



Wellness and aesthetic industry scrutinised for exploitation

Vulnerable seniors being lured by fear-driven health claims, pressured into costly long-term prepaid packages and left with little recourse: Fomca

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Emergency safeguards ensure smooth SPM exam amid flood woes

Steps taken include moving at-risk candidates to school hostels, getting daily weather updates and securing exam papers at police stations.

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Sabah voters prioritise stability over personality, party loyalty

Electorate wants government that can minimise unpredictability, secure federal backing and deliver steady development: Analyst

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SPM examination officers moving examination papers to an alternative venue after floodwater cut off access to the examination hall of SMK Syed Hussein in Arau, Perlis yesterday. – BERNAMAPIC



Flood alert up north

Rainbands causing deluge in southern Thailand could extend southwards, increasing risk of continuous rainfall, inundation and slope failures in Perlis, Kedah and northern Perak, warns expert.

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Thailand floods could spill over into Malaysia: Experts

► 'High-risk basins, low-lying towns in northern states vulnerable'

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PETALING JAYA: Northern Peninsular Malaysia is on alert as experts say severe floods in Hat Yai, southern Thailand, could spill over into Perlis, Kedah, and northern Perak in the coming days.

The warnings come amid the ongoing northeast monsoon, which already heightens the risk of heavy rainfall and flash floods.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia

environmental and climate systems researcher Prof Dr Mohd Fadhil Md Din said the intensity of the Hat Yai floods is significant enough to influence northern Malaysia.

"The floods were driven by an active monsoon trough that produced very heavy rain, a record 335mm in a single day on Nov 21 and about 630mm over three days from Nov 19 to Nov 21.

"These rainbands could extend into northern Peninsular Malaysia, increasing the risk of continuous rainfall, flash floods and slope failures."

He added that Malaysia has seen thousands of evacuations and several landslides in Perlis so far, signalling saturated soil and overburdened drainage systems.

"The immediate concern lies in several high-risk basins and low-lying towns. The focus should be on

the Muda, Perlis and Kerian basins, and areas such as Alor Setar, Kangar and Seberang Perai Utara.

"These places are vulnerable to fast-onset flooding, especially if rainbands continue to shift southwards."

Fadhil also said meteorological patterns in southern Thailand often extend into northern Malaysia due to semi-low-pressure alignment.

"When rainbands remain locked in the north, the Kedah-Bintang and Titiwangsa ranges could intensify rainfall on the slopes. This increases the risk of flash floods, small river overflows and landslides in Hulu Perak, Padang Terap, Kubang Pasu and other low-lying alluvial areas."

Meanwhile, Universiti Malaysia Kelantan earth science specialist Prof Dr Aweng Eh Rak said Malaysia is likely to see only minor spillover effects from Hat Yai.

"We are experiencing the northeast monsoon at the same time, so of course the extreme weather in Hat Yai has some effect on the states mentioned, but I think it is only a slight increase in rainfall."

"It is actually a rain bomb; unusually high rainfall in a short period. Travellers should avoid visiting southern Thai districts until the northeast monsoon ends. Traders and residents could increase their level of preparedness compared with normal flood preparation," he said, adding that the northeast monsoon is expected to last until March.

Hat Yai and southern Songkhla have recorded intense rainfall and disaster zones have been declared across affected districts. Officials estimate about 4,000 Malaysians have been affected, with some still stranded due to rising waters and disrupted transport.

King orders full provision of aid

KUALA LUMPUR: His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim the King of Malaysia has ordered that all essential needs of flood evacuees at temporary relief centres be fully provided, as the number of displaced people continues to rise nationwide.

In a statement via the Royal Press Office, His Majesty instructed the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) to ensure all centres remain safe, well-maintained and adequately stocked with food, medical aid and basic necessities.

The King also urged the public to comply with evacuation orders and avoid high-risk areas, while expressing appreciation to security forces, rescue teams and volunteers assisting affected communities.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim also voiced confidence in Nadma's level of preparedness. He said the agency had been holding regular coordination meetings, led by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamid, and that relief centres had opened promptly to support evacuees.

Anwar said he is monitoring the flood situation twice daily and has instructed all agencies to mobilise maximum resources to ease the burden on evacuees.

He acknowledged past delays in flood mitigation projects due to land issues, contractual constraints and tender processes but added that several projects are now progressing, with completed works in parts of Kelantan already reducing flood impacts.

He also said the current situation appears to involve flash floods, with some centres reopening and others closing as conditions fluctuate.

Anwar also expressed concern over soil erosion in Kuala Lumpur, which has affected homes and caused trees to topple. — Bernama

Health Ministry activates plan to support, treat evacuees

BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI AND FAIZ RUZMAN
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KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry has raised the alarm on risks of leptospirosis, influenza and other diseases as floodwaters recede.

Its minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said as of Monday, 629 flood victims had been examined at temporary evacuation centres.

He added that Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre data showed 78 cases of acute respiratory infection, 16 skin infections, two acute gastroenteritis cases and one conjunctivitis case among evacuees.

"No evacuees required hospital referral and no outbreaks have been reported," he said after officiating at the Malaysia International Healthcare Megatrends event.

He also said the ministry had anticipated worsening flood conditions and activated a full preparedness plan to ensure uninterrupted healthcare services.

"Alternative health facilities have been identified should primary facilities be disrupted, while state health departments have updated assets, vehicles and medical supplies.

"Medicine stocks are sufficient for at least three months, with extra reserves available from concession suppliers."

Dzulkefly said he visited his Kuala Selangor constituency yesterday, where 954 residents from 231 families were affected by flood and are sheltering at Sekolah Kebangsaan Desa Aman, while another 22 evacuees from three families were placed at the Balai Raya Kampung Jaya Setia evacuation centre.

He added that the ministry is rolling out several key measures under its action plan to ensure health facilities remain safe and fully operational with sufficient manpower, equipment and logistics.

"Specialised medical teams are on



Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Fadillah Yusof and Dzulkefly visiting an exhibition during the event at Plenary Hall, Level 1, Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre. — ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

standby, including the Rapid Assessment Team, Rapid Response Team (RRT) and Medical Emergency Response Team, supported by mental health and psychosocial support units.

"These teams conduct health assessments, provide treatment at the relief centres and monitor for diseases. Environmental inspections and psychosocial support are also part of their duties."

He said inspections at the evacuation centres are ongoing, with all identified locations checked and assessed for suitability, while public health activities are being carried out with other agencies.

"While no new outbreaks have been reported, we remain cautious due to rising (cases of) influenza and other illnesses.

"We also remind the public to stay alert to diseases such as leptospirosis, especially as floodwaters recede."

Forty eight emergency medical teams, comprising 16 medical RRTs and 32 health RRTs, have been

mobilised to provide medical services and disease prevention for individuals affected by the floods.

The Meteorological Department issued a Continuous Rainfall Warning at Danger Level (Red) on Monday at 2pm for Kedah (Langkawi, Kubang Pasu, Kota Setar, Pokok Sena, Padang Terap, Yan, Pendang and Sik), Kelantan (Tumpat, Pasir Mas, Kota Bharu, Bachok, Machang and Pasir Puteh) and Terengganu (Besut), effective until today.

A Continuous Rainfall Warning at Alert Level (Orange) was also issued on Monday for Kedah, Penang, Perak, Kelantan and Terengganu until today.

As of 10.30am yesterday, 20,146 flood victims sought refuge at 119 relief centres across eight states, according to reports from the Social Welfare Department's InfoBencana, the Irrigation and Drainage Department's InfoBanjir and state disaster management secretariats.

Kelantan recorded 9,959 evacuees from 3,643 families across 40 relief

centres, followed by Selangor with 2,697 evacuees in 19 centres and Perak with 2,678 evacuees across 29 centres.

Perlis reported 2,694 evacuees, while Kedah had 1,632 evacuees in 12 centres, with four rivers above danger levels.

Penang reported 366 evacuees, Terengganu reported 97 evacuees at one centre and Pahang 23 evacuees after opening a relief centre in Raub. InfoBanjir reported several critical river readings, including Sungai Golok in Rantau Panjang rising to 8.55m, exceeding the danger mark by 0.55m.

In Pahang, Sungai Kuala Mendang in Lipis remained above the danger level at 85.35m, while Sungai Telemong in Bentong showed a downward trend at 98.19m, still above its alert threshold.

Sungai Bidor in Changkat Jong, Perak reached 4.59m, far above its normal level of around 2m, and Sungai Slim in Slim River stood at 27.82m compared with its normal 23.50m.

Senior political sec to PM resigns

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's senior political secretary Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin resigned yesterday amid public uproar over a support letter he allegedly issued for contractors involved in a hospital construction project.

Shamsul said in a statement on social media he stepped down in response to attempts to attack his reputation and undermine the Madani government.

"I understand there has been an attempt to attack me with matters that could damage the image of the Madani government.

"Therefore, I have decided to defend myself from these attacks. This morning, I submitted my letter of resignation to the prime minister.

"I would like to thank him for the trust he has placed in me."

He did not address the allegations directly but his resignation comes just days after Anwar defended not removing him over the disputed support letter for contractors in a hospital project. — By Harith Kamal

SPM proceeds smoothly amid flood safeguards

➤ Early risk mapping, relocations and multi-agency coordination ensure the examination continues despite rising waters, says education director-general

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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PUTRAJAYA: As the SPM 2025 examination kicked off yesterday at the height of the monsoon season, the Education Ministry has rolled out an extensive emergency playbook to ensure not a single candidate is left stranded by rising waters.

Education director-general Dr Mohd Azam Ahmad said 259 candidates had been flagged as at risk due to flooding, with most already moved to school hostels ahead of the examination.

"We have identified centres at risk and early relocation arrangements have been made," he said after visiting SMK Putrajaya Presint 11(1) yesterday.

He said the ministry began mapping flood risks as early as September, pinpointing students living near rivers and in known flood-prone zones.

"Some of the students were relocated in advance to nearby hostels to prevent the risk of missing out on the exam."

Mohd Azam said the early intervention eased families' anxieties and ensured candidates' safety as continuous rainfall is expected in several states.

"We conducted a flood simulation exercise in Kuala Terengganu in September and October to anticipate challenges.

"We are also in constant communication with MetMalaysia for daily weather updates," he added.

For centres located near overflowing rivers, alternative safeguards have been activated, including securing examination papers at police stations.

"If a school hall is used as a temporary flood relief centre, the exam can be moved to classrooms or alternative centres. Plans are in place for every scenario," he said.

All 16 state education departments have confirmed that the SPM examination proceeded as scheduled yesterday.

Mohd Azam credited the seamless coordination between agencies, schools, parents and community groups.

"These proactive steps ensure that SPM



Mohd Azam addresses SPM candidates during a visit to Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Putrajaya Presint 11(1) yesterday. A total of 413,372 candidates are sitting for the exam. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

2025 can be carried out smoothly despite the seasonal challenges," he said.

On Nov 23, Education Minister Datuk Fadhlina Sidek confirmed that Ops Payung had also been activated following flooding in multiple states.

The operation involves coordination with the National Security Council, police, Fire and Rescue Department and other agencies to ensure candidates' safety is closely monitored.

This year marks the return of SPM to its traditional November-December window after several years of pandemic adjustments.

A total of 413,372 candidates are sitting for the examination – comprising 358,817 from government schools, 8,051 from government-linked agencies, 6,676 from state religious schools, 13,836 from private schools, 23,741 private candidates and 2,251 from independent religious schools.

Mohd Azam also addressed circulating rumours of leaked SPM papers, which gained traction on social media via advertisements offering guaranteed grades.

"From what I have seen, we have not received any official reports. Such information was obtained from social media," he said, adding that the matter is being handled by the Malaysian Examinations Board (MEB).

"I am confident they have procedures in place because I have served as director myself. We have established protocols to address such matters. For now, we believe SPM questions remain secure," he said, urging candidates not to be distracted by unverified claims.

The ministry, with the MEB, state and district education offices and agencies including the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma), Civil Defence Force, Fire and Rescue Department and police, are providing full support to candidates and exam personnel.

SPM 2025 runs from Nov 3 to Dec 23, covering nearly a month of examinations beginning with oral assessments before yesterday's Bahasa Melayu Paper 1.

The total number of candidates has risen by about 2.6% from the 402,956 last year.

Contingency plans keep candidates on track

IPOH: The SPM examination will not be postponed despite flooding in several states, as the authorities have contingency measures in place to deal with the situation, said Deputy Education Minister Wong Kah Woh.

He said the Education Ministry has a complete set of standard operating procedures (SOP) and mechanisms to ensure candidates can sit for the examination safely, including the activation of Ops Payung.

"As I mentioned earlier, we have long made the necessary preparations to ensure that the SPM can proceed smoothly and we have proven that we can ensure our students attend the SPM with the existing SOP.

"So the ministry is confident that with the existing SOP, circulars and the activation of Ops

Payung if floods occur, we will be able to handle the situation and ensure the examination runs smoothly," he said at a press conference after visiting the first day of the SPM examination at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Raja Chulan here yesterday.

He said measures under Ops Payung include transport into and out of examination centres, relocating examination centres to allow candidates to sit for their papers at unaffected centres, temporary placement of flood-affected candidates at school hostels or temporary relief centres and the use of alternative exam centres for schools affected by floods.

Wong said as of this morning, 317 SPM candidates in seven states were affected by floods – Kelantan (72), Penang (6), Kedah (24),

Terengganu (2), Perlis (45), Perak (167) and Selangor (1).

"So far, four exam centres have been opened – one in the Tumpat district in Kelantan and two in Kulim and Bandar Baharu (Kedah). I was also informed this morning by the state director that there is a case in Perak involving Sekolah Menengah Tahfiz Darul Ridzuan, Pangkor, with 20 affected candidates.

"But the students affected there is because of a landslide, not flooding."

Perak education director Zulkafli Mohamed Mokhtar said the students will sit for the exam at Sekolah Menengah Pangkor, which is adjacent to the *tahfiz* school. – Bernama

NGO aid must follow set procedures: Nadma

TUMPAT: Nadma has welcomed assistance from NGOs for flood victims, but stressed that all aid must comply with established procedures.

Nadma director-general Meor Ismail Meor Akim said the guidelines are necessary to prevent supplies from being concentrated at only one temporary relief centre and ensure they are distributed to all affected areas.

"We welcome all assistance from NGOs – there are no restrictions – but every contribution must follow procedures.

"This is not about control, it's about ensuring coordination. All aid must go through the state or district Disaster Operations Control Centre or the district police chief as the disaster operations commander at the incident control post," he told reporters during a visit to the relief centre at SMK Geting.

He said Nadma has received only one complaint so far about NGO-donated aid not being distributed because procedures were not followed.

Meanwhile, Meor Ismail said manpower and security agency assets would be increased at any time if flooding worsens.

"Currently, we have 103,500 personnel strength, including 20,600 police officers, 15,640 firefighters and 15,390 members of the Civil Defence Force. We also have 39,687 assets, including 34,092 life jackets, 25 helicopters and 1,172 trucks," he said.

As of yesterday morning, 20,146 flood victims were housed at 119 centres across eight states, with Pahang the latest to be affected.

The northeast monsoon began on Nov 13 and is expected to continue until March next year. – Bernama

Swift response averts disruption

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: SPM candidates at SMK Jitra, Kedah were caught off guard yesterday when flash floods swept through the school compound and part of the examination hall.

In a statement, the Kedah state education department said during the Bahasa Melayu Paper 1, water began rising in the school grounds, prompting officers from the MEB to act immediately.

The statement said 17 visual arts education candidates were safely moved to SMK Tanjung Pauh to ensure the examination could continue without disruption and in full compliance with MEB rules.

"For the Bahasa Melayu Paper 2, all 163 SMK Jitra candidates, including private candidates, were relocated to SMK Bandar Baru Darulaman, which had been prepared earlier as an alternative examination centre.

"The relocation process was efficiently handled by the school with help from police vehicles, teachers' transport and parents, and proceeded smoothly."

The school, together with the state education department and district education office will continue to monitor water levels and that all logistical, safety and examination procedures were properly maintained.

The state education department praised the swift efforts of the school, district education office and security staff in safeguarding students and keeping the SPM examination running as scheduled.

The department said the incident serves as a reminder of the need for vigilance and preparedness, ensuring that students' safety and exam integrity remain a priority even in unexpected situations.



'Voters see political turbulence as disruption'

➤ Instability tied to stalled development, unreliable services and broken promises, says academic

BY HARITH KAMAL
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PETALING JAYA: Sabah heads to the polls this Saturday with voters less bothered about who wins and more worried about whether the next government is stable enough to actually govern.

Years of collapses, shifting alliances and overnight defections have turned instability into the defining issue of the election and analysts say Sabahans now see political turbulence not as elite drama but as daily disruption.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Novel Lyndon said ordinary voters have begun linking instability to stalled development, unreliable services and broken promises.

"Previously, political transitions might have been seen as behind-the-scenes negotiations.

"However, citizens now link these changes directly to disruptions in infrastructure projects, halted funding and delays in social benefits.

"This shift from viewing politics as theatre to seeing it as disruption has pushed instability to the top of voter concerns."

He said issues such as water supply, road maintenance and living costs have become dominant campaign themes, adding that many Sabahans now associate these practical problems with the fallout from unstable administrations and collapsing coalitions.

He also said a clear behavioural shift is emerging, with a growing number of voters,

especially those aged 20 to 49, prioritising stability over personality or party loyalty.

"A significant segment, particularly younger and urban voters, are making pragmatic assessments in which coalition longevity and administrative effectiveness take precedence.

"These voters are judging candidates based on their ability to secure federal backing, maintain project funding and prevent fragmentation after the election."

He said in a volatile political landscape, "stability-first voting" is a rational response.

"The risks associated with endorsing an unstable candidate increase.

"Consequently, voters tend to prioritise indicators of stability such as signed coalition agreements, reliable technocratic candidates or incumbents with a proven track record of completing projects over charisma."

Novel said communities that depend on government initiatives for essential services have "little tolerance for political instability", adding that socio-economic pressure is also driving demand for stable governance.

"During times of material hardship, voters tend to favour policies and candidates that mitigate risks, particularly the risk of a government collapsing before projects are completed or assistance is disbursed."

However, years of party-hopping have hollowed out trust.

"Frequent switching has significantly eroded interpersonal and institutional trust," he said, describing public sentiment today as "conditional trust" - support given with the expectation that politicians may still break their mandate.

"Even with national anti-hopping laws, citizens believe politicians could exploit

loopholes or rely on informal strategies."

He added that Sabahans are likely to support governments that minimise unpredictability and deliver steady development.

"Voters favour coalitions that are inclusive, pragmatic and transparent, as well as leaders who value consultation, predictability and discipline."

He also said from a political sociology standpoint, there is no definitive "best" party or leader, only coalitions that could offer credible stability, effective leadership and realistic development pathways.

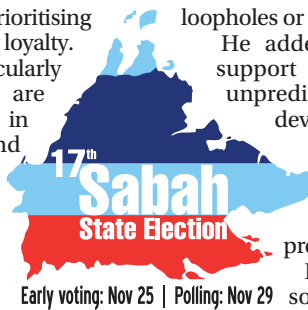
Universiti Malaysia Sabah political analyst Assoc Prof Dr Romzi Ationg said instability would remain a central risk, arguing that the political culture of the state has long been shaped by fragmented parties, personality driven loyalties and regional interests.

"A multi-cornered contest makes a hung assembly plausible," he said, adding that splintered vote shares are likely to produce narrow pluralities and last-minute coalition bargaining.

He said despite the anti-hopping law, the threat of realignment still looms, adding that personality-driven alliances, party mergers, leadership shifts and other "accepted realignment pathways" remain possible.

Romzi said patterns seen in 2018, 2020 and during the formation of Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) - such as the rapid reshuffles, federal influence and opportunistic collaboration under slim majorities - could easily reappear.

He added that the survival of the next Sabah government would hinge on disciplined coalition partners, cohesive leadership, steady federal relations and mechanisms to manage internal disputes before they escalate into open fragmentation.



Govt committed to Tawau, Kalabakan agriculture: Zahid

TAWAU: The government is committed to developing Tawau and Kalabakan into modern agricultural hubs and training centres for the High-Level Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Hi-TVET) programme.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said the initiative is not a seasonal offer or associated with the Sabah polls, but rather part of the federal government's plan to modernise the agricultural sector and produce a skilled workforce in Sabah.

"Tawau and Kalabakan have tremendous potential for development because the land is very fertile. The area should be developed with not only traditional agriculture, but also modern agriculture."

He was speaking after attending the Sentuhan Kasih Desa@Tanjung Batu programme and the First Khatam ceremony for pupils of the Pre-Tahfiz Sabah Kemas kindergarten at the Tawau Sports Complex yesterday.

Also present were Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and Community Development director-general Datuk Mohd Hanafiah Man.

Ahmad Zahid, who is also Rural and Regional Development minister, said modern agriculture requires systematically trained and skilled workers, with TVET serving as the core of economic transformation in the region.

He added that the introduction of high-value agro-technology TVET would position Tawau as the new TVET hub in Sabah.

He said although Sabah currently has 24 Giatmara centres and a Mara Skills Institute in Kota Kinabalu, Tawau still needs a Hi-TVET centre to enhance the marketability of local youths.

He also said a new polytechnic has been identified for development in Tawau to strengthen its skills training ecosystem, adding that these initiatives form part of the government's long-term development agenda and are not temporary promises.

"We are emphasising this not because of the election. These plans were set from the beginning, and we want to ensure their immediate implementation in this region." - Bernama

Election Commission reports 92.5% early voter turnout for polls

KOTA KINABALU: Early voters in the 17th Sabah State Election turned out in impressive numbers yesterday, with 92.5%, with some 19,000 voters casting their ballots, according to Election Commission (EC) data.

Early voting began at 8am at 58 voting stations throughout Sabah and closed at 5pm, with over 8,000 armed forces personnel and spouses, along with more than 10,000 police personnel and spouses qualified to vote.

EC secretary Datuk Khairul Shahril Idrus said early voters consisted of armed forces personnel and their spouses, as well as police personnel, including those in the General Operations Force and spouses who qualify as early voters in the state election.

"The EC congratulates all returning officers and their teams for having done their duties well today."

All early voting ballots will be kept at designated police stations and counted only after polling closes this Saturday.

Despite rain in the morning, the early voting process ran smoothly.

Some of the centres affected by rain included the Sabah Police Headquarters Officers' Mess, Sekolah Agama Rakyat (SAR) Kem 5 Lok Kawi and Sekolah Kebangsaan Pangkalan Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia.

EC staff provided umbrellas to ensure the convenience of voters, who began

arriving as early as 7.30am.

Among the earliest to vote at SAR Kem 5 were 5th Division Commander Maj Jen Datuk Noorul Azril Ariffin and his wife Datin Noriza Md Rashid.

Sabah police commissioner Datuk Jauteh Dikun cast his vote at the Sabah IPK Senior Officers' Mess polling centre.

Candidates for the Tanjung Keramat state seat, Shah Alfie Yahya of Gabungan Rakyat Sabah (GRS) and Jeffery Nor Mohamed of Barisan Nasional (BN), were present at SAR Kem 5 to observe the process, alongside Eastern Field Commander Lt Jen Datuk Mohd Sofi Md Lepi.

In contrast, sunny conditions were reported at several other early voting centres, including the 13th Infantry Brigade headquarters, Cenderawasih Camp in Lahad Datu, the Multipurpose Block 15, 15th Battalion, PGA Sandakan and the Tawau district police headquarters.

BN's Tungku candidate Saleha Abdul Wahid visited the voting centre at Dewan Gagah Berani, 13th Infantry Brigade headquarters in Cenderawasih Camp, Lahad Datu, while PH's Segama candidate Romansa Lamin mingled with security personnel at Dewan Mawar, Lahad Datu.

Police and military personnel were seen showing their inked fingers after voting at



Army personnel (from left) Nurul Najihah Mohd Nazri, Nurul Nabihah Zainuri and Nur Zulaikha Salim display their inked fingers after casting early votes at SAR Kem 5 Lok Kawi yesterday. - BERNAMAPIC

their respective centres, in the presence of agents from the contesting parties.

The Election Academy also conducted a live broadcast yesterday to provide updates and monitor the running of early voting.

EC chairman Datuk Seri Ramlan Harun

said the commission had received 472 campaign-related complaints as of Monday.

"These range from *ceramah* held without permits to misuse of campaign materials. We have taken note and will act accordingly."

'Elderly being coerced into costly wellness packages'

Some centres close abruptly, leaving customers with unused sessions while instalments continue: Fomca

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's wellness and aesthetic industry, once celebrated for promoting health and vitality, is under scrutiny for exploiting vulnerable seniors.

Elderly consumers are being lured by fear-driven health claims, pressured into costly long-term prepaid packages and left with little recourse, warned the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (Fomca).

Its CEO Dr Saravanan Thambirajah said complaints involving prepaid wellness packages are surging.

"The National Consumer Complaints Centre has verified 38 cases in which packages became unusable, totalling more than RM65,000 in losses.

"New cases are reported almost daily, showing that this is a systemic issue, not isolated incidents."

According to Fomca, many operators present themselves as experts in "health improvement", "preventive therapy", "energy treatment" or "holistic rejuvenation".

"Some centres offer genuine wellness services, but others cross the line by using medical-sounding claims to push expensive long-term packages."

Sales tactics often start with free talks, roadshows or "health screenings" targeted at older adults. Consumers are told that they have poor circulation or early signs of disease, which are claims designed to create fear and urgency.

"Once frightened, consumers are pushed into signing packages worth thousands. In some cases, staff have even taken customers' phones to activate 'Buy Now, Pay Later' plans without explanation.

"These are not wellness consultations. These are psychological pressure sessions disguised as health advice."

The wellness sector spans therapy centres, slimming outlets, spas, aesthetic clinics,



Saravanan advised Malaysians to treat free screenings with caution, never sign packages on the spot, keep personal devices in their control and review contracts with family before committing.
— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THE SUN

alternative therapy providers and lifestyle clubs.

"Problems arise when operators claim to treat or reverse chronic illnesses, such as diabetes or heart disease, with no scientific basis," he said.

He added that some centres close abruptly, leaving customers with unused sessions while instalments continue.

"Because financial contracts are legally separate from the service provider, consumers remain bound to pay despite receiving nothing."

Saravanan pointed to regulatory gaps between the Health Ministry and the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry as a key reason these abuses persist.

"While the Health Ministry regulates medical facilities, many operators avoid calling themselves healthcare providers, even when using diagnostic-like equipment.

"Meanwhile, the Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry oversees advertising and contracts, but blurred lines between lifestyle and health make enforcement difficult."

Senior citizens are particularly at risk due to trust in authority, fear-based messaging and limited familiarity with digital finance.

"This is targeted exploitation, not marketing," he emphasised.

M'sians urged to seek medically regulated providers

PETALING JAYA: Amid rising complaints against unregulated wellness centres, aesthetic dermatologist Dr Lim Ing Kien is urging Malaysians to seek only medically regulated providers and beware of fear-based sales tactics.

Responding to the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations' (Fomca) report on aggressive package-selling, Lim, founder of Medii Skin Studio, Skynfyx, and Ventamin, stressed that legitimate aesthetic clinics operate under strict Health Ministry standards, unlike many operators functioning in regulatory grey areas.

"All our doctors are Malaysian Medical Council-registered, we use only ministry-approved devices and follow proper documentation and informed consent protocols. That is the minimum standard patients should expect."

He emphasised that all treatments must be supported by peer-reviewed clinical studies and regulatory approval.

"Aesthetic medicine does not cure chronic diseases. We never claim to treat conditions like diabetes or hypertension – those require proper medical care."

Addressing misleading promotions, Lim said

his clinics prioritise transparency.

"We practise clear pricing with no hidden fees, provide written treatment plans and never force same-day decisions."

He warned consumers to watch for red flags such as free "health screenings" detecting fake issues, high-pressure sales, non-refundable packages and claims of curing serious illnesses.

For older consumers, he advised verifying Health Ministry registration, reviewing contracts with family and walking away from providers using fear or urgency.

"Aesthetic medicine is meant to enhance appearance safely. It does not cure illnesses or require rushed decisions.

"The regulatory gaps highlighted by Fomca must be addressed urgently. Always choose providers who prioritise your wellbeing over sales targets."

Complaints have surged against a nationwide wellness and massage chain, with consumers alleging sudden service restrictions, inaccessible bookings and prolonged refund delays despite paying thousands upfront for prepaid packages.

Several customers reported that outlets

He added that contracts obtained under pressure, misleading claims or hidden clauses may be unenforceable.

"A fair contract should clearly outline pricing, duration, services, refunds and cancellation terms, without letting the company withdraw services unilaterally."

Fomca is calling for government action, urging both ministries to jointly set clear rules on advertising, sales practices, contract standards and protections for elderly consumers.

Health-related claims, especially those involving serious illnesses, must be closely scrutinised, he said.

Saravanan advised Malaysians to treat free screenings with caution, never sign packages on the spot, keep personal devices in their control and review contracts with family before committing.

Consumers misled by wellness operators can contact the National Consumer Complaints Centre at 03-7877 1076 or 03-7865 3441, or visit www.nccc.org.my.

"When fear, manipulation and vague health claims are used to extract money, especially from the elderly, the system has failed. Malaysia must close this regulatory gap before more are harmed."

Eric Tan and sister of Jho Low ordered to pay 1MDB

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court here has ordered Eric Tan, an associate of fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low, to pay US\$2.8 billion (RM11.58 billion) to 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) and its four subsidiaries.

Judge Mahazan Mat Taib, who granted the judgment in default, yesterday also ordered Jho Low's sister Low May Lin to pay US\$809,319 to the sovereign wealth fund.

In 2021, 1MDB and its four subsidiaries 1MDB Energy Holdings Limited, 1MDB Energy Limited, 1MDB Energy (Langat) Limited and Global Diversified Investment Company Limited (formerly known as 1MDB Global Investments Limited) had filed the suit against the duo.

Mahazan declared that both defendants were constructive trustees of 1MDB for the sums they had received, and were liable to return all sums deemed secret profits obtained in fraud of the plaintiffs.

"Costs of RM500,000 are to be paid jointly and severally by both defendants to the plaintiffs."

She also ruled that documentary evidence demonstrates that Tan was the beneficial owner of the Alsen Chance and Blackstone accounts, which received significant flows of money wrongly diverted from 1MDB, amounting to US\$2,795,333,000.

"Tan is a known close associate of Jho Low and served as an essential conduit in the laundering and layering of the stolen funds. The nature, magnitude and pattern of the transfers render any assertion of innocent receipt wholly implausible.

"The evidence further shows that May Lin received US\$809,319 directly into her personal account through four transfers from Jho Low's father Tan Sri Larry Low.

"These transfers were gratuitous, lacked any commercial rationale and originated from funds misappropriated via the Good Star Limited structure. As the sister of Jho Low, her role as a personal beneficiary of siphoned funds fits squarely within the wider pattern of family-based concealment."

Three witnesses testified during the one-day unopposed full trial held on Oct 6 against the duo. Both defendants were duly served with all cause papers but failed to enter an appearance, file any pleading or attend trial. – Bernama

Man killed in shootout with cops

KUALA LUMPUR: A suspected criminal was shot dead during a shootout with police at the roadside of Km8, Jalan Banting-Dengkil in Dengkil near here on Monday.

Bukit Aman Criminal Investigation Department director Datuk M. Kumar said the incident occurred at 8.10pm when a team from the Serious Crimes Division, patrolling areas around Banting, Dengkil and Sepang near here, detected a silver car driven by a man behaving suspiciously.

"When the team tried to stop the vehicle, the suspect suddenly opened fire from inside the vehicle at the police team. Our men returned fire until the threat was neutralised."

Kumar said the suspect was confirmed dead by a medical team at the scene and police could not find any identification documents on the man.

"Upon inspecting the suspect's vehicle, police found a Colt 45 firearm, three bullets and seven transparent plastic packets suspected to contain drugs," he said, adding that investigations are ongoing. – Bernama

promised under packages were abruptly reduced from over 30 branches to fewer than eight without prior notice or compensation.

One customer said her local outlet closed shortly after buying a RM2,699 package, forcing her to travel more than an hour each way.

"It is impractical and not what we were promised," she said.

Booking difficulties were widespread: constant "fully booked" notices, WhatsApp-only reservations and new rules requiring seven-day advance bookings made redemption almost impossible.

Some reported cancellations for vague reasons such as "maintenance" or unrelated events while app balances disappeared.

Refund requests submitted via Google Forms went unanswered for weeks, often with deductions or delays exceeding 14 days.

Consumers claim that these practices may breach sections 10, 16 and 53 of the Consumer Protection Act 1999, constituting misleading sales and unfair business conduct.

They are calling on authorities to reinstate prepaid packages under original terms or issue full refunds. – BY KIRTINEE RAMESH



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MALAYSIA

Class teaches children about hornbills

► We need to inspire young minds about how important it is to protect nature, says wildlife artist

BY IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's iconic hornbills took centre stage in a unique classroom last week as children in Tenom learned firsthand about the birds' vital role in the state's forests.

The Yayasan Sime Darby (YSD) Eco Citizen - Kawan Enggang Programme 2.0, held on Nov 12, came shortly after National Hornbill Day on Nov 10, aiming to inspire the next generation of wildlife guardians.

The programme brought together preschoolers and schoolchildren for interactive talks, art sessions and



Das said she loves seeing children's authentic expressions, something often overlooked in today's education system. — IKHWAN ZULKAFLEE/THESUN

hands-on learning about hornbills, such as their habitats, diets and the species found in Malaysia.

Explore Gaia Enterprise senior field assistant Helson Abdullah shared insights on hornbill conservation

while student volunteers from Universiti Malaysia Sabah's Faculty of Tropical Forestry and YSD Eco Citizen volunteers from SD Guthrie Sabah north zone helped guide the young participants.

Wildlife artist Christine Das also joined, showing children how to turn knowledge into creativity through art.

Das said her passion for hornbills began during her early conservation work, including population counts.

"I have always wanted to advocate for hornbills. When I was doing the hornbill count, I realised how vulnerable they really are.

"As the forests shrink, they lose the towering trees where they need to nest. What worries me most is that without these nesting sites, there will not be regeneration. We could lose them," she said.

She stressed the vital role hornbills play in forest health.

"They are the gardeners of the forest. Forest health depends on hornbills. They disperse seeds, maintain balance and support the ecosystem," she added.

While hornbills often appear in her artwork, Das highlighted the need for broader attention to endangered species.

She believes corporations must invest in long-term conservation education.

"I am grateful that YSD is doing

this and bringing awareness to schools. We need to inspire young minds about how important it is to protect nature," she said, noting that conservation education in Malaysian schools remains limited.

During the workshop, Das guided children as they coloured hornbill illustrations, an activity she cherishes.

"One of the key components of my workshop is integrating what students learn from the mind into the heart. Art is powerful. When you create, you connect emotionally. Even while painting, the mind is processing the message.

"From mind to heart, then channelled into hands. That is why I always talk to the kids as they paint and why I ask them to name their hornbill and write a message to it. It makes it personal."

Das said she loves seeing children's authentic expressions, something often overlooked in today's education system.

"Art is rarely viewed as important, but it is essential for creative and critical thinking. When I see kids paint from the heart, it gives me so much joy."

Public cleansing sector mandates waste management course for licences

BY HARITH KAMAL
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PUTRAJAYA: All new applications and licence renewals in Malaysia's solid waste and public cleansing sector will require mandatory participation in the Solid Waste Management Intellectual Course starting next year.

Housing and Local Government Ministry secretary-general Datuk M. Noor Azman Taib, speaking on behalf of minister Nga Kor Ming, described the course as "a step towards new thinking, new competencies and new standards in the solid waste industry".

He said the course is central to professionalising a sector that is becoming more complex and is closely linked to the dignity and

wellbeing of Malaysians.

"The country's cleanliness is not created overnight. It is built through commitment, discipline and integrity practised every day.

"The programme would empower sanitation operators as key drivers of industry best practices and elevate the sector to the stature it deserves."

The announcement comes as illegal dumping continues to rise, with Noor Azman describing the problem as "mushrooming" across village outskirts, open fields, behind shops, riverbanks and areas outside local authority coverage.

From 2014 to this year, authorities carried out 24,003 operations to address illegal dumping.

"This year alone, up to October, 3,634 operations were conducted,

clearing 1,530.41 tonnes of solid waste at a cost exceeding RM406,000."

The course forms part of the ministry's wider effort to professionalise the sector under the National Solid Waste Policy and the 13th Malaysia Plan.

According to Noor Azman, the National Solid Waste Management Department, SWCorp and I-KPKT (Housing and Local Government Training Institute) are working together under a "Trio Model" to strengthen industry standards, performance and human capital development.

The department is tasked with enhancing the quality, effectiveness and capability of solid waste and public cleansing management, while SWCorp focuses on improving licence

holder performance and creating a more organised, efficient and competitive system. I-KPKT is strengthening human capital development.

Noor Azman said 5,288 companies have been licensed under the Solid Waste and Public Cleansing Management Act 2007 for waste collection spanning six categories. They comprise household waste, commercial, industrial and institutional waste, construction waste, public cleansing services, long-distance transportation and solid waste management facilities, each requiring strong technical knowledge and strict compliance.

"As an industry reference standard, the course is a comprehensive training programme covering five

core modules.

"These consist of the background of solid waste management, legislation, technical basics, licensing application procedures via the i-Lesen system and best practices for licence holders."

He said the course ensures licence holders meet a level of professionalism aligned with the country's future needs.

Noor Azman said the course is expected to train 20,000 participants in its first five years, equipping each with technical skills, a renewed culture, discipline and awareness.

"Let us strengthen this sector as a national cornerstone and honour our sanitation heroes by elevating the industry to its rightful stature."

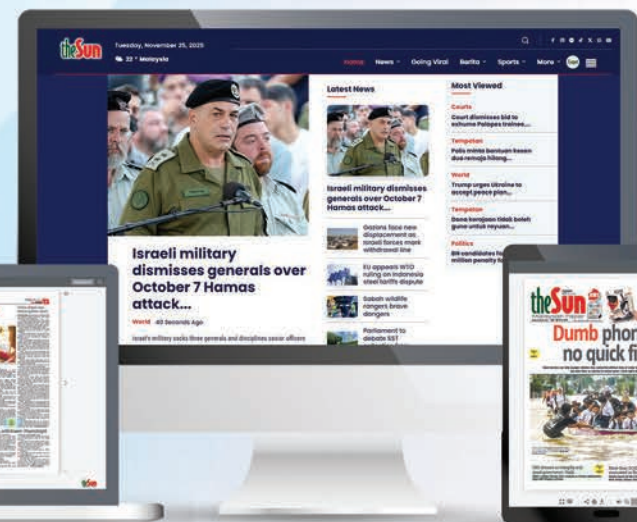
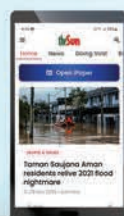


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Myanmar in US lose protected status shield

WASHINGTON: The US administration announced on Monday that it was ending temporary protections shielding immigrants from Myanmar from deportation.

The move affects some 4,000 people who have been living in the United States under what is known as Temporary Protected Status (TPS).

TPS protects its holders from deportation and allows them to work. It is granted to people deemed to be in danger if they return to their home countries, because of war, natural disaster or other extraordinary circumstances.

President Donald Trump, as part of his sweeping immigration crackdown, has removed TPS for nationals from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Haiti, Honduras, Nepal, Nicaragua, Syria, South Sudan and Venezuela.

Trump announced on Friday that he would also withdraw TPS from Somalis.

TPS was extended to Myanmar nationals after a 2021 military coup. Homeland Security Secretary Kristi Noem said the decision to withdraw it was made after a review.

Myanmar continues to face "humanitarian challenges due in part to continued military operations against armed resistance", Noem said.

But, she said, there have been improvements in "governance and stability at the national and local levels".

Noem noted the July lifting of a state of emergency and the announcement that "free and fair elections" will take place beginning in December.

The US State Department advises Americans not to travel to Myanmar due to "armed conflict, the potential for civil unrest" and "wrongful detentions". - AFP

Pakistan strikes kill at least 10

KABUL: Pakistan strikes on Afghanistan killed at least 10 people, an Afghan government spokesman said yesterday.

"The Pakistani invading forces bombed the house of a civilian resident ... as a result, nine children (five boys and four girls) and one woman were martyred" in Khost province, spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid posted on X.

Airstrikes targeting the border regions of Kunar and Paktika wounded another four civilians.

The bombardment follows an unclaimed suicide attack Monday against Pakistan security forces in a province bordering Afghanistan.

Another suicide blast in the Pakistan capital Islamabad this month killed 12 people and was claimed by the Pakistan Taliban.

Islamabad blamed a militant cell which was "guided at every step by the ... high command based in Afghanistan" for the capital attack.

The bombings in Pakistan follow days of cross-border fire in October which ended with a fragile truce.

Negotiations have failed to secure a solid agreement, with disagreements remaining over security in each country. - AFP

Aircraft carrier deployed to southern Thailand

➤ Vessel doubles up as floating hospital

BANGKOK: Thailand was preparing to send an aircraft carrier with relief supplies and medical teams to its south, where more heavy rain intensified the worst floods in years, which have killed 13 people and hobbled rescue and evacuation efforts.

Floodwaters running as high as 2m in some areas have hit nine Thai provinces, across a swathe of hundreds of kilometres devastated last year by seasonal monsoon floods that killed 12.

The Thai navy said it was readying to send a flotilla of 14 boats and the aircraft carrier, *Chakri*

Naruebet, accompanied by helicopters, doctors, supplies and field kitchens that can supply 3,000 meals a day.

"The fleet is ready to deliver forces and carry out actions as the Royal Navy orders," it said in a statement, adding that the carrier could also serve as a floating hospital.

An estimated 1.9 million people have been affected in Thailand, where the meteorology agency forecast sustained heavy rain and flash floods yesterday and warned small boats to stay ashore to avoid waves taller than 3m.

"Calls have been coming in non-stop in the last three days, in the thousands, asking to be evacuated and others for food," said a member of volunteer group the Matchima Rescue Centre in the worst affected

city of Hat Yai.

The rubber trading centre is Thailand's fifth largest city, where authorities have ordered evacuation after days of rain that Prime Minister Anutin Charnvirakul said had brought the worst flooding in 15 years.

"We are five people and a small child without rice and water," Facebook user The Hong Tep posted in an appeal for help on the Matchima group's page.

"Phone reception has been cut - water is rising fast."

Hat Yai received 335mm of rain on Friday, its highest in a single day in three centuries.

Television images showed brown waters rushing through its commercial streets, while residents waded through high waters, clinging to floating polystyrene boxes as

rubber boats evacuated others in orange life vests.

The waters submerged cars and flowed around a fire truck abandoned in a street.

The floods could wreak disruption in Thailand's rubber industry, among the world's largest producers and exporters of the commodity, where the government rubber agency has estimated the rains could cut output by about 10,300 tonnes.

Posts from stranded people desperate for help ran into the thousands on the Facebook page of Hat Yai's Matchima rescue group.

"Water is on the second floor now," wrote one of them, Pingojung Ping, who said she was one of six trapped, two elderly people among them. "Pray. Please help." - Reuters



Rescue teams distribute supplies to stranded Hat Yai residents. - REUTERS/SPIC

'Return to China not an option for Taiwan'

TAIPEI: Taiwan Premier Cho Jung-tai said yesterday that a "return" to China is not an option for the island's 23 million people, after Chinese President Xi Jinping pressed his country's sovereignty claims in a call with President Donald Trump.

Xi told Trump on Monday that Taiwan's "return to China" at the end of World War II was a key part of Beijing's vision for the world order. Taiwan strongly rejects China's stance.

"We must once again emphasise that the Republic of China, Taiwan, is a fully sovereign and independent

country," Cho told reporters outside parliament, referring to the island's formal name.

"For the 23 million people of our nation, 'return' is not an option - this is very clear," he said.

In Taiwan's system, the premier is in charge of day-to-day government operations while defence and foreign relations are generally the president's purview.

China has offered Taiwan a "one country, two systems" model, which enjoys no support from any mainstream Taiwanese political party and has been rejected by President Lai Ching-te.

Relations between Beijing and Tokyo have plunged after Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi said this month that a hypothetical attack on Taiwan could trigger a military response from Japan.

China says Taiwan is its most important and sensitive diplomatic issue. Taipei has repeatedly denounced Beijing for trying to distort the legacy of World War II, which ended 80 years ago, especially as Taiwan was handed to the Republic of China government at the end of the conflict.

The People's Republic of China did not come into existence until

1949, when Mao Zedong's forces defeated the Republic of China forces, which then fled to Taiwan.

Taiwan's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hsiao Kuang-wei told a separate briefing in Taipei yesterday that Beijing's narrative on World War II was "completely false and untrue".

"Its real intention is simply to isolate Taiwan from the international community and, as part of a broader set of actions, to try to restrict other countries' sovereign choices in how they engage with Taiwan," he said. - Reuters

X erupts in uproar over new location feature

Launch triggers wave of online sleuthing

WASHINGTON: X erupted in uproar after the rollout of a feature revealing an account's location, exposing what users describe as global troll farms and influence operations on the platform.

X's head of product Nikita Bier launched the feature over the weekend, allowing users "to see the country or region where an account is based", to boost transparency on a platform that tech experts say is rife with disinformation.

"This is an important first step to securing the integrity of the global town square," Bier wrote on X.

The launch triggered a wave of online sleuthing.

Almost immediately, the platform flooded with posts flagging dozens of right-wing internet personalities, whose location data showed they were in Nigeria, Bangladesh or Eastern Europe.

Influential accounts that present themselves as US-based but actually operate overseas have circulated 31 false claims over

the past 15 months, according to a NewsGuard analysis using the location feature.

The feature also seemed to vindicate researchers who warned during last year's presidential election that a network of accounts - posing as "Trump-supporting independent women" and using stolen photos of European models and influencers - was operating overseas.

"X's new account info showed many of these 'American' women were actually based in Thailand, with some tied to Myanmar," said Benjamin Strick, the London-based director of investigations at the Centre for Information Resilience.

Reflecting a hyperpolarised political climate, some right-wing personalities also pointed fingers at left-wing users seemingly posting from suspicious locations.

X, however, cautioned that the location data "may not be accurate and can change periodically".

When users clicked on an account's location, a pop up noted: "The country or region that an account is based can be impacted by recent travel or temporary relocation."

Some users may also be connected via a VPN that can mask their real location.

"There are a few rough edges that will be

resolved," Bier wrote after the feature's launch.

Bier said last week an "upgrade" was upcoming that will ensure "accuracy will be nearly 99.99%".

Some users criticised the launch, warning that it could expose the locations of dissidents and protesters in autocratic states.

Bier, however, said that for users in countries "where speech has penalties," the feature includes privacy toggles that reveal only the region.

Soon after the launch, some apparent imposter accounts with vast followings were suddenly taken down.

The new feature "shines a light on a fundamental problem with social media today: paid actors are deliberately inflaming difficult issues because controversy attracts attention," said Amy Bruckman, a professor at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

"We need more trustworthy platforms that don't allow people to behave badly."

Last month, X laid off half of its engineering team responsible for fighting influence operations, spam, and illegal content on the platform, reflecting a push to replace staff with artificial intelligence, *The Information* reported on Monday.

X did not respond to AFP's request for comment.

China launches first emergency mission

BEIJING: China's first emergency space launch entered orbit after blasting off yesterday, as the country looks to plug safety risks at its crewed space station after a vessel was damaged in orbit earlier this month.

The unmanned Shenzhou-22 spacecraft lifted off atop a Long March-2F rocket from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwest China at noon, according to China Manned Space Agency (CMSA).

Video shared by Chinese state broadcaster CCTV showed the rocket blazing into space, with Earth visible in the background as the vessel entered orbit.

The spacecraft will travel to China's permanently inhabited Tiangong space station, where three astronauts reside with no flightworthy vessel that could return them to Earth in the event of an emergency.

"The spacecraft successfully separated from the rocket and entered its planned orbit, the launch mission was a complete success," CMSA said in a statement published on its official WeChat account.

On Nov 5, the Shenzhou-20 vessel was meant to return a trio of Chinese astronauts back to Earth but was deemed unfit to fly after the window of its return capsule was cracked by what CMSA suspects was impact from space debris.

This forced China's space authorities on Nov 14 to deploy the only remaining flightworthy vessel, the Shenzhou-21, which had just arrived at the space station in late October, bringing a new trio of astronauts.

With the departure of Shenzhou-21 six months before schedule, Tiangong's three resident astronauts were left without a spacecraft, a safety risk the arrival of Shenzhou-22 will remove.

"This emergency launch is a first for China, but I hope it will be the last in humanity's journey through space," CMSA official He Yuanjun told CCTV. Shenzhou-22 departed with spare parts for Tiangong, equipment to repair the window crack on the Shenzhou-20 vessel, which remains docked at the space station, as well as fresh fruit and vegetables.

After arriving at the station, the spacecraft will remain docked until April next year, when it will be used to transport the crew of the Shenzhou-21 back to Earth. - Reuters

Forever chemicals found in dolphins

WELLINGTON: "Forever chemicals" (PFAS) contamination affects more dolphins and whales than previously known.

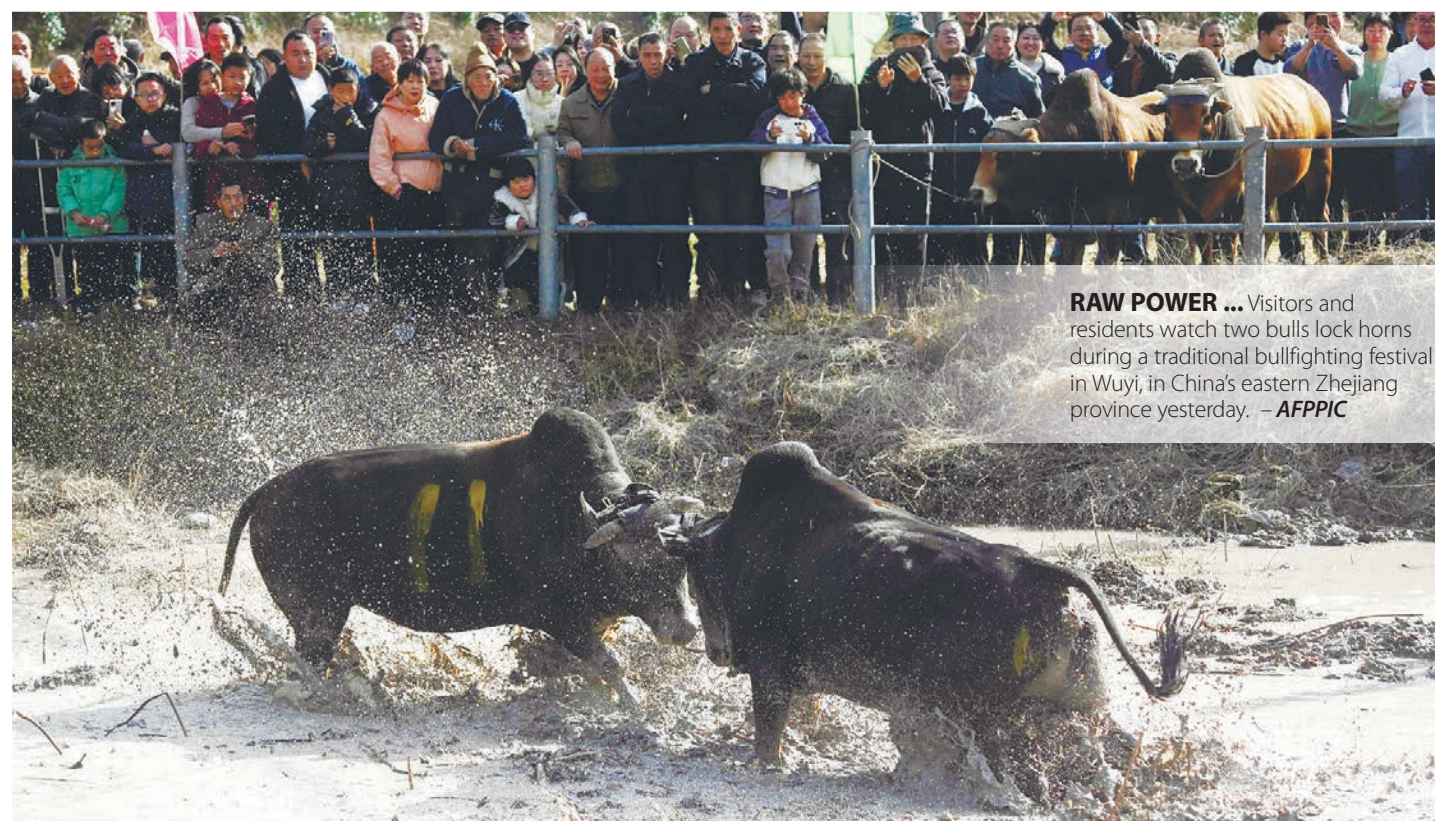
Researchers analysing liver samples from 127 stranded whales and dolphins in New Zealand waters found PFAS, or per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, in 16 species, with eight species including Hector's dolphins and three beaked whale species tested for PFAS globally for the first time, according to an article published by *The Conversation*.

Surprisingly, an animal's habitat does not predict its exposure.

Instead, sex and age are stronger indicators of how much of these pollutants a whale or dolphin accumulates, with older, larger animals and males carrying higher contamination levels, according to a study by a team of New Zealand and Australian researchers.

"PFAS were originally designed to make everyday products more convenient, but they have become a widespread environmental and public health concern," it said.

These chemicals used since the 1950s in products like non-stick cookware, food packaging, cleaning products and firefighting foam, persist indefinitely, enter the food web, and can attach to proteins and accumulate in the blood and organs, disrupting hormones, immune function and reproduction. - Bernama



RAW POWER ... Visitors and residents watch two bulls lock horns during a traditional bullfighting festival in Wuyi, in China's eastern Zhejiang province yesterday. - AFP/PIIC

Pension fund fined US\$15m for claim delays

SYDNEY: Australia's Federal Court has ordered superannuation fund Cbus to pay an A\$23.5 million (US\$15.17 million or RM64.9 million) penalty for serious failures in processing death and disability insurance claims, the country's corporate regulator said yesterday.

The penalty was imposed against United Super Pty, the trustee of Cbus, after the fund admitted that systemic faults caused long delays in handling death benefits and total and permanent disability claims, said the Australian Securities and Investments Commission (ASIC).

The delays affected more than 7,000

members and claimants, according to ASIC.

Australia's prudential regulator said in February that it would investigate Construction and Building Unions Superannuation Fund (Cbus) over possible breaches of the superannuation industry law, with a focus on its expenditure management.

The penalty yesterday lands on top of about A\$32 million in compensation already paid to the estimated 7,402 affected claimants and members under the fund's remediation programme, and exceeded United Super's A\$18.5 million revenue in fiscal 2024,

underscoring the seriousness of the breaches.

"Not only was Cbus aware of increased insurance claim volumes, but it was also put on notice by its own customers who were complaining about the long delays they were enduring," ASIC Deputy Chair Sarah Court said.

In one case, a widow told ABC radio in June 2023 that she had been waiting 15 months for her late husband's death benefit.

Cbus only opened an investigation and ultimately lodged a breach report with ASIC after she went public about the delays and poor communication. - Reuters

US, Russia hold talks in Abu Dhabi

Missiles, drones pound Kyiv

WASHINGTON: US Army Secretary Dan Driscoll has held unannounced talks with Russian officials in Abu Dhabi as part of an intense new push by President Donald Trump's administration to end the war in Ukraine and more meetings were expected.

The talks come as US and Ukrainian officials sought to narrow the gaps between them over a peace plan, with core issues still unresolved and Ukraine wary of being strong-armed into accepting a deal largely on the Kremlin's terms.

The exact nature of the talks in Abu Dhabi, which were confirmed to Reuters by a US official, were not immediately clear, and it was not known who was in the Russian delegation.

The US official said Driscoll, who

has emerged as a point man for US diplomatic efforts, was also expected to meet Ukrainian officials while in Abu Dhabi.

Underlining the stakes for Ukraine, its capital Kyiv was hit by a barrage of missiles and hundreds of drones in an attack that killed at least six people. Residents were sheltering underground wearing winter jackets, some in tents.

US policy towards the war in Ukraine has zigzagged in recent months.

A hastily arranged summit between Trump and President Vladimir Putin in Alaska in August spurred worries in Kyiv and European capitals that Washington might accept many Russian demands, but ultimately resulted in more US pressure on Russia.

The latest US peace proposal, a 28-point plan that emerged last week, caught many in the US government, Kyiv and Europe off-guard and prompted fresh concerns that the Trump administration might be

willing to push Ukraine to sign a peace deal heavily tilted towards Moscow.

The plan would require Kyiv to cede more territory, accept curbs on its military and bar it from ever joining Nato, conditions Kyiv has long rejected as tantamount to surrender.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy said on Monday that the latest plan had included "correct" points after talks over the weekend in Geneva but that sensitive issues were still to be discussed with Trump.

"As of now, after Geneva, there are fewer points, no longer 28, and many correct elements have been incorporated into this framework," Zelenskiy said.

The Kremlin said it had nothing to say yet about reports of the Abu Dhabi meeting.

"The only substantive thing is the American project, the Trump project," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. "We believe that this could become a very good basis for negotiations." - Reuters



A Kyiv resident looks through a broken window of an apartment building hit by a Russian drone strike yesterday. - REUTERS/SPIC



Father Ibrahim Faltas, a Franciscan friar of the Custody of the Holy Land, looks at the Vehicle of Hope, the former popemobile used by Pope Francis which has been transformed into a fully equipped mobile clinic, in Bethlehem. - REUTERS/SPIC

Gaza survival at stake, warns UN agency

GENEVA: Israel's war in Gaza has ravaged the Palestinian territory's economy and is threatening its very survival, the United Nations warned yesterday, calling for "immediate and substantial" international intervention.

Rebuilding the Gaza Strip will cost more than US\$70 billion (RM289 billion) and could take several decades, the UN Trade and Development agency (UNCTAD) said in a new report, warning that war and restrictions had triggered an "unprecedented collapse across the Palestinian economy".

"The military operations have significantly undermined every pillar of survival," from food to shelter to healthcare, "and plunged Gaza into a human-made abyss", it said.

"The sustained, systematic destruction casts significant doubt on the ability of Gaza to reconstitute itself as a liveable space and society."

The attack on southern Israel in October 2023 resulted in the deaths of 1,221 people and sparked a devastating two-year war in Gaza.

Israel's retaliatory assault on Gaza has killed more than 69,000 people, according to figures from the Health Ministry that the UN considers reliable.

The scale of destruction wrought on the territory has "unleashed cascading crises, economic, humanitarian, environmental and social, propelling (it) from de-development to utter ruin", UNCTAD's report said.

Even "in an optimistic scenario of double-digit growth rates facilitated by a significant level of foreign aid, it will take several decades for Gaza to return to pre-October 2023 welfare levels", it said.

UNCTAD called for a "comprehensive recovery plan", combining "coordinated international assistance, restoration of fiscal

transfers, and measures to ease constraints on trade, movement and investment".

With Gaza's entire population facing "extreme, multidimensional impoverishment", the UN agency is also calling for the introduction of a universal emergency basic income, providing everyone there a renewable and unconditional monthly transfer of cash.

The report showed that Gaza's economy contracted by 87% over the course of 2023-2024, leaving its gross domestic product per capita at just US\$161 - among the lowest globally.

While the situation was not as bad in the West Bank, the report found that "violence, accelerated settlement expansion and restrictions on worker mobility have decimated the economy" there as well, "resulting in the worst economic decline since UNCTAD began to maintain records in 1972". - AFP

Indonesian general to lead peace force

JAKARTA: Commander of the Indonesian Defence Forces, General Agus Subiyanto, said that the peacekeeping force for Gaza will be led by a three-star TNI officer.

"The selection process for the peacekeeping contingent is underway. The plan is for it to be led by a three-star general," he said on Monday.

He did not explain the reason for appointing a high-ranking officer to lead the peacekeeping force.

He said there will be three composite brigades. Each brigade consists of a health battalion, a construction battalion and a support battalion.

"There will also be mechanical support," Subiyanto said.

He gave an assurance that all troops slated for the Gaza peacekeeping deployment are physically and mentally prepared.

"For troop recruitment, the first step is a medical test. They must be in good health, physically and psychologically fit."

Indonesia has sent an advance team to evaluate the situation and decide where troops will be stationed. He did not specify the deployment date.

The Indonesian Air Force will continue to provide routine logistical assistance through airdrops. - Bernama

Press group dismayed over access delay

TEL AVIV: An organisation representing international media in Israel and the Palestinian territories blasted Israel's top court on Monday for delaying a decision on opening access to Gaza for foreign journalists.

Israeli authorities have prevented foreign journalists from entering the devastated territory, taking only a handful of reporters inside on tightly controlled visits alongside its troops.

The Foreign Press Association (FPA), which represents hundreds of foreign journalists, filed a petition in the Supreme Court last year, seeking immediate access for international journalists.

On Oct 23, the court held a first hearing on the petition and decided to give authorities one month to develop a plan for granting foreign journalists access to Gaza.

On Monday, at the end of the 30-day period, the court granted the Israeli government a 10-day extension, postponing the deadline to Dec 4.

"The FPA is dismayed to learn that the court has once again granted an extension to the Israeli government to respond to our petition for free and independent access to Gaza," it said. - AFP

Building a culture of compassion

COMMENT
by Dr Manivannan Rethinam

WE are teaching machines to think but forgetting to teach humans to feel. As the world becomes increasingly interconnected, it is also, paradoxically, becoming more divided. We live in an age where digital progress outpaces emotional growth, where artificial intelligence learns faster than human understanding and where connection does not always mean compassion.

Empathy deficit

Empathy, the ability to understand and share the feelings of another, is not simply a moral ideal; it is the foundation of every stable society.

When empathy erodes, polarisation rises, trust weakens and social harmony disintegrates. What we face today is not merely a technological disruption but a moral and emotional one.

Studies from Harvard University, Stanford University and the University of Cambridge reveal a concerning trend: empathy among young people has declined sharply over the last three decades.

Researchers have linked this to increased screen time, social isolation and declining face-to-face interaction. In short, while our devices have grown smarter, our ability to understand one another has diminished.

Technology without humanity

The digital revolution has enabled us to communicate faster than ever before, yet it has subtly reprogrammed how we perceive emotion. Studies show that constant digital exposure reduces our sensitivity to non-verbal cues such as tone, facial expression and posture, all of which are critical to emotional understanding.

This matters because empathy is not a passive emotion; it is a biological and behavioural skill. Neuroscientists have discovered that mirror neurons in the brain allow us to perceive and understand others' emotions, forming the foundation for compassion and cooperation. When these neural pathways are neglected, they weaken. Just as physical muscles require exercise, so too does empathy.

Leadership in the age of disconnection

Empathy is often misunderstood as softness but



Businesses must adopt empathy-driven leadership cultures, where compassion becomes a measure of performance. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

evidence tells a different story. Research published by *Harvard Business Review* demonstrates that empathetic leaders outperform their peers in productivity, creativity and team engagement. Empathy creates trust, which in turn builds loyalty and innovation.

In government, businesses and civil society alike, we must move beyond transactional leadership towards transformational leadership that values people as much as performance. The leaders of tomorrow will not only need intelligence and vision but emotional literacy, the ability to sense, understand and respond to the emotions of others.

A Malaysian and global imperative

As chairman of Majlis Gagasan Malaysia, I have seen first-hand how genuine dialogue can dissolve division. When individuals from different faiths, ethnicities and ideologies come together to listen, truly listen, transformation begins. Through civic dialogue, youth empowerment and inclusive nation-building, we have witnessed how compassion can become a catalyst for change.

Empathy is not limited by borders, language or belief; it is a universal currency that

transcends culture. In a world facing increasing fragmentation, whether through political conflict, social inequality or technological alienation, empathy is the bridge that reconnects us.

Global research increasingly supports the integration of empathy education into national policies. Finland's KiVa programme and Iceland's Barnahus framework have demonstrated how empathy-based learning can reduce violence, improve well-being and foster social harmony. These models remind us that teaching empathy is not a luxury but a necessity.

Empathy can be deliberately cultivated through structured approaches. Social-emotional learning equips children and young adults with the skills to recognise, understand and manage emotions while also fostering empathy, teamwork and responsible decision-making.

Restorative practices in schools and communities encourage individuals to understand the impact of their actions, resolve conflicts constructively and rebuild trust.

Trauma-informed education ensures that educators recognise and respond to the effects

of trauma, creating safe environments that nurture emotional growth rather than perpetuate harm.

Malaysia and the world must now take the bold step of embedding these practices into leadership, education and community development. Schools should include emotional literacy as part of the core curriculum, not as an optional subject.

Businesses must adopt empathy-driven leadership cultures, where compassion becomes a measure of performance. Civil society organisations can lead by example, demonstrating that listening is as powerful as speaking.

The science of connection

Subsequent findings from leading institutions including Harvard, Stanford and Cambridge highlight that empathy enhances resilience, cooperation and decision-making, strengthening both relationships and organisations.

When people feel understood, stress levels drop, collaboration improves and institutions become more innovative and adaptive.

Empathy, therefore, is not an emotional luxury but an essential component of social stability and progress. It is the invisible infrastructure that allows humanity to thrive.

The challenge before us is to build cultures – national and global – that value feeling as much as thinking. We must evolve from networks of data to communities of understanding. The leaders who will define the next three decades will be those who see empathy not as sentimentality but as strategic strength.

As technology continues to reshape our societies, we must ensure that humanity remains at the centre of progress. The future will not be defined by how intelligent our machines become but by how deeply we choose to feel for one another. When we choose empathy over indifference, we do more than lead; we heal the world.

Dr Manivannan Rethinam is a professional technologist and holds a doctorate in Business Administration, specialising in marketing and technology management. He is the chairman of Majlis Gagasan Malaysia and a political and geopolitical analyst with almost three decades of leadership experience in technology, strategy and policy. He also serves on the Safe from Harm Global Panel of World Scouting. 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!



How the war in Ukraine will end

UKRAINE became the world's largest importer of major arms in the period 2020 to 2024, with its imports increasing nearly 100 times over compared with 2015 to 2019, according to Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

Media headlines highlighted Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky after he signed a military procurement letter of intent with his French counterpart, Emmanuel Macron.

Zelensky described the agreement as providing Ukraine with "one of the greatest air defence systems in the world", aimed at strengthening the country's defence against Russian air attacks and ensuring long-term security.

According to the agreement, Ukraine will receive up to 100 of France's Rafale F4 fighter jets as well as advanced air defence systems. The estimated sales value of a new Dassault Rafale fighter jet typically ranges from €225 million (RM1,08 billion) to €285 million (RM1.36 billion) per aircraft, depending on the specific contract, which includes weapons packages, training and support. This would make the deal worth an eye-watering €22 to €28 billion alone.

Other military hardware to be procured but not included in the cost are air defence systems, advanced air-to-air missiles and guided bombs, radar systems and drones, with production of interceptor drones planned to begin in late 2025.

The French success in this procurement exercise brings closer attention to an important but often underreported and less detailed aspect of the war. While much reporting on Ukraine focuses on the war and the aid packages supporting the country, the commercial competition and industrial beneficiaries among its supporters,

particularly within the European Union (EU) and other arms-exporting nations such as the United Kingdom, are also significant factors, especially in relation to military aid and procurement contracts. This

competition for the economic and financial benefits of war and reconstruction will intensify even as the war, in its current form, is ending.

According to available data, the EU collectively has provided over US\$60 billion (RM249 billion) in military aid and contracts to Ukraine. Germany is often cited as the largest individual contributor among EU countries. However, when focusing specifically on arms sales and procurement contracts, which reveal which nations' defence industries are "winning" in terms of new business, the picture becomes more complex and dynamic.

An added feature is the perception that Ukrainian military procurement is riddled with kickbacks and corruption is widespread, both internally among Ukrainians and externally among international partners and observers.

As recently as March 2025, surveys indicated that over 91% of the Ukrainian population believed corruption was "somewhat" or "very widespread". This has not discouraged arms suppliers to Ukraine; instead, it appears to have encouraged them.

Key European armament players

Germany has consistently been one of the largest single European donors of military aid to Ukraine, often ranking second globally after the United States in terms of total allocated aid. This includes high-value equipment like the Leopard 2 tanks and IRIS-T air defence systems.

German companies, such as the arms manufacturer Rheinmetall, have secured major contracts for producing and supplying



According to available data, the EU collectively has provided over US\$60 billion (RM249 billion) in military aid and contracts to Ukraine. – **REUTERSPIC**

ammunition, vehicles and other equipment, making the country a significant industrial winner.

France has become the world's second-largest arms exporter overall (in a recent period from 2020 to 2024) and its exports to other European states have surged.

While the letter of intent does not represent immediate sales, it proposes potential contracts for the French defence industry (Dassault Aviation and others) and will be a major shift in Ukraine's future military air procurement.

Sweden has signed a similar letter of intent for a long-term deal to supply up to 150 Gripen E-series fighter jets to Ukraine, with the first deliveries expected within the next few years. Sweden has also provided significant military aid in other forms, including armoured vehicles, artillery, air defence systems and financial contributions to various funds.

Poland is also consistently cited as a major supplier of military aid, often ranking third among all suppliers to

Ukraine (after the US and Germany) in terms of the transfer of major conventional arms.

Biggest winner in Ukraine's reconstruction and rearmament

Unreported behind the scenes – as Europe's leaders go public in continuing to urge Zelensky to reject a settlement of the war except on terms that are deemed as a clear defeat for Russia – has been the fierce competition among their military and industrial interests to win the lucrative contracts enriching the lobby groups and buttressing national economies.

This competition is intensifying as Zelensky makes a last-ditch effort to rally European military support to avoid a more comprehensive defeat as Russia's war machine grinds forward and closes in on Ukrainian positions in the Donbas region.

The biggest winner is unlikely to emerge from among individual EU countries heavily invested in the armament and industrial complexes

or even from the EU as a collective. It will be the US, which – having provided the largest amount of military assistance to Ukraine, an estimated US\$66.5 billion in military aid since February 2022 – is determined not only to call the shots in the peace settlement but also to recover its war "investment" in the reconstruction and rearmament years ahead.

This can be seen clearly from the 28-point draft peace settlement plan presented to Ukraine, which is essentially an American imposition on Ukraine and its supporters in the EU.

The entire structure of the plan – particularly control over Russian frozen assets, the financial profits for the US in reconstruction, the US-led security dialogue and the key position and authority of the Peace Council to be chaired by President Donald Trump to monitor implementation – appear designed to establish US primacy in shaping the post-war European order and accessing strategic and economic opportunities, potentially at the expense of the EU's own efforts, leverage and desired role in continental security.

European military and industry critics of the plan will be hoping that the final peace settlement will see more than a few contracts thrown their way as American military and economic hegemony over Europe continues uncontested.

Meanwhile, Zelensky is facing his biggest challenge away from the battlefield – either accept the American-Russian peace plan or face even greater exposure as leader of a corrupt regime that has reaped extraordinary benefits from the war. Trump has given him a deadline on acceptance of the plan, which Zelensky will find difficult to wriggle out of.

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

Learn to tell difference between what matters and what trends

LETTERS
letters@thesundaily.com

MALAYSIANS have a peculiar habit – we can turn the smallest issue into a national debate. Maybe it is a symptom of living in a country where everyone has an opinion and a smartphone.

Whatever the reason, we often make mountains out of molehills. Worse still, social media allows even the tiniest of complaints to be turned into a national conversation.

Psychologists call it negativity bias – the human tendency to focus more on what goes wrong than what goes right – where one bad experience overshadows 10 good ones. That is why complaints travel faster than compliments, and a single glitch can drown out months of good performance.

Take Budi95. When it was first introduced, the online noise was quite noticeable. One petrol kiosk experiencing technical glitches was made out as though the entire system had failed nationwide. Others complained of those who fell between

the cracks, such as those not possessing valid driving licences, or the sufficiency of the monthly fuel quota.

Yet, one month later, the programme has proven to be largely well implemented. Payments have been smooth and the teething issues have been quickly resolved. What was once branded as a failure quietly became a functioning policy.

The pattern repeats itself with the Aerotrain service at Kuala Lumpur International Airport. For months, social media users joked about its breakdowns, as if the train spent more time idle than running.

Memes, photos and exaggerated stories spread faster than any repair update ever could. But when the Dewan Rakyat was told that the Aerotrain operated at a reliability rate of 99.19%, critics went silent.

I have used the Aerotrain services several times since its relaunch last July and so have my friends. We generally agree that the experience have been pleasant. This is not to deny that things had indeed gone wrong with the service and the ensuing bad press was embarrassing, especially in the run-up to Visit Malaysia Year 2026.

“As Malaysians, we take pride in being outspoken but perhaps we should also cultivate the discipline to pause before reacting, to ask whether what we are hearing is truly significant or just the latest ripple in the noise.”

But human nature is such that when things run smoothly most of the time, nobody notices. However, the moment things go wrong ever so slightly, we kick up a fuss.

In school exams, if one were to score 90% and above, one is usually considered the cream of the crop. In the Aerotrain case, it scored 99.19%, which should be exceptional.

In Bukit Bintang, where I am active in community work, I see this propensity to blow things out of proportion all the time, whether among the residents or relevant government agencies or even the private sector. For instance, a small issue like a parking problem or a broken lamp post can spark endless debate while larger long-term upgrades receive little notice. We often miss the forest for the trees. To be honest, I sometimes find myself falling into this trap too.

The problem with living in constant reaction mode is that it shapes how we see everything. We conflate noise with substance and in doing so, we lose track of what really matters. Our resources end up misdirected and spent on the trivial

instead of the essential.

To be clear, holding authorities accountable is necessary but accountability requires perspective. It means recognising the difference between genuine failures and noise manufactured to distract.

As Malaysians, we take pride in being outspoken but perhaps we should also cultivate the discipline to pause before reacting, to ask whether what we are hearing is truly significant or just the latest ripple in the noise.

If we can do that, we might find ourselves less distracted by the outrage of the day and more focussed on progress that lasts. Whether it is transport, digital services or policy reforms, substance deserves a louder voice than noise.

Because in the end, nations do not move forward on complaints; they move forward when their people learn to tell the difference between what matters and what merely trends.

Ben Fong Kok Seng
Chairperson
Bukit Bintang Parliamentary
Zone Residents'
Representative Council

Raising the bar for future-ready workspaces

KUALA LUMPUR: INFINITY8, Malaysia's fastest-growing homegrown co-working brand, has unveiled its latest flagship, INFINITY8 Reserve Sunway Square, marking a defining moment in the company's journey from a pioneering co-working operator to a full-suite corporate solutions provider.

The launch underscores INFINITY8's trajectory of growth, with 131,600 square feet of expansion achieved in the last one and a half years, bringing its nationwide presence to 14 outlets across Johor Bahru, Kuala Lumpur, Subang Jaya and George Town.

Founded in Johor just eight years ago, INFINITY8 has grown in parallel with Malaysia's dynamic business landscape.

What began as a bold experiment in flexible coworking has matured into a holistic ecosystem supporting businesses of all sizes, from agile SMEs to multinational corporations seeking efficient market entry.

This transformation reflects the company's commitment to anticipate the future of work and deliver solutions that go far beyond physical office space.

"Our journey has always been about anticipating the future of work, not just reacting to it," said Lee Sheah Liang, Co-Founder of INFINITY8. "This milestone reflects how far INFINITY8 has come since our beginnings in Johor. Today, we are proud to stand as a partner to businesses of every size, offering not just workspaces but the corporate solutions and sustainable environments they need to succeed in Malaysia."

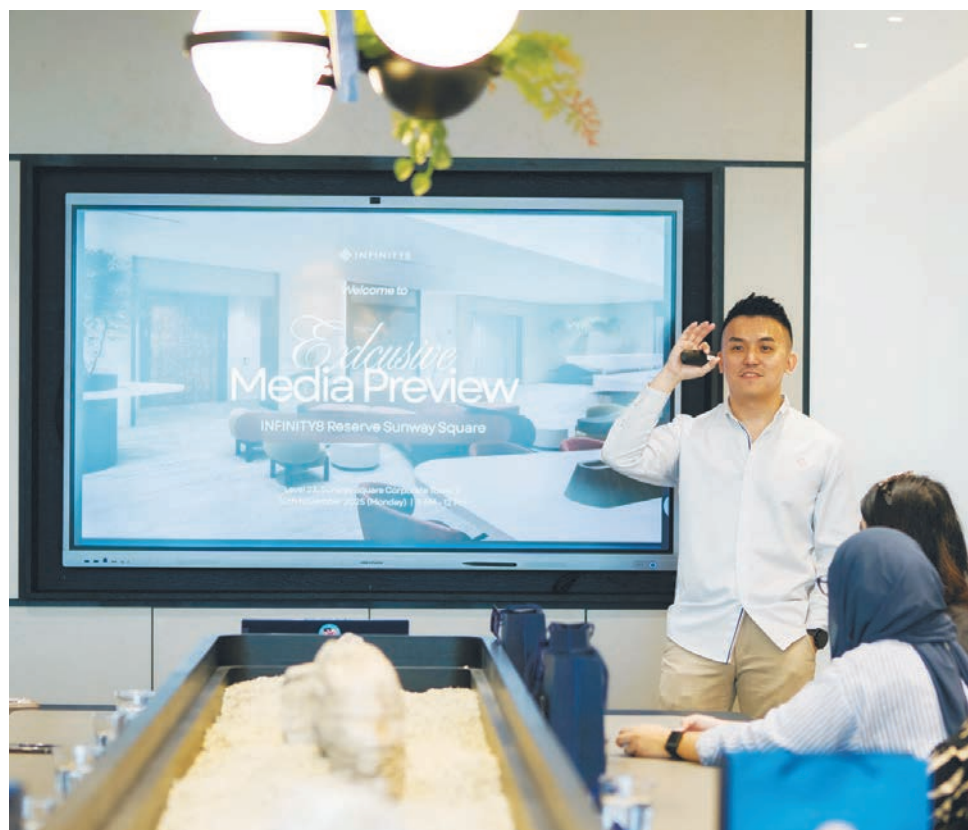
The company's evolution into a full-suite corporate partner responds directly to rising demand for integrated business solutions. Beyond its flexible, high-quality workspaces, the company now offers recruitment and HR placement services, as well as Employer of Record (EoR) solutions that enable international firms to establish operations in Malaysia up to six months faster, with setup possible in as little as one week.

By bridging the gap between workspace and operational readiness, INFINITY8 has positioned itself as a partner for businesses navigating the complexities of market entry and expansion.

The brand's performance reflects its resilience and scalability, with an overall occupancy rate of 86% as of September 2025. INFINITY8 is closing the financial year with an estimated 40% year-on-year revenue growth, and projects up to 74% revenue growth in 2026 for its workspace business.

Its commitment to operational excellence is reinforced by its ISO 9001 certification for

➤ INFINITY8 Reserve Sunway Square empowers business community to grow responsibly



Lee delivers the opening speech at the exclusive media preview of INFINITY8 Reserve Sunway Square.

quality management by TÜV, recognising the company's consistency, efficiency, and service quality.

The newly launched INFINITY8 Reserve Sunway Square represents the company's most ESG-oriented outlet to date, reflecting its belief that sustainability and business performance go hand in hand.

Designed to elevate comfort, well-being, and productivity, the outlet integrates features such as nap pods, and natural-light zones, alongside the use of locally sourced and recycled materials. Its food waste reduction systems align with Sunway's aspiration to be a Sustainable Development Goals-driven township, positioning the space as a model for future-ready work environments that prioritise both people and the planet.

From Johor Bharu to Kuala Lumpur,

Subang Jaya and George Town, INFINITY8 said it has consistently built communities that connect entrepreneurs, SMEs, and big corporations.

It added that this community-centric approach remains central to the company's mission, ensuring that its expansion is measured not only in square footage but also in its contribution to Malaysia's entrepreneurial and innovation ecosystem.

Looking ahead, INFINITY8 said it aims to maintain its growth through continued expansion beginning in 2026 and by strengthening its corporate service offerings.

With INFINITY8 Reserve Sunway Square, the company said that its sustainability can meet scalability and that a homegrown Malaysian company can set new benchmarks for innovation, profitability, and community impact in the workspace industry.

Bank Islam inks MoU to provide RM100m financing to PAAB contractors

KUALA LUMPUR: Bank Islam Malaysia Bhd has inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Pengurusan Aset Air Bhd (PAAB) to provide RM100 million financing to PAAB contractors in 2026.

In a joint statement, both companies said the collaboration aims to enhance access to tailored financing and banking solutions for PAAB's contractors, enabling them to execute awarded contracts more effectively and unlock their growth potential.

They said the MoU would facilitate the financing and implementation of water-asset works, which in turn can accelerate the reduction of non-revenue water and help deliver other 13th Malaysia Plan (13MP) and Budget 2026 water-related initiatives.

"(These initiatives include) sustainable infrastructure investment, improved service reliability, and environmental, social and governance (ESG)-aligned funding," they said.

Bank Islam group chief business officer of institutional banking Sharifah Sarah Syed Mohamed Tahir said the MoU reflects the bank's strategic commitment to support national ESG priorities while unlocking significant growth opportunities in the water sector.

"With RM100 million in targeted financing for PAAB contractors in 2026, we are positioning ourselves to play a pivotal role in financing sustainable development.

"Beyond financing, this partnership provides customers with faster and more reliable access to working capital through direct contract verification and PAAB's assignment of payment mechanism," she said.

Sharifah Sarah added that the collaboration enhances transparency, streamlines processes, and supports timely project delivery by ensuring efficient fund flow across the supply chain.

Bank Islam group CEO Datuk Mohd Muazzam Mohamed and PAAB CEO Zulkiflee said the company believes the MoU represents an innovative approach to supporting vendor development by strengthening business sustainability.

"It enables us to bridge the financial gaps faced by our vendors through tailored financing solutions that help them maintain steady cash flow and ensure the smooth implementation of their projects within the stipulated timeline," he said. – Bernama

Malaysia launches world's first renminbi-denominated climate sukuk

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has achieved another global first in Islamic finance with the launch of the world's first RMB 200 million Climate Sukuk, a landmark deal that fuses Shariah principles with green finance, digital tokenisation, and carbon credit monetisation.

Jointly issued by Hong Kong-listed Unity Group Holdings International Ltd (Unity Group) and Tek Securities Limited under the Labuan IBFC framework, the sukuk was announced at the Global Islamic Finance Forum (GIFF) 2025 recently, reinforcing Malaysia's ambition to position Labuan as the Global Hub for Digital Islamic Finance.

The issuance is backed by 40,400 tonnes of

verified carbon credits derived from the Selangor Government's Energy Efficiency Initiative: The Green Initiative Programme, reflecting tangible carbon reduction outcomes through the deployment of Ultra High-Efficiency ESG Lighting.

In a recent statement, it said proceeds from the issuance will fund green infrastructure and low-carbon projects led by Synergy ESCO, including advanced ESG lighting installations under the Selangor Green Initiative for Strata Properties.

The initiative aims to convert six million tonnes and generate four million tonnes of carbon credits over the next decade.

Unity Group Chairman and CEO Mansfield Wong said the Climate Sukuk serves as a replicable model for sustainable investment and Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) integration.

"It sets a new standard for Islamic finance to drive climate action and this marks Unity Group's shift from energy services to sustainable fintech provider, delivering both financial returns and measurable environmental value," he added.

Unity Group also plans to expand its portfolio into other sustainability-driven ventures such as renewable energy and smart farming projects to further support Malaysia's net-zero transition.

This milestone was highlighted by the visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who toured the Unity Group booth at GIFF 2025 and kickstarted the initiative by signing a commemorative plaque.

This innovative bond represents a new generation of Shariah-compliant financial instruments aligned with the Government's vision for a climate-focused and transparent financial ecosystem under Budget 2026.

Using Labuan IBFC's strong framework to attract investment and drive sustainable, climate-resilient growth, the sukuk exemplifies how Islamic finance can support measurable environmental outcomes.



BY HAYATUN RAZAK
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is introducing a new model that requires ministries to publicly identify their challenges and invite industry players to propose solutions, moving away from Malaysia's traditional one-problem-one-contractor system.

Spearheaded by Malaysia Digital Economy Corporation (MDEC), the government Innovation Initiative will allow ministries and agencies to publish their problem statements openly, enabling the private sector to submit data- and technology-driven proposals in response.

"We want to move to a system where ministries put up their problem statements, and the industry tells us what solutions are possible. Ultimately, the best suggestion wins," Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo told reporters at the Pikom Leadership Summit 2025 (Pikom Lead 2025) yesterday.

Gobind said such a move would help Malaysia obtain more comprehensive, higher-quality solutions using the same budget traditionally used to solve just one issue.

"In the past, when a problem arose, a contractor would simply be appointed to resolve it. Previously, we spent money to fix one issue at a time. Still, today, with innovation, data and new technology, the same resources can be used to tackle many more challenges."

Gobind said his ministry is preparing the innovation framework for submission to the prime minister and the cabinet, with

Malaysia to switch to open innovation framework

➤ Initiative allows ministries and agencies to identify challenges openly, invite private sector to submit data- and technology-driven proposals in response

phased implementation expected.

"It is still under discussion, and I am preparing the framework to submit to the prime minister and the cabinet. We are working on it now, and I believe we will start seeing progress within the first six months of next year. It will roll out in phases, but by the middle of next year, the framework should be ready," he said.

Furthermore, the government is establishing a data commission within the next 24 months to oversee data standards, security layers and long-term usability, following the enforcement of the Data Sharing Act on April 28 this year.

"Although 4G coverage has reached 97% and 5G is nearing 84%, the country remains under-prepared in critical areas such as data, computing power, and digital

governance.

"Much of the government's data from the past 60 years is still in analogue form, and there is no policy requiring ministries to audit and digitise their records. Without reliable data and sufficient computing capacity, discussions about AI are ineffective because we cannot put those ideas into practice," Gobind said.

Pikom Lead is the annual flagship leadership summit organised by Pikom, the National Tech Association of Malaysia. This year's edition gathered more than 400 C-level leaders, policymakers, innovators and international delegates from China, Mongolia and across Southeast Asia.

Carrying the theme *Spark · Strategy · Scale*, Pikom Lead 2025 explored how intelligent technologies, artificial intelligence (AI),

cross-border market access and talent transformation are shaping a resilient, globally competitive digital economy for Malaysia.

A major highlight of the summit was the announcement of five strategic collaborations, underscoring Pikom's expanding role as a regional connector and national industry catalyst.

The first collaboration will see the Global Computing Consortium establish its Malaysian hub within Pikom, positioning the country as an active node in the global computing ecosystem and advancing cross-border cooperation in AI, advanced computing, and digital infrastructure.

The second partnership, between Pikom and the China Silk Road Group, aims to deepen Malaysia-China digital cooperation by accelerating joint initiatives in AI innovation, cybersecurity, data centres and digital trade, further strengthening Malaysia's role as a digital gateway between China and Asean.

The third collaboration involves Pikom Academy and TM Digital Innovation, which will jointly develop a Talent Intelligence Platform to help companies anti-

cipate future skill needs, support digital upskilling and build a resilient, data-driven talent pipeline.

The fourth partnership is between Pikom Academy and TalentCorp to promote the LiKES internship initiative. TalentCorp also announced a RMI million allocation for Pikom member companies under the LiKES Matching Grant to support SMEs and start-ups in providing high-quality paid internships.

The fifth collaboration links the Pikom CIO Chapter with the Mongolia CIO Club to enhance cross-border CIO cooperation, strengthening professional exchange, leadership development, and CIO-to-CIO networking between both countries.

Pikom chairman Adjunct Professor of Practice Alex Liew highlighted the importance of these partnerships in charting Malaysia's digital future.

"These collaborations represent our commitment to move from ambition to activation. Pikom is building bridges that connect Malaysia to global opportunities, strengthen our talent ecosystem, and accelerate industry-wide digital transformation," he said.

Palm oil continues to anchor global food security, edible oils supply

PETALING JAYA: Palm oil remains the most important and affordable edible oil in the global supply chain, underpinning food security, employment, and economic development worldwide.

Fastmarkets Palm Oil Analytics Singapore senior analyst Dr Sathia Varqa said palm oil accounts for one-third of global edible oil consumption, surpassing soybean, sunflower and rapeseed oils in the international market.

"Palm oil is highly competitive and affordable. It helps balance rising food prices and provides a stable edible oil supply to millions of consumers around the world," he said at the recent Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) International Palm Oil Congress and Exhibition 2025 (Pipoc 2025).

Sathia delivered a presentation titled "Palm and Lauric Oil Market Outlook 2026", emphasising that palm oil is not only a food commodity but also a vital income source for millions of smallholders in Malaysia, Indonesia, and other producing nations.

Beyond food, palm oil is now a critical component in sustainable energy policies. Its role in biodiesel production has grown from 10% currently to 25% next year, he said.

"The ability of palm oil to reduce carbon emissions positions palm-



Poon (left) and Sathia

based biofuels as an important contributor to green energy targets in producing countries – including Malaysia, which has already implemented the B20 biodiesel programme," Sathia noted.

However, climate change continues to pose challenges across all agricultural commodities. Even so, palm trees demonstrate greater resilience and faster recovery from extreme weather than soybeans and sunflowers.

Sathia acknowledged several domestic challenges facing Malaysia's industry, including ageing palms, low productivity, labour shortages, slow mechanisation and the wide performance gap between large estates and smallholder farms.

"These issues will not disappear by

2026. Malaysia needs short-, medium-, and long-term strategies, including accelerated replanting incentives and automation," he said.

He added that Malaysia is now well-positioned to attract new investments, especially amid land policy uncertainties and rising regulatory risks in Indonesia.

"Malaysia's advantage is stability. Investors want clarity in land rights, regulations, and governance. This is the right moment for Malaysia to draw new investment," Sathia said.

Meanwhile, used cooking oil, particularly that derived from palm oil, can be processed and recycled into new forms of energy, including sustainable aviation fuel (SAF).

EcoCeres Renewable Fuels Sdn Bhd, a clean-energy company from China, is advancing this innovative pathway.

The company has established an operational plant in Johor with a production capacity of about 1,000 tonnes of products per day – comparable to its facilities in China.

EcoCeres Renewable Fuels executive vice-president of operations Dannis Poon said the company is planning a nationwide public awareness campaign to highlight the benefits of SAF.

"We hope that by January 2026, this campaign will encourage Malaysians to participate in collecting

used cooking oil to recycle it into energy," he said.

"For most people, this oil is simply waste, but for us, it is valuable because it can be converted into fuels, including SAF. We do not use fossil oils or earth-extracted resources. Instead, we process used cooking oil (from households and restaurants), industrial waste oil and food-grade oil residues as our primary feedstocks."

Poon delivered these remarks during his talk titled "Latest Developments in Aviation Decarbonisation: Opportunities and Challenges" at Pipoc 2025.

EcoCeres deliberately avoids edible oils to prevent competition with the food sector and to minimise the carbon footprint associated with cultivation. Through its proprietary hydrotreating technology, waste oils are refined into several products: SAF for aviation, renewable diesel for industrial and transportation use and naphtha for the petrochemical sector.

"At present, the SAF we produce is supplied to international airlines such as Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong Airlines and British Airways under long-term contracts," Poon said.

Explaining why Johor was selected for its expanded operations, he noted that the company evaluated several Asian countries, including

Thailand and Indonesia, but ultimately found Malaysia's investment-friendly policies more attractive.

"The existing oil and gas infrastructure, access to waste oil from the local food industry, and a business environment that aligns well with regional operations were key factors," he added.

More than 99% of the Johor plant's workforce comprises Malaysians, which he said reflects the company's commitment to supporting local socioeconomic development.

"The feedstock is collected in Malaysia, processed in Malaysia, and may eventually be used by Malaysian airlines such as MAS and AirAsia," said Poon.

However, he also highlighted several challenges. Malaysia produces only about 200,000 tonnes of used cooking oil annually, insufficient for large-scale refinery operations.

Other issues include inconsistent waste-oil quality – some being heavily contaminated or mixed with water – as well as international trade policies that impose tariffs, and the need for regional collaboration in Southeast Asia to secure a stable supply of feedstock.

"If every country builds its own plant, the feedstock will not be enough. We need to look at regional-level solutions," Poon said.



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Polyplas invests RM74m in new high-tech Penang plant

➤ **Ge-Shen Corp subsidiary strengthens capabilities in advanced manufacturing**

PETALING JAYA: Ge-Shen Corporation Bhd's subsidiary, Polyplas Sdn Bhd, a precision injection moulding manufacturer, is strengthening its strategic presence in Malaysia's manufacturing landscape with a new high-technology plant in Penang, launched on Nov 21.

Supported by a committed investment of RM24 million for the new manufacturing facility and RM50 million for advanced machinery and automation, the expansion reflects the company's continued commitment to strengthening its technologically sophisticated, high-value production activities.

The enhanced capabilities are expected to elevate operational efficiency, accelerate Industry 4.0 adoption and reinforce Malaysia's overall competitiveness in innovation-driven manufacturing.

Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida) CEO Datuk Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid emphasised the significance of the project to Malaysia's industrial development agenda.

"Mida wholeheartedly welcomes Polyplas's latest expansion, which stands as a strong testament to a homegrown manufacturer advancing up the value chain. Through our strategic investment facilitation, regulatory coordination, and ongoing advisory support, Mida is proud to champion local champions like Polyplas in their transformation towards high-value, technology-intensive operations.

"By deepening its specialisation in high-quality plastic components for critical sectors such as industrial products, med-tech products, and consumer goods, Polyplas is contributing meaningfully to Malaysia's

economic complexity.

"This investment exemplifies the outcome-based, technology-driven growth central to the New Industrial Master Plan 2030 agenda, anchored on advanced manufacturing, high-value job creation, and stronger innovation capacity.

"The commitment to creating skilled employment opportunities and nurturing local talent through structured training and university collaborations directly supports our national priority of developing a future-ready workforce.

"Polyplas' sustained focus on technological adoption, automation, and Industry 4.0 integration further reinforces Malaysia's position as a globally competitive, innovation-led industrial nation.

"We are confident that this expansion will inspire more Malaysian companies to embrace innovation and scale up their capabilities to meet the demands of tomorrow's economy," he said.

Polyplas managing director Andrew Teoh said the company is

delighted to announce the official opening of its new manufacturing facility, marking a significant milestone in its growth journey and reaffirming its commitment to delivering excellence to its customers.

"This new factory represents not only a significant investment in advanced technology and production capability, but also in our people, our community, and the future of our industry.

"Equipped with modern machinery and sustainable production systems, this facility will enhance our operational efficiency, increase capacity and support our expansion into new markets.

"More importantly, it reinforces our dedication to delivering high-quality products while maintaining responsible and environmentally friendly manufacturing practices. The opening of this new factory also brings exciting opportunities for the local workforce.

"We are committed to creating meaningful jobs, nurturing talent, and contributing positively to the community we now proudly call

home. This milestone would not have been possible without the trust of our customers, the support of our partners, and the hard work of our entire team.

"Together, we look forward to driving innovation, strengthening our competitiveness, and building a brighter future for the company and the communities we serve," he added.

The expansion has created new high-skilled positions across engineering, technical operations, moulding, quality control, automation and management.

Polyplas is also intensifying its talent development efforts through structured training, upskilling programmes and university collaborations that support Malaysia's national talent development priorities.

Established in 1988, Polyplas has steadily expanded its production footprint and technical competencies.

The company acknowledges the continuous support of the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry, Mida, and relevant agencies in facilitating its growth.



From left Polyplas operation director Malveen Singh, Mida director Muhammad Ghaddaffi, Ge-Shen Corporation operation director Brandon Tham, Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry Penang director Siti Norbaya Kamaludin and Teoh.

September Leading Index up 0.8% year-on-year

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's economic indicators strengthened in September 2025, with the Leading Index (LI) recording a 0.8% increase to 113.3 points, up from 112.4 points a year earlier, according to the Statistics Department of Malaysia (DoSM).

The LI provides an early indication of turning points in the business cycle and the near-term direction of the economy.

Chief Statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the positive trajectory was supported by strong double-digit growth in the number of new companies registered (16%) and real imports of semiconductors (15.8%).

"Nevertheless, on a monthly basis the LI declined by 0.5%, weighed down by the number of housing units approved (-0.7%) and real imports of other basic precious and other non-ferrous metals (-0.5%)," he said in a statement.

Despite the LI's smoothed long-term trend remaining below the 100 -point level in September 2025, Mohd Uzir said, the Malaysian economy is expected to continue expanding, underpinned by sectoral diversity and a robust domestic foundation.

He said positive trade performance, encouraging investment and easing inflation continue to strengthen domestic resilience, acting as an effective buffer against global headwinds and alleviating cost-of-living pressures.

"In terms of the current economic situation, the Coincident Index (CI) sustained its positive growth, registering 2.6% and reaching 129.1 points against 125.8 points in the corresponding month last year."

At the same time, Mohd Uzir said the CI's monthly performance rebounded by 0.2% after a 0.6% decline in the previous month.

"This recovery was driven by a 0.3% increase in the volume index of retail trade, which recorded the highest rise among the components, indicating resilient domestic economic activity," he added. – Bernama

SBS Nexus signs underwriting deal with M&A Securities for IPO

PETALING JAYA: SBS Nexus Bhd has signed an underwriting agreement with M&A Securities Sdn Bhd for its initial public offering (IPO) and listing on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia.

M&A Securities will be underwriting 41.65 million shares, made available to the Malaysian public and eligible persons, via pink form allocations.

SBS Nexus's IPO entails the public offering of 171.5 million ordinary shares comprising a public issue of 122.5 million shares and an offer for sale of 49 million shares, which collectively represent 35% of SBS Nexus Group's enlarged issued share capital of 490 million shares.

Of the 122.5 million shares offered, 24.5 million will be open for sub-

scription by the Malaysian public, while another 17.15 million will be reserved for eligible applicants. A further 61.25 million shares will be placed privately with Bumiputera investors approved by the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry.

The remaining 19.6 million shares will be allocated to selected investors through a private placement exercise.

This structure aims to ensure a balanced distribution across public, eligible and strategic investor groups.

There is also an offer for sale of 49 million shares, to be allocated through a private placement to selected investors.

SBS Nexus managing director CEO Wong Chun Mun said the signing of the underwriting agreement with

M&A Securities not only reinforces confidence but also brings SBS Nexus a step closer to its IPO journey to become an ACE Market-listed company.

"This comes at an opportune time as we are ready to take advantage of the vast opportunities and vibrancy in the branding and marketing industry in Malaysia.

"We offer an extensive range of services as a one-stop branding and marketing solutions provider for local businesses and entrepreneurs in various stages of their business lifecycle.

"One of our key unique competencies is our ability to propose and cross-sell a range of branding and marketing solutions to our customers, creating a seamless, cohesive branding strategy for them," Wong said in a

statement.

SBS Nexus, an investment holding company and branding and marketing solutions specialist, is principally involved in the provision of offline and digital branding solutions.

Wong said the wide range of service offerings provided by SBS Nexus caters to prevalent consumer trends and ever-changing market demand, which is expected to support the continued growth of SBS Nexus Group.

The IPO proceeds will be used to establish a new headquarters, including relocating to a larger office to support the company's anticipated growth. Part of the funds will also go towards strengthening its presence within the Malay-speaking SME community.

In addition, the company plans to

invest in further branding and marketing efforts, as well as expand its mobile app, web-based application and website development services to enhance its overall digital capabilities.

The balance will be used to defray estimated listing expenses.

SBS Nexus has recorded strong financial growth, with revenue increasing from RM11.6 million for the financial year ended Dec 31, 2022 (FY22) to RM29.92 million in FY24, and its profit after tax grew from RM1.58 million in FY22 to RM7.6 million in FY24, a compounded annual growth rate of 219%.

M&A Securities serves as the principal adviser, sponsor, underwriter and placement agent for the IPO, which will be priced later.

Mixed views on MISC as LNG mood softens

► Strong Q3 results boost confidence but liquefied natural gas market under pressure

KUALA LUMPUR: Analysts have mixed views on MISC Bhd after it posted a higher net profit of RM541.8 million in the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2025 (Q3'25) from RM338.9 million a year ago.

In a research note yesterday, Hong Leong Investment Bank Bhd (HLIB) has maintained a "Buy" call on the counter and revised the target price (TP) to RM8.31 from RM8.11 previously.

The investment bank said the stock's risk-reward profile remains favourable, anticipating earnings growth driven by the offshore and petroleum segments.

HLIB said the liquefied natural gas (LNG) market will, however, remain soft this year due to oversupply of vessels, driven by strong newbuild deliveries, with further pressure from delays in large-scale liquefaction projects that are constraining vessel utilisation.

"We believe this softness is temporary, with a meaningful recovery anticipated from 2026 onwards once Qatar, the US and African LNG supply expansions

come onstream, which should gradually rebalance vessel demand-supply dynamics and underpin firmer charter rates," it added.

HLIB said that over the next three years, eight LNG carriers will come off charter, and MISC's priority is expected to be on secure re-chartering opportunities for these vessels.

"At the same time, MISC is scheduled to take delivery of close to 20 new LNG carriers, which will progressively rebuild and supplement segmental revenue as older contracts roll off.

"That said, we see earnings growth in 2026 to be driven by the petroleum division due to the favourable petroleum tanker market, with increasing Opec's oil supply driving tonne-mile demand alongside minimal fleet expansion, and offshore business with recognition of Mero-3's bareboat charter post-final acceptance," it said.

Meanwhile, CIMB Securities Sdn Bