for teaching, facilities, employability, good governance, social impact, academic development, global engagement, hospitality and leisure management, including diversity, equity and inclusion.

This milestone reflects MSU's commitment to academic quality, holistic student development, and global engagement. Each 5-Star rating reflects the university's dedication to excellence not only in education and research, but also in fostering social responsibility, inclusivity, and industry relevance.

The QS Stars Rating System is a globally recognized evaluation framework developed by Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), which assesses universities across multiple dimensions of performance and



MSU President and Founder, Professor Tan Sri Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid (centre), received the QS 5 Stars certificate from MSU Senior Vice President of the Business and Social Sciences Cluster, Professor Dr Abdol Ali Khatibi.

impact.

MSU champions equality and inclusivity by providing a level playing field for all learners, transforming lives and enriching the future through meaningful, globally oriented learning experiences, while building a better and more sustainable future for all.

With 5 Stars in teaching as well as academic development, MSU continues to empower learners to evolve, innovate and lead with purpose at every stage of life. By equipping learners with future-ready

skills and promoting continuous upskilling through flexible, industry-driven programmes, MSU ensures that education extends beyond the classroom—empowering individuals to learn, adapt, and thrive throughout their lives.

With ten locations across Malaysia including in Sabah and Sarawak, MSU ensures convenient access for prospective candidates to sit for the APEL Aptitude Test, a non-traditional pathway to higher education. MSU currently offers APEL (A) and APEL

(C) at multiple levels: T-3 (Certificate), T-4 (Diploma), T-6 (Bachelor's Degree), and T-7 (Master's Degree).

Introduced and approved by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA), APEL broadens access to higher education for adult learners who have substantial work experience but lack formal academic qualifications.

The MSU APEL Centre is overseen by the MSU Academy (MA), established to deliver high-quality continuing education that meets the

changing needs of society. Dedicated to advancing lifelong learning, MA offers programmes tailored for individuals seeking flexibility in both scheduling and the delivery of learning experiences.

By integrating Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) with traditional academic curricula, MSU enhances student competencies through industry internships, community engagement, creative entrepreneurship, and global exposure. This holistic approach equips MSU graduates with the well-rounded skills and experience highly valued by employers.

Ranked among the best in the region, the university's programmes are carefully designed to maximise graduate potential, consistently producing graduates who are highly sought after by employers.

MSU comprises the Faculty of Health and Life Sciences, the Faculty of Business Management and Professional Studies, the Faculty of Information Sciences and Engineering, the International Medical School, the School of Pharmacy, the School of Education and Social Sciences, the School of Hospitality and Creative Arts, the School of Graduate Studies and the Graduate School of Management.

**For a full range and information on flexible programmes offered at MSU, please call 03-5521 6868, email [enquiry@msu.edu.my](mailto:enquiry@msu.edu.my), or visit [www.msu.edu.my](http://www.msu.edu.my)**



Management and Science University (MSU) is a globally recognised institution, ranked by both Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) and Times Higher Education (THE). Committed to developing well-rounded human capital, MSU envisions a more sustainable and inclusive future. Through transformative learning experiences, the university promotes equality and strives to create a level playing field for all, enriching lives and shaping tomorrow's leaders.

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322 **Notices**

Looking for  
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840921-08-5187)  
Kindly attend the Petaling Jaya Sessions Court on 27.11.2025 at 9.00 am for the hearing of BB-58-59-11/2025 or contact 03-40216820 for further info.

DALAM MAHKAMAH SESYEN DI BUTTERWORTH DALAM NEGERI PULAU PINANG GUAMAN SIVIL NO. PB-852NCC-172-10/2025

ANTARA

PUBLIC BANK BERHAD [NO. SYARIKAT 196501000672 (6463-H)] ... PLAINTIF

DAN

1. TAN CHIN MENG (NO. K. P. 790311-07-5587)
2. YEW MOOI KUI (NO. K. P. 791029-07-5756) ... DEFENDAN-DEFENDAN

NOTIS IKLAN

Kepada:-  
TAN CHIN MENG (NO. K. P. 790311-07-5587) No. 18, Persiaran Merbuk Taman Sri Nibong 14300 Nibong Tebal Pulau Pinang

dan/atau

TAN CHIN MENG (NO. K. P. 790311-07-5587) 23, Lorong Perdana 24 Taman Perdana 14100 Simpang Ampat Pulau Pinang

dan/atau

YEW MOOI KUI (NO. K. P. 791029-07-5756) No. 18, Persiaran Merbuk Taman Sri Nibong 14300 Nibong Tebal Pulau Pinang

dan/atau

YEW MOOI KUI (NO. K. P. 791029-07-5756) 23, Lorong Perdana 24 Taman Perdana 14100 Simpang Ampat Pulau Pinang

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa satu Writ bermeterai bertarikh 03-10-2025 telah dikeluarkan ke atas kamu dalam Mahkamah Sesyen di Butterworth, Pulau Pinang dalam Guaman Sivil No. PB-852NCC-172-10/2025 oleh Public Bank Berhad yang mempunyai alamat di 19, 21 & 23, Jalan Keruing, Kawasan Perniagaan Simpang Ampat, 14100 Seberang Perai Selatan, Pulau Pinang dan diperintahkan bahawa Writ bermeterai tersebut bersama dengan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 03-10-2025 disampaikan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menampal kertas-kertas kausa bersama dengan Perintah untuk Penyampaian Ganti bermeterai di Papan Notis Mahkamah Sesyen di Butterworth, Pulau Pinang, dan pada satu bahagian yang jelas kelihatan di alamat-alamat terakhir yang diketahui iaitu pada No. 18, Persiaran Merbuk, Taman Sri Nibong, 14300 Nibong Tebal, Pulau Pinang dan/atau 23, Lorong Perdana 24, Taman Perdana, 14100 Simpang Ampat, Pulau Pinang dan memasukkan satu iklan dalam suatu surat khabar tempatan berbahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" untuk satu (1) terbitan dan bahawa penampalan dan pengiklanan itu hendaklah disifatkan sebagai penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup bagi Writ tersebut dalam tempoh masa tujuh (7) hari dari tarikh akhir penampalan dengan kos penyampaian ganti dijadikan kos dalam kausa.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membela tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah hadir sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguambela kamu di hadapan Mahkamah Sesyen di Butterworth, Pulau Pinang pada 08-12-2025 jam pukul 9.00 pagi. Jika kamu ingkar hadir semediam, satu penghakiman boleh dibuat terhadap kamu oleh Mahkamah.

Bertarikh 18 November 2025.

T.T

Peguamcara Plaintiff

Notis ini dikeluarkan oleh Tetuan Wong & Loh, Peguamcara Plaintiff yang beralamat di 44, Jalan Cantonment, 10350 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang.

322 **Notices**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. [198701008201 (166918-D)]

(IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a General Meeting of the member(s) of MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. duly convened and held at 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P. Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur on 18 November 2025 the following Special Resolution set out below was duly passed:-

MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP

"THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. YAP KAI WENG of No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed as liquidator of the Company for the purpose of such winding up."

Dated this: 18 November 2025

DATUK EDWARD LEE MING FOO Director

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. [198701008201 (166918-D)] (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the creditors of MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. which is being voluntarily wound up, are requested to, on or before the 19 December 2025 to send in their names and addresses with particulars of their debts and claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitor (if any) to YAP KAI WENG, the Liquidator at No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W.P. Kuala Lumpur and if so required by the notice in writing to the said Liquidator, or by their solicitor or personally to come and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any distribution made.

Dated this: 18 November 2025

YAP KAI WENG Liquidator

322 **Notices**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. [200901039151 (882290-T)]

(IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT a General Meeting of the member(s) of HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. duly convened and held at 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P. Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur on 18 November 2025, the following Special Resolution set out below was duly passed:-

MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP

"THAT the Company be wound up voluntarily pursuant to Section 439(1) of the Companies Act, 2016 and that Mr. YAP KAI WENG of No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur be and is hereby appointed as liquidator of the Company for the purpose of such winding up."

Dated this: 18 November 2025

DATUK EDWARD LEE MING FOO Director

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND

IN THE MATTER OF HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. [200901039151 (882290-T)] (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF CREDITORS

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT the creditors of HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. which is being voluntarily wound up, are requested to, on or before the 19 December 2025 to send in their names and addresses with particulars of their debts and claims and of any security held by them, and the names and addresses of their solicitor (if any) to YAP KAI WENG, the Liquidator at No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W.P. Kuala Lumpur and if so required by the notice in writing to the said Liquidator, or by their solicitor or personally to come and prove their debts or claims at such time and place as shall be specified in such notice or in default thereof they will be excluded from the benefits of any distribution made.

Dated this: 18 November 2025

YAP KAI WENG Liquidator

322 **Notices**

DALAM PERKARA AKTA SYARIKAT 2016 DAN DALAM PERKARA HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. [200901039151 (882290-T)] (Dalam Penggulangan Syarikat Secara Sukarela Oleh Ahli)

NOTIS RESOLUSI

NOTIS DENGAN INI DIBERI bahawa dalam Mesyuarat Pemegang-pemegang Saham syarikat HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (P.J) SDN. BHD. yang telah diadakan di 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P. Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur pada 18 November 2025, Resolusi Khas seperti berikut telah diluluskan:-

PEGGULUNGAN SYARIKAT SECARA SUKARELA OLEH AHLI

"BAHAWA Syarikat ini digulungan secara sukarela menurut Seksyen 439(1) Akta Syarikat 2016 dan En. YAP KAI WENG yang beralamat di No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W.P. Kuala Lumpur dilantik sebagai Pelikuidasi untuk tujuan penggulangan tersebut."

Tarikh: 18 November 2025

DATUK EDWARD LEE MING FOO Pengarah

322 **Notices**

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI SHAH ALAM DALAM NEGERI SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA PENGGULUNGAN SYARIKAT NO. BA-28NCC-752-11/2025

Dalam perkara di bawah Akta Syarikat, 2016

Dan

Dalam perkara di bawah Seksyen 465 (1) (e) dan Seksyen 466 (1) (a) Akta Syarikat, 2016

Dan

Dalam perkara di bawah Kaedah-Kaedah (Penggulangan) Syarikat 1972

ANTARA

ORIX CREDIT MALAYSIA SDN. BHD. (NO. SYARIKAT : 67108-U) ... PEMPETISYEN

DAN

NAJIRA TRANSPORT (M) SDN. BHD. (NO. SYARIKAT : 202101010216 (1410515-A)) ... RESPONDEN

IKLAN PETISYEN

NOTIS ADALAH DENGAN INI DIBERI bahawa suatu Petisyen untuk penggulangan Syarikat oleh Mahkamah Tinggi, telah pada 04/11/2025 dikemukakan oleh Orix Credit Malaysia Sdn. Bhd. (No. Syarikat : 67108-U) yang beralamat di 8th Floor, Menara Penang Garden, 42, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang.

DAN bahawa Petisyen tersebut diarahkan supaya dibicarakan di Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia di Shah Alam, Selangor pada 06/02/2026 jam 9.30 pagi.

DAN mana pihak pemutihan atau penyumbang Syarikat tersebut yang bermati untuk menyokong atau menentang sesuatu perintah mengikut Petisyen tersebut boleh hadir dengan tujuan itu secara peribadi atau melalui peguambelanya pada masa bicaraan dan sesalman Petisyen tersebut akan dibekalkan oleh pihak yang bertandatangan di bawah ini kepada mana-mana pemutihan atau penyumbang Syarikat tersebut yang memintanya dengan membuat bayaran yang ditetapkan.

Alamat Pempetisyen adalah di 8th Floor, Menara Penang Garden, 42, Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 Penang.

Peguamcara Pempetisyen ialah Wong-Choi & Mohd. Nor, Peguambela & Peguamcara yang beralamat di No. 27, 1st Floor, Jalan Maju Jaya, Pusat Perniagaan Maju Jaya, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang.

.....Peguamcara Pempetisyen

PERINGATAN - Sesiapa yang ingin hadir pada bicaraan Petisyen tersebut hendaklah menyampaikan, atau menghantar dengan pos, kepada Wong-Choi & Mohd. Nor yang dinamakan di atas suatu notis bertulis tentang niatnya sebegini. Notis tersebut mestilah menyatakan nama dan alamat pihak berkenaan, atau jika ia sebuah firma, nama dan alamat firma, dan mestilah ditandatangani oleh pihak atau firma berkenaan atau peguamcaranya, jika ada. Notis hendaklah disampaikan, atau jika dihantar dengan pos, hendaklah dantar dalam jangka masa mencukupi, supaya sampai kepada pihak yang dinamakan di atas sebelum jam 12.00 tengahari pada 05/02/2026. [RUJUKAN NO.: WCNM(BM)/OCMSB/2025-460/NTMSB (LC/sk)]

322 **Notices**

DALAM PERKARA AKTA SYARIKAT 2016 DAN DALAM PERKARA MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. [198701008201 (166918-D)] (Dalam Penggulangan Syarikat Secara Sukarela Oleh Ahli)

NOTIS RESOLUSI

NOTIS DENGAN INI DIBERI bahawa dalam Mesyuarat Pemegang-pemegang Saham syarikat MML MARKETING SDN. BHD. yang telah diadakan di 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P. Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur, W. P. Kuala Lumpur pada 18 November 2025, Resolusi Khas seperti berikut telah diluluskan:-

PEGGULUNGAN SYARIKAT SECARA SUKARELA OLEH AHLI

"BAHAWA Syarikat ini digulungan secara sukarela menurut Seksyen 439(1) Akta Syarikat 2016 dan En. YAP KAI WENG yang beralamat di No. 9, Jalan Indah 16, Taman Cheras Indah, 56100 Kuala Lumpur, W.P. Kuala Lumpur dilantik sebagai Pelikuidasi untuk tujuan penggulangan tersebut."

Tarikh: 18 November 2025

DATUK EDWARD LEE MING FOO Pengarah

322 **Notices**

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT SHAH ALAM IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA COMMERCIAL DIVISION COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) PETITION NO. - BA-28NCC-735-10/2025

In the Matter of Section 465(1)(f), and (h) of the Companies Act 2016;

And

In the Matter of Lite-Metric Engineering Sdn Bhd [Company No. 200601036077 (755836-U)]

And

In the Matter of Companies (Winding-Up) Rules, 1972

BETWEEN

WONG JUINN GIO [NRIC No.: 740621-14-5661] ...PETITIONER

AND

LITE-METRIC ENGINEERING SDN BHD [Company No.: 200601036077 (755836-U)] ...RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the abovenamed Company by the High Court was presented on the 31st day of October 2025 by Wong Juinn Gio and that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Shah Alam at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon on day the 29th day of January 2026 and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by it or its Counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at Lim Phua & Noraini, Advocates & Solicitors, No. 49-C, Jalan Alam Jaya 17, Taman Alam Jaya Cheras, 43200 Selangor.

Tel. No. 03-9080 6862 E-mail: limphua@yahoo.com

NOTE:-

Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the abovenamed Lim Phua & Noraini, notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or if a firm, the name and address of the firm and must be signed by the person or firm of his or their solicitor (if any) and must be served or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovenamed, not later than 12 noon of Wednesday the 29th day of January 2026. (Ref: LPN/JWL-7622/25/LKJ)

322 **Notices**

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF ADAZ SDN BERHAD COMPANY NO. 62506-K (MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016 that a Final Meeting of the Company will be held at 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, 55100 Kuala Lumpur on 18.12.2025 at 10.00a.m. for the following purpose:-

- a. To receive an account from the Liquidator showing the manner in which the winding-up has been conducted and the property of the Company disposed of and to hear any explanations that may be given by the Liquidator.
- b. To determine pursuant to Section 518 of the Companies Act, 2016, the manner in which the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator thereof, shall be disposed of.

Wong Soon Fong Liquidator

c/o SFW Insolvency Services 221B, Jalan Mahkota, Taman Maluri, Cheras, 55100 Kuala Lumpur

Kuala Lumpur this 18.11.2025

322 **Notices**

IN THE HIGH COURT IN MALAYA AT IPOH COMPANIES (WINDING - UP) NO: AA-28NCC-82-10/2025

In the matter of Section 465 (1) (e) of the Companies Act 2016

And

In the matter of Suriamas Yakin Sdn Bhd (201101028061 (956196-K))

BETWEEN

KOPERASI KAKITANGAN KERAJIAN HULU PERAK BERHAD (Coop Bill No: IP 5423/1) ...PETITIONER

DAN

SURIAMAS YAKIN SDN BHD (Company No: 201101028061 (956196-K)) ...RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the above-named Company by the High Court was on 14.10.2025 presented by the Koperasi Kakitangan Kerajaan Hulu Perak Berhad. And the said Petition is directed to be heard before the High Court sitting at the Ipoh at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon on Monday, 12.01.2026 and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is No 8281, Jalan Suda Bahagia, Off Jalan Sultan Iskandar, 33300 Gerik, Perak

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs. Amirul Fairuzzen & Co., 103A, Tingkat 1, Jalan Baldwin 3, Pusat Perniagaan Baldwin, 35000 Tapah, Perak.

MESSRS. AMIRUL FAIRUZZEN & CO. Solicitors for the Petitioner

NOTE - Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to abovenamed, notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or if firm, the name and address of the firm and must be signed by the person, or firm, or his or their solicitor (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovenamed not later than 12.00 o'clock noon of the 09.01.2026 [AFC/K/282/157/2024 (G)]

# Victory in defeat

## McIlroy loses playoff but clinches seventh Race to Dubai title

**RORY MCILROY** lost the week-long US\$10 million (RM42m) DP World Tour Championship on Sunday in a playoff against Matt Fitzpatrick, but did enough to ensure he was crowned the winner of the season-long Race to Dubai champion.

"It's absolutely incredible. I knew I still had a bit of work to do to get over the line in the Race to Dubai," said McIlroy, who will remain the world No. 2.

McIlroy topped the European tour's season ending rankings for a seventh time, and for the fourth season in a row. He broke a tie with Severiano Ballesteros and is one behind Colin Montgomerie, who achieved the feat eight times.

"It seems within touching distance now," said McIlroy. "I was the first European to win the Grand Slam and I'd love to be the most successful European in

terms of winning Order of Merits and season-long races."

He added that Ballesteros "was always my dad's favourite player".

"When I hear Seve, it just sort of brings me back through my whole journey in the game, and yeah, it's quite emotional."

Englishman Fitzpatrick made a birdie on the 72nd hole of regulation play to finish with a 66 at the Earth course of Jumeirah Golf Estates.

A few minutes later, Northern Ireland's McIlroy sensationally eagled the same hole after a brilliant second shot to 16 feet.

On the first playoff hole, McIlroy's drive found the stream that crosses the fairway, and could only make a bogey, leaving Fitzpatrick a third-time winner of the

season-ending tournament.

Fitzpatrick, the 2022 US Open champion, kept his nerve for his third DP World Tour Championship title and a 10th DP World Tour victory in 195 starts.

Until he finished tied eighth in the PGA Championship in May, he did not have a top-10 for nearly 11 months.

"This means the world," said Fitzpatrick, who picked up two-and-

Rory McIlroy celebrates with his trophy at the end the 2025 DP World Tour Championship in Dubai. - AFP/PTIC



half points as Europe won the Ryder Cup in September.

"Struggled at the start of this year, obviously, and to turn it around in the summer like I did and have a Ryder Cup like I did, it feels like it's hard to top given everything."

"I feel like I really didn't hit one bad shot all day," he said.

Four players - England's Tommy Fleetwood (67) and Laurie Canter (67), Sweden's Ludvig Aberg (66) and Denmark's Rasmus Neergaard-Petersen (68) - tied for third at 17-under total.

McIlroy, the Masters champion, seemed to be motoring along when he made five birdies in his first 11 holes to move ahead by two shots.

A bogey on the 12th hole, where he overshot the green with his approach shot, and another dropped shot on the par-four 16th, where he found a bunker, pulled him back.

After McIlroy's long birdie putt lipped out on the 17th, he was one behind a group of four players.

That became a two-shot deficit when Fitzpatrick made the sixth birdie of his bogey-free round on the 18th.

McIlroy responded with a towering second shot from 234 yards into headwind to 16 feet for his eagle to force the playoff.

England's Marco Penge finished in a tie for 22nd to secure second place in the Race to Dubai.

He led 10 non-exempt players who will get their PGA Tour card for 2026. That list includes Canter, Kristoffer Reitan, Adrien Saddier, Alex Noren, John Parry, Haotong Li, Keita Nakajima, Neergaard-Petersen and Jordan Smith. - AFP

# Sweden's Grant captures Annika title

**SWEDEN'S** Linn Grant (below) fired a 5-under 65 yesterday to win the LPGA Annika at Pelican title by three strokes over American Jennifer Kupcho.

Grant finished 72 holes at the Belleair, Florida, resort on 19-under 261 to become the first Swede to win the event named for Swedish LPGA legend Annika Sorenstam.

"Very satisfying," Grant said. "I mean, we were talking about what a full circle it is, just to win anything, but to stand here and win her tournament."

Grant, 26, captured her only prior LPGA title in 2023 at Toledo but has taken six triumphs on the Ladies European Tour.

She became the 29th different winner of an LPGA event this season and the fourth Swede.

Grant led Kupcho by a stroke entering the final round and birdied the second, fifth, par-five seventh and par-three ninth holes to make the turn with a three-stroke lead over Kupcho, who made four birdies and two bogeys on the front nine.

"Especially on the first nine, we were going back and forth," Grant said. "I'm glad she was playing well because that really pushed me to play better."

World No. 53 Grant birdied the par-five 14th and 40th-ranked Kupcho answered with a birdie at the par-three 15th, pulling within three with three to play.

Grant birdied the par-four 17th and had a comfortable enough margin to bogey 18, her first bogey since her opening hole on Friday, and still make a relaxed tap-in for the title.

Mexico's Gaby Lopez was third on 265 after a closing 65.

England's Charley Hull fired a 63 to share fourth on 266 with Americans Auston Kim and Lucy Li.

American Brooke Matthews made a hole-in-one at the 140-yard par-three 12th hole with a nine-iron. She shot 65 to finish on 268 for the first ace of her life.

"That was wild," she said. "I just saw it bounce and disappear. I still can't believe it. I blacked out." - AFP



### 322 Notices

**DALAM MAHKAMAH MAJLISRET DI GUA MUSANG**  
**DALAM NEGERI KELANTAN**  
**SUAMAN SIVIL NO. DI-A72NCVC-17-08/2025**

Antara  
Mahsari Quarry Sdn. Bhd.  
(No. Syarikat: 202001008520  
(1364840-X) ...Plaintiff  
Dan  
Ibrahim Bin Mat Nawi  
(No. K.P. 950510-03-6193) ...Defendan

**NOTIS IKLAN**  
Kepada:-  
**IBRAHIM BIN MAT NAWI**  
(NO. K.P. 950510-03-6193)  
Lot 471, Kampung Lapan Jaya  
18300 Gua Musang  
Kelantan

**AMBIL PERHATIAN** bahawa satu Writ bermeterai bertarikh 28-08-2025 telah dikeluarkan ke atas kamu dalam Mahkamah Majlisret di Gua Musang, Kelantan dalam Guaman Sivil No. DI-A72NCVC-17-08/2025 oleh Mahsari Quarry Sdn. Bhd. yang mempunyai alamat berdaftar di Lot 194, Tingkat 2, Section 22, Jalan Kuala Krai, 15050 Kota Bharu, Kelantan dan alamat perniagaannya di KM 18, Jalan Kuala Betis, Kg. Panggong Lait, 18300 Gua Musang, Kelantan dan diperintahkan bahawa Writ bermeterai tersebut bersama dengan Pernyataan Tuntutan bertarikh 28-08-2025 disampaikan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menampalkan kertas-kertas kausa bersama dengan Perintah untuk Penyampaian Ganti bermeterai di Papan Notis Mahkamah Majlisret di Gua Musang, Kelantan; pada satu bahagian yang jelas kelihatan di alamat terakhir yang diketahui iaitu pada Lot 471, Kampung Lapan Jaya, 18300 Gua Musang, Kelantan dan memasukkan satu iklan dalam suatu surat khabar tempatan Bahasa Inggeris iaitu "The Sun" untuk satu (1) terbitan dan bahawa penampalan dan pengiklanan itu hendaklah disifatkan sebagai penyampaian yang sempurna dan cukup bagi Writ tersebut dalam tempoh masa tujuh (7) hari dari tarikh akhir penampalan dengan kos penyampaian ganti dijadikan kos dalam kausa.

Jika kamu berhasrat untuk membela tindakan tersebut kamu mestilah hadir sama ada secara sendiri atau melalui peguambela kamu di hadapan Mahkamah Majlisret di Gua Musang, Kelantan pada 27-11-2025 jam pukul 9.00 pagi. Jika kamu ingkar hadir sedemikian, satu penghakiman boleh dibuat terhadap kamu oleh Mahkamah.

Bertarikh 14 November 2025.  
T.T.  
Peguambela Plaintiff

Notis ini dikeluarkan oleh Tetuan Wong & Loh, Peguambela Plaintiff yang beralamat di 44, Jalan Cantonment, 10350 Georgetown, Pulau Pinang.

# India confront batting blind spot

**INDIA** have long curated home tracks that accentuate turn, but the assumption their own batters would master such conditions no longer appears safe following their defeat in the opening test against South Africa.

On a treacherous Eden Gardens' pitch, the ball bounced irregularly and turned sharply and none of the teams posted 200. Touring captain Temba Bavuma's unbeaten 55 was the highest score by any batter.

India, a batter short as skipper Shubman Gill retired hurt in the first innings with a neck injury and did not bat in the second, were bundled out for 93 chasing 124 for victory.

South African spinners claimed 12 of the 18 Indian wickets in the match exposing the home batters' vulnerabilities against the turning ball.

South Africa off-spinner Simon Harmer finished with a match haul of eight wickets to bag the player-of-the-match award.

It was jarring to home fans used to watching nimble-footed and supple-wristed Indian batters dominate spin.

India head coach Gautam Gambhir mounted a spirited defence of the much-maligned pitch on Sunday, shifting the conversation from conditions

to competence.

"The point is that you should be able to know how to play turn," Gautam said in an assessment of their batting that led to the sobering defeat inside three days.

"I felt that if you are willing to put your head down and if you have a solid defence, if you have the temperament, you can definitely score runs.

"Yes, it might not be a wicket which is going to (allow you to) be very, very flamboyant, where you can play those big shots. But if you are willing to put your head down, definitely it's a wicket where you can score."

Opener KL Rahul's 39 in the first innings was the highest score by an Indian batter in the match.

India have slipped to the fourth place in the World Test Championship standings after the loss and have plenty to ponder ahead of the second and final Test in Guwahati.

Shubman was taken to hospital and later discharged, but is doubtful for the Test in Guwahati beginning on Nov 22.

India played spin-bowling all-rounder Washington Sundar at No. 3 in Kolkata but B. Sai Sudharsan is likely to reclaim his top-order place in Guwahati especially if Shubman is not available. - Reuters

# Pakistan whitewash Sri Lanka in ODI series

**MOHAMMAD RIZWAN** and Mohammad Wasim starred as Pakistan beat Sri Lanka by six wickets in the third and final ODI yesterday, claiming the series 3-0.

Rizwan scored an unbeaten 61 and opener Fakhar Zaman knocked 55 to guide Pakistan past their target of 212 in 44.4 overs.

Fast bowler Wasim earlier took 3-47, while pace partner Haris Rauf and spinner Faisal Akram took two pieces to bowl out Sri Lanka on a slow-paced Rawalpindi Stadium pitch.

This becomes Pakistan's fourth consecutive ODI series win over Sri Lanka, having beaten them in 2015, 2017 and 2019.

Pakistan did lose opener Haseebullah Khan for a duck but Babar Azam joined Fakhar to put 74 runs for the second wicket with both dominating the bowling.

Leg-spinner Jeffrey Vandersay brought Sri Lanka back in the game by removing Fakhar, Babar (34) and Salman Agha (six) in the space of 33 runs.

But Rizwan and Hussain Talat, who scored 42 not out, dove Pakistan past the target and to 215-4 during their unbroken 100-run stand for the fifth wicket.

Fakhar hit eight boundaries while the usually-swashbuckling Rizwan played an anchoring knock which featured just four hits to the rope.

Vandersay finished with 3-42 but did not get any support from the other bowl-

ers. For Pakistan skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi it was his second series win as captain after beating South Africa 2-1 earlier this month.

"I think winning a series gives great happiness," said Shaheen. "We bowled well in this series so it's nice for the future."

His Sri Lankan counterpart, Kusal Mendis, rued his own side's performance with the bat, however.

"The top five got good starts but did not go on long and we did not get a big total which cost us badly," said Mendis.

Sri Lanka lost the first two ODIs in Rawalpindi and started the final match on a bad note when skipper Charith Asalanka was ruled out with a fever.

Sadeera Samarawickrama, who top-scored with 48, added 43 for the third wicket with stand-in captain Kusal Mendis (34), but the innings then fell away badly.

Pathum Nissanka scored 24 and Kamil Mishara made 29 but both openers were dismissed in quick succession by the combination of Rauf and Wasim.

Akram, playing his first international in a year, dismissed Kamindu Mendis for 10 and then Samarawickrama as the tourists slumped from 143-4 to 193-8.

Debutant Pavan Rathnayake hit a fighting 32 with a six and two boundaries before he was the last man to go, run-out trying to grab a quick second. - AFP

**JANNIK SINNER** cut a delighted figure yesterday after he finished a turbulent season in the best possible fashion, seeing off rival Carlos Alcaraz in straight sets to retain his ATP Finals title.

Italian Sinner was roared to a 7-6 (7-4), 7-5 victory by supporters in Turin, who watched their idol cap a landmark season in which he became the first of his countrymen to win Wimbledon.

"It's (an) amazing season... This year making four Grand Slam finals, coming here, winning here, having this big streak in end of the year, it's amazing," Sinner told reporters.

"But mostly I feel to be a better player than last year, I think this is the most important. It's all part of the process.

"I always say and believe that if you keep working and trying to be a better player, the results, they're going to come. This year it was

# Amazing Sinner

Italian wins Alcaraz battle to retain ATP Finals title

like this."

Sinner collapsed to the ground with a mixture of joy and relief after sealing his triumph at the season-ending tournament where he hasn't lost a match since being beaten in the 2023 final by Novak Djokovic.

The win brought to a close a year in which the 24-year-old had to bounce back from a three-month ban, which chopped out a large chunk of his season despite the World Anti-Doping Agency accepting that the Italian was acciden-

tally contaminated with banned substance clostebol in March 2024.

"I was thinking about a lot and at the same time not a lot. There was a lot of tension because if I lost that point we go into a tie-break and then it becomes a different match," added Sinner.

"But in that moment I was probably more relieved about the end of the season. I had a similar feeling last year but it was different.

"This year it was a more powerful feeling for a variety of reasons. It was a really emo-

tional moment."

Sinner's win was his second over Alcaraz this year and a big moment after he lost the year-end world No. 1 spot to the Spaniard, who won eight tournaments this year and took his Grand Slam tally to six.

Alcaraz was left to rue missed opportunities at key moments of a typically tight match between the two best players in the world, with his backhand failing him when he had chances to strike.

"Right now I have some points and some shots on my mind. For example, the backhand volley that I missed. I missed a few of the backhand volleys... which I'm really disappointed in," said Alcaraz.

"I would say that was the key because it was a really important moment that I didn't finish the point with the backhand volley... I think that was a really important shot that I didn't do well today." - AFP

## SHORTS

### Kane hails flawless campaign

**HARRY KANE** believes that England's current side are "as good as we've ever had" after the skipper wrapped up their record-breaking World Cup qualifying campaign with a 2-0 win against Albania yesterday.

Bayern Munich striker Kane struck twice in the closing stages in Tirana to give Thomas Tuchel's team a perfect eight successive Group K victories.

The 32-year-old has played in England sides that twice finished as European Championship runners-up, as well as reaching the World Cup semifinals.

But Kane believes that Tuchel has assembled the best group during his 10 years in the national team, labelling them as one of the favourites to win the World Cup next year.

"I think it's as good as we've ever had," Kane told *ITV*. "I think when you look at the starting 11, you look at the players coming off the bench, we're going to go into the tournament as

one of the favourites.

"We have to accept that. We've been like that now for the last few tournaments, and that's part and parcel of it.

"We've been building, we've had a great year together with the new coach, and now we look forward to obviously a big 2026," Kane said.

"I think we've set the standard now, especially in the last few camps, and we carried it on into this camp.

"It was an important win. You don't want to finish with a loss at the end of the year and then have to wait until March to play again. We can go away and enjoy this now."

### Reserve Les Bleus too good for Azerbaijan

**A SECOND-STRING** French side overcome a nervous start to beat Azerbaijan 3-1 away yesterday and wrap up their World Cup campaign after having already qualified.

Coach Didier Deschamps rotated his entire line-up after *Les Bleus* sealed their spot against Ukraine last week.

France top Europe's Group D with 16 points from six games after goals by Jean-Philippe Mateta and Maghnes Aklouché plus an own goal from Shakhruddin Magomedaliyev helped them recover from Renat Dadashov's opener.

The players who came in lacked cohesion at times but showed no shortage of motivation, with several squad places still up for grabs for the tournament in the United States, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19.

The win ensured France head into the next phase with momentum and they will be seeded for the Dec 5 World Cup draw.

France were stunned in the fourth minute when Dadashov latched onto a cross from Rahman Dashdamirov, who had caught Malo Gusto off guard on the left flank.

Gusto made up for his error in the 17th minute with a pinpoint cross for Mateta, who headed home to equalise. Aklouché fired home from six yards after another assist by Gusto.

Four minutes after having a goal ruled out, Thuram thought he had made it 3-1 on the stroke of halftime but it was goalkeeper Magomedaliyev who deflected the ball into his own goal.

France had several chances in the second half but Azerbaijan defended solidly.

## Congo keep World Cup dream alive

**DEMOCRATIC** Republic of Congo ended Nigeria's hopes of qualifying for the 2026 World Cup with a penalty shootout victory in the African playoffs final yesterday.

DR Congo and Nigeria drew 1-1 after extra-time in the tie in Rabat and the central Africans won 4-3 on penalties to book a place in inter-confederation playoffs in Mexico next March.

In a nerve-riddled shootout in which four spot-kicks were saved and another missed, DR Congo captain Chancel Mbemba defied a bottle thrown toward him and torrential rain to convert the winning penalty as his country seek a return to the global showpiece after a lengthy absence.

Two of the

saves were made by substitute goalkeeper Timothy Fayulu, who replaced Lionel M'Pasi in the final minute of extra-time.

DR Congo was called Zaire when the country qualified for the only time in 1974. It was not a happy debut as they failed to score, and conceded 14 goals, including nine against Yugoslavia.



Congo's Chancel Mbemba celebrates after scoring the winning goal in the penalty shootout against Nigeria yesterday. - REUTERS/SPIC

Nigeria lie 19 places above DR Congo in the world rankings and were pre-match favourites, but DR Congo recovered from conceding early to look the likelier winners the longer the match proceeded.

Nigeria, who needed 78 minutes to break the scoring deadlock in a 4-1 semifinals victory over Gabon three days ago, were ahead within three minutes against the Congolese.

A cross was only partially cleared and a hard, low shot from outside the area by Brentford midfielder Frank Onyeka was deflected by Burnley defender Axel Tuanzebe past M'Pasi.

DR Congo slowly recovered from the shock of falling behind so early against the Super Eagles and levelled after 32 minutes.

Veteran forward Cedric Bakambu crossed and when Nigeria captain Wilfred Ndidi failed to control the ball in the six-yard box, Mechak Elia pounced to beat goalkeeper Stanley Nwabali.

Victory qualifies the Congolese for a six-nation inter-confederation mini-tournament in Guadalajara and Monterrey from March 23.

The African representatives are the third nation to secure a place after Bolivia and New Caledonia, and the other three slots will be filled today for a competition that excludes Europe.

Iraq host the United Arab Emirates in Basra after the first leg of the Asian decider finished 1-1 last Thursday in Abu Dhabi.

Jamaica and Panama are the frontrunners to be the two Central America/Caribbean flag-bearers, but Suriname, Curacao, Honduras, Haiti and Costa Rica are other possible qualifiers.

The two highest ranked teams will receive byes into single-match finals while the other four meet in single-match semifinals. The winners of the two finals go to the World Cup. - AFP

Happy Congo fans inside the stadium after the match. - REUTERS/SPIC

## Parrott hattrick books Ireland playoff spot over Hungary

**A 96TH-MINUTE** Troy Parrott goal to complete his hattrick booked Ireland a spot in the playoffs for next year's World Cup with a thrilling 3-2 comeback victory over their nearest Group F rivals Hungary in a must-win game in Budapest.

Higher-ranked Hungary just needed a draw to secure second place and led 2-1 at half-time thanks to goals from Daniel Lukacs and Barnabas Varga, but Parrott's second goal of the night on 80 minutes and last-gasp winner ended the heartbroken hosts' qualification hopes.

Parrott had described his double in Thursday's shock 2-0 win over Portugal that set up the dramatic finale as the best night of his life and was in tears after yesterday topped

that.

"This is why we love football because things like this can happen. I love where I'm from, so this means the world to me," the AZ Alkmaar striker told national broadcaster *RTE* shortly after embracing his family in the stands.

"This is the first time I've cried in years... It's a fairytale, you can't even dream about something like that."

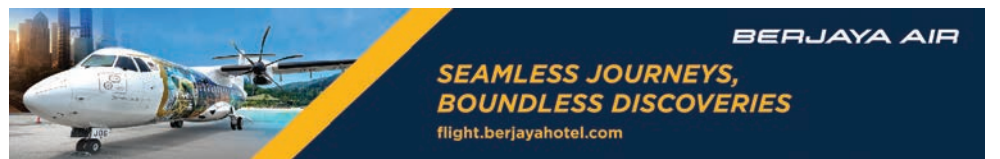
Hungary, who had high hopes of reaching a first World Cup in 40 years, got off to the perfect start when Lukacs flicked in a Dominik Szoboszlai short corner on four minutes, only for Parrott to equalise from the penalty spot on 15 minutes.

Caoimhin Kelleher kept the sides level with

a fine close range save from Roland Sallai but could do nothing on 37 minutes when Varga chested the ball down with his back to goal just outside the box, swivelled and unleashed a stunning left-foot half volley into the top corner.

Ireland looked out of gas until Parrott broke through to equalise again with 10 minutes to go and stabbed home his fifth goal in two games with a finish reminiscent of Robbie Keane's famous equaliser against Germany the last time Ireland played in a World Cup in 2002.

He was mobbed by exultant teammates and substitutes as Ireland moved within two single-leg playoff games in March from a trip to the United States, Mexico and Canada. - Reuters



**FRUSTRATED** Italy fans streamed out of the San Siro, bracing for more World Cup playoff drama, after their team slumped to a humiliating 4-1 defeat against Norway yesterday in their last qualifier.

Italy needed a nine-goal win to dislodge Norway from the top of Group I and secure direct qualification for the 2026 World Cup in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

It was an almost impossible task, but the *Azzurri* failed to clinch even a consolation victory as they suffered another bruising World Cup qualifying night.

The four-time world champions, who last lifted the trophy in 2006, now have to battle through the playoffs in March if they are to avoid missing the tournament for a third straight occasion.

The playoffs have not proven a happy hunting ground for Italy, who missed the past two World Cups in Russia and Qatar, both following playoff defeats.

"It would be depressing to watch a third straight World Cup without Italy. Almost a fifth in a row,

## Azzurri fans brace for more drama after mauling

because in 2010 and 2014 we didn't get past the group stage," said Luca Raggi, a 54-year-old consultant.

Fans' fears that Italy might fail to win their qualifying group were fuelled after a shock 3-0 defeat to Norway in June prompted the replacement of coach Luciano Spalletti with Gennaro Gattuso.

Italians, who grew up watching the national team reach the World Cup final in 1982, 1994 and 2006, now see a side seemingly lacking world-class players, with the exception of goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma.

"The game was a birthday gift for my 10-year-old son. He was happy to watch Italy, though he was more thrilled to see Haaland," said 57-year-old journalist Andrea Saronni.

Older supporters at the match bitterly observed that many Italian children had never seen Italy play

at a World Cup. Others suggested that Italy's rivals have been better at spotting and nurturing rising talent.

"It's also about players' culture. In other countries, being a national team standout still means something, but for our players, it appears no longer a motivation to raise their game," Saronni argued.

Four years ago, Italy again finished second in their qualifying group, this time behind Switzerland, and once more found themselves in the playoffs.

Drawn against unfancied North Macedonia in the semifinals, they were eliminated in shock fashion when Aleksandar Trajkovski struck deep into stoppage time.

In 2018, the *Azzurri* finished second in their qualifying group behind Spain and were forced into the playoffs, where a narrow 1-0 aggregate defeat to Sweden ended their hopes and left former goal-

keeper Gianluigi Buffon in tears at San Siro.

"I was here when we missed out against Sweden. You couldn't imagine being out of a World Cup. We were all stunned, now it seems normal," said Raggi.

Between those two failures, Italy were crowned European champions in 2021, a triumph that only made their World Cup absences feel all the more surreal.

Even if the current squad cannot be compared to the great Italy sides of the past, many fans believe that if they could just get to the tournament in North America, anything could happen.

"Italy overperformed when we won the Euros in 2021, everyone played above their average. That can always happen. But for it to happen, you first need to be there," said 40-year-old Pasquale Di Bello. - Reuters

# Marauding Vikings

Haaland's Norway thump sorry Italy to reach first World Cup since 1998

**NORWAY** qualified for their first World Cup since 1998 after Erling Haaland struck again in a 4-1 thumping of Italy yesterday which sealed a spot in next summer's finals in the United States, Canada and Mexico.

Haaland scored the decisive brace in the space of seconds at a soaking San Siro for Norway, who completed Group I with a perfect 24 points from their eight qualifying matches.

Norway would have had to lose by nine goals or more in order to be overtaken by Italy for the group's only automatic place for next summer's finals in North America, but Stale Solbakken's side ended their campaign in glorious fashion in front of 70,000 people.

However, Solbakken was coy as to his powerful team's chances now that a 28-year weight has come to an end.

"Let's see the draw first... I haven't even thought about it. For me, it (tonight) was to go from 99% to 100% and now we have done it in a great way," Solbakken told reporters.

"Let's see what the draw brings



Norway's team players and staff celebrate their victory at the end of their match against Italy yesterday. - AFP/PICT

before we go into those questions." Haaland's father Alf-Inge was still an international player when Norway last competed in the World Cup 27 years ago, a tournament won by a Zinedine Zidane-inspired France.

And the Manchester City striker, called a "goal machine" by Solbakken, will be one of the players to watch in North America after smashing in 16 goals during qualifying.

The 25-year-old is averaging more than a goal a game for club and country this season and was typically ruth-

less when presented with his opportunities to both put Norway ahead and then double their lead in the 78th and 79th minutes.

Pio Esposito opened the scoring for Italy in the 11th minute, but once Antonio Nusa levelled with a thumping strike in the 63rd minute, there was only one team who looked like winning, and Jorgen Strand Larsen's brilliant individual goal completed the rout in stoppage time.

Italy will head to the playoffs in March after finishing the group six

points behind Norway following two bracing defeats to Solbakken's team, and exited the San Siro field to a hail of whistles from the few home fans who had stayed until the end.

Coach Gennaro Gattuso apologised to supporters during his short interview with public broadcaster RAI and was clearly concerned about the second half collapse.

"It's worrying, I'd be a liar to say that it doesn't concern me, because when you have nights like this it's much easier if you can stay together,

improve the day to day," said Gattuso. "What worries me is that we'll next see each other in three months' time."

Italy's bid for direct qualification was compromised from their opening match against Norway, a 3-0 defeat which ended Luciano Spalletti's reign as coach.

Since Gattuso took over, the *Azzurri* have performed better but there is no-one in their team of the class of Haaland, a shame for a country which has produced some of the game's best-ever players. - AFP

## Portugal thrash Armenia to book World Cup ticket

**PORTUGAL** crushed Armenia 9-1 despite the absence of suspended talisman Cristiano Ronaldo yesterday to clinch qualification for the 2026 World Cup finals.

Manchester United's Bruno Fernandes and Paris Saint-Germain's Joao Neves both scored a hattrick as Roberto Martinez's side racked up a huge win in Porto to top Group F.

Renato Veiga got the ball rolling for Portugal, with Goncalo Ramos and Francisco Conceicao also on the scoresheet.

After a draw in Hungary in October and a surprise defeat in Ireland on Thursday, in which Ronaldo was sent off, Portugal wrapped up qualification at the third attempt in their final group match.

They will compete in a seventh consecutive edition of the World Cup, a tournament which the

Euro 2016 champions are yet to win.

"We always want to win in the same way - to be convincing and control the game. It's not always possible, but today we were effective and achieved a good victory," said Fernandes.

With midfielder Fernandes playing a key role throughout, Portugal made a quick start by scoring in the seventh minute.

Fernandes's vicious inswinging freekick from just outside the left side of the box was pushed onto the post by goalkeeper Henri Avagyan but Veiga was on hand to head home the rebound.

The visitors shocked the hosts by scoring on their first attack to equalise, with Grant-Leon Ranos crossing for Armenia captain Eduard Spertsyanyan to strike.

However, Portugal quickly stepped up a gear and racked up an unassailable lead. Paris Saint-

Germain striker Ramos intercepted a back pass and squeezed home his country's second after rounding Avagyan.

Portugal put together a tidy move for their third, with Neves blasting home from the edge of the box after being teed up by Fernandes.

Neves netted a spectacular second with a freekick which flew into the top corner, leaving Avagyan with no chance.

Fernandes added the fifth in first half stoppage time with a low penalty after Ruben Dias was fouled.

The Manchester United midfielder continued where he left off after the break, slotting home his second after being fed by Ramos.

Fernandes completed his hattrick from the penalty spot after debutant substitute Carlos Forbs was felled.

Neves also completed his treble for Portugal's eighth goal, smashing home after Veiga headed Fernandes's cross into his path.

"The most important thing was qualifying for the World Cup," said Neves, after scoring his first goals for his country.

"For me, as I always say, the team always comes before the individual. I'm very happy to have scored my first goal for the national team, and my second and third as well."

Juventus forward Conceicao added the ninth in stoppage time to seal one of his country's biggest-ever victories.

"Now we can truly dream about the World Cup, I was very pleased with the players' response (after the Ireland defeat)," said Martinez.

"We're at the World Cup! Let's go, Portugal!" wrote Ronaldo on social media platform X. - AFP

## RESULTS

## WORLD CUP QUALIFIERS (EUROPE)

**Group D: Azerbaijan 1** (Dadasov 4) **France 3** (Mateta 17, Akliouche 30, Magomedaliyev 45-og), **Ukraine 2** (Zubkov 83, Hutsuliak 90+3) **Iceland 0**.

**Group F: Portugal 9** (Veiga 7, Ramos 28, Neves 30, 41, 81, Fernandes 45+3-pen, 52, 72-pen, Conceicao 90+2) **Armenia 1** (Spertsyan 18), **Hungary 2** (Lukacs 4, Varga 37) **Ireland 3** (Parrott 15-pen, 80, 90+6).

**Group I: Italy 1** (Esposito 11) **Norway 4** (Nusa 63, Haaland 78, 79, Strand Larsen 90+3), **Israel 4** (Turgeman 21-pen, Revivo 65, E. Peretz 85, Baboglo 88-og) **Moldova 1** (Nicolaescu 37).

**Group K: Albania 0** **England 2** (Kane 74, 82), **Serbia 2** (Katai 49, Stankovic 60) **Latvia 1** (Gutkovskis 12).

**AFRICA: Nigeria 1** **Congo 1** (Congo win 5-4 on penalties).

## Combined training suggestion

**THE** Road to Gold (RTG) Committee has proposed that players under the auspices of the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) train together with professional shuttlers starting from early next year.

Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh said the proposal aims to create more competition between BAM shuttlers and the professionals listed under the RTG programme.

"If we don't let them spar together, I feel that they will be lacking in competitiveness... their ranking is almost similar. It will be a loss if we do not take advantage of this opportunity.

"So, the RTG is preparing the ecosystem and discussing with BAM to make sure they have special courts reserved for this purpose," she told a media conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Based on the latest RTG list, the national shuttlers training under the BAM umbrella are Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik and Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun (men's doubles), Pearly Tan-M. Thinaah (women's doubles) and Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei (mixed doubles).

Among the professional shuttlers are Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin Rumsani (men's doubles) and Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai Jemie.

In related news, national women's doubles stars and current world No. 2 Pearly Tan-M. Thinaah, fresh from their third World Tour title triumph of the season in the Japan Masters 2025 in Kumamoto on Sunday, insist they are far from done.

Thinaah, reflecting on their 22-20, 21-19 victory over Japan's Rin Iwanaga-Kie Nakanishi in the Super 500 tournament final at the Kumamoto Prefectural Gymnasium, said they will enjoy the moment, but won't get carried away.

"We're really happy with the win, but there are still many things we need to learn and improve on.

"For now, we'll celebrate this moment, stay grounded, and stay focused on the next one," she said in a brief statement shared by the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) yesterday.

The 2025 World Championships runners-up, who had also bagged the Thailand and Arctic Open titles this year, now lead Iwanaga-Nakanishi 7-2 in head-to-head meetings.

Their latest triumph in Japan also saw them pocket USD37,525 (RM155,000). – Bernama

# Cklamovski stays focused

Harimau Malaya coach surprised by exit talk ahead of Nepal clash

**A**USTRALIAN Peter Cklamovski is adamant that he won't allow speculation that his days as the national football head coach are numbered to distract him from the task at hand.

The 47-year-old said he is not the least bothered by the speculation, which has gone viral on social media.

"It was a bit of a surprise to me, but that's football and things like that can happen. What's most important for me now is about today (the team's preparation)... then, making sure we do the right thing tomorrow and get all three points.

"Finishing this year at the top (of the standings) and continuing to give the country confidence in the team we are building.

"That's all I'm thinking about right now," he told reporters at a pre-match press conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Malaysia will take on Nepal in their fifth Group F match in the 2027 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup Qualifiers at the National Stadium

in Bukit Jalil today, and Cklamovski's sights are firmly set on his men trooping out with full points.

On Saturday, Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) acting president Datuk Mohd Yusoff Mahadi reportedly said that news about Cklamovski's future was nothing more than wild speculation played up by external parties.

Referring to today's match, Cklamovski said his men are ready to go full throttle this time, having defeated Nepal 2-0 in their opening group match in March.

"I've challenged my men to play the best football and score as many goals as they can. They (Nepal) have come with a new manager (Hari Khadka) and they will fight to disrupt us, but the most important thing is that we have to control the game," said Cklamovski.

Nepal will not underestimate the strength and quality of the Harimau Malaya squad despite the home team missing seven of their heritage players for tomorrow's Group F match in the 2027 Asian Football Confederation (AFC) Asian Cup

Qualifiers.

In fact, Nepal skipper Kiran Kumar Limbu is expecting another torrid time today.

"Last time, they had seven heritage players and were stronger. But now, even without them, I think the local players have just as much quality.

"They are a strong side and play in a high-quality league here. But we are ready and we're not going to make the same mistakes again," the 35-year-old goalkeeper said yesterday.

Kiran Kumar also believes that their recent friendly against Bangladesh helped new coach Khadka identify the starting XI to face Harimau Malaya today.

Malaysia will play their fifth Group F match against Nepal without the benefit of any friendly matches, having only undergone a centralised training camp at home.

After four matches, Malaysia top Group F with 12 points, followed by Vietnam (9pts), Laos (3) and Nepal, who have nothing to show for after losing all four matches. – Bernama



National sprinter, Muhammad Zumar Azman (centre) in action in the men's 100-meter qualifying event yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC

## Duo in Deaflympics 100m semifinals

**MALAYSIA'S** athletics squad received an early boost at the 2025 Deaflympics when Southeast Asia's deaf sprint king, Muhammad Zamir Azman, together with teammate Hazrul Shah Hamri, advanced to the men's 100m semifinals at the Komazawa Metropolitan Stadium in Tokyo yesterday.

Both athletes, making their debut at the prestigious Games, did not finish their respective heats in the top two but still progressed after ranking among the next eight fastest runners for the next round.

Met after the race, Muhammad Zamir admitted he was slightly "distracted" while waiting for the

start "light" signal, causing him to break out from the starting blocks later than usual.

"If we follow the one in Jakarta, my record was 11.06s because at the equator, physically, I perform better. But here it's cold.

"I expect the challenge will come from athletes from the United States, Japan and Estonia, but I will still do my best to qualify for the final," he told reporters.

Hazrul Shah described qualifying for the semifinals as a morale booster and stressed that his focus now is solely on "stealing" a place in the final.

"Whatever advice the coach gives, I will surely follow, and for myself, I hope to run below 11s for

tomorrow's semifinal," he said.

Earlier, Muhammad Zamir clocked 11.58s in Heat 3, far from his personal best of 11.06s recorded at the Jakarta Deaf SEA Games last August.

Hazrul Shah registered 11.53s in Heat 4, also below his best performance of 11.09s.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Zamir's twin brother, Muhammad Zumar, exited in the early round after posting 11.64s, while national women's representative Nur Andrina Zainudin also failed to advance after recording 13.49s.

Both athletes will continue their challenge in the 200m event. – Bernama

## Red Giants to appeal FAM punishment

**SELANGOR FC** will submit an appeal to the Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) over the punishment imposed on them following a "heated" incident involving fan behaviour in the FA Cup quarterfinals, second-leg tie against Negeri Sembilan FC at Petaling Jaya City Council Stadium, Kelana Jaya, on Oct 29.

On Saturday, Selangor were fined RM100,000 and ordered to play behind closed doors in the second leg of this season's FA Cup semifinal against Sabah FC on Nov 30 and their first home match for the same competition next season.

State Youth, Sports and Entrepreneurship Committee chairman Mohd Najwan Halimi said that the Selangor FC team management will submit the appeal and issue a statement soon.

"At the state government level, we have advised the club's management to appeal and review the case," he told reporters at the lobby of Wisma Negeri Selangor in Shah Aman yesterday.

"We (the state government) have also requested the club management to review the punishment meted out, and object to any inaccurate allegations."

Mohd Najwan, who described the punishment imposed on the Red Giants as "a little stiff and excessive", hopes that the FAM will consider their appeal, while advising fans to be more disciplined.

On Saturday (Nov 15), FAM disciplinary committee chairman Datuk Baljit Singh Sidhu, in meeting out the punishment, said Selangor FC, who advanced to the semifinals this season with a 6-3 aggregate win over Negeri Sembilan, were fined RM100,000 for repeated offences under Article 42, Paragraph 1 of the FAM Disciplinary Code. – Bernama



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SCAN ME



# Courting trouble

*Tuchel unimpressed as Bellingham reaction takes shine off England win*

England's Jude Bellingham (front row, right) and teammates look on from the bench during the World Cup European qualifiers against Albania yesterday. - REUTERS/PIC

BY RICHARD JOLLY

**I**T was the return that came with a rebuke. Jude Bellingham and Thomas Tuchel are reunited but, for the second time in a few months, the England manager found fault with the resident superstar's behaviour.

This time, at least, he did not deem him "repulsive". But the hint was that he had been too selfish. The way his comeback ended prompted Tuchel to criticise him again.

If England, already qualified for the World Cup, had little to play for besides a perfect record they sustained with an imperfect performance, Bellingham had plenty to gain, or indeed lose.

A first start for his country since June could not be pronounced an unqualified success: not when Tuchel deemed his reaction to being removed egotistical.

The England manager had warned of the dangers of red cards that would incur a suspension for the World Cup. Bellingham was hauled off soon after he was booked for fouling Armando Broja. He was non-plussed. And Tuchel, in turn, was unimpressed.

"I saw that he was not happy," he said. "I don't want to make it bigger at the moment than it is. I think to a certain degree, if you have players like Jude, who are so competitive, they will never like it. But he has to accept it."

"His friend is waiting on the sideline. We are about standards and level, and commitment to and respect to each other, so someone is waiting outside, and we will not change our decision just because someone is waving their arms."

It was proof, if nothing else that things

can revolve around Bellingham. There is a theory that England need Bellingham starting to win the World Cup. They required Harry Kane's finishing to win in Albania, the captain's nine-minute double taking him past Pele and up to 78 goals in international football. And yet Bellingham commanded the attention, for better and worse.

It was a sign of his status that Kristjan Asllani swapped shirts with him at the interval; presumably, the Albania midfielder would not have made the same request if he had instead been pitted against Morgan Rogers.

"I'm a bit old school, I thought never at halftime," added Tuchel.

If it reflected Bellingham's fame, his booking may have been an indication of a determination to impress.

His most notable contribution in the first half-hour was a terrific challenge on Arber Hoxha just outside his box. He showed an assiduous commitment to tracking back.

It was not initially accompanied by a conviction in the possession, and it was only after he grew into the game that he fashioned two of the best chances England created in open play: Jarrod Bowen and Eberechi Eze were both denied by Thomas Strakosha.

And yet Bellingham's was a mixed display: there was insufficient evidence to say that England become world-beaters simply by slotting him back into the side.

There were times, too, when he and Kane both dropped deep which, as Tuchel did had not started his quickest wingers, meant England lacked anyone running in behind Albania's defence. This was too reminiscent of Euro 2024.

And Kane's double came courtesy of two substitutes, not the man restored to the No.

10 role. Bukayo Saka set up a goal 12 minutes after his introduction, Marcus Rashford seven after he came on.

Pele is now behind him. "This is cherry on everything, that he overcomes Pele today," said Tuchel.

England finished stronger than they started. The raiding Declan Rice was the early threat, twice coming close. The buccaneering Nico O'Reilly provided some forward thrust with his bursts from leftback. Otherwise, however, it was a muted beginning. Nor was it smooth progress thereafter.

"I liked our attitude, I liked the work rate, again, to overcome difficult moments together is so important, that not everything goes non-stop smoothly," Tuchel said.

His side lost control in part of the second half, looking less secure after Rice went off. Tuchel responded by summoning Elliot Anderson after Adam Wharton flirted with a red card.

"I learned about the players," Tuchel added. This was his most experimental line-up to date.

There was a belated debut for Jarell Quansah, a first start for Wharton, just a fourth cap for Dean Henderson.

O'Reilly, one of only four to keep his place, won his second. Another was John Stones, who spent the first half in the hybrid role he can occupy for Manchester City, stepping into midfield.

Albania's sharpness on the break indicated why they came second in the group, but they suffered their first defeat since March.

For Tuchel, whose reign began with a 2-0 win against Albania, it was a repeat result. "And it's of course never finished," he said. So, too, the saga of him and Bellingham. - The Independent



Victory in defeat

Story on page 28



Marauding Vikings

Story on page 30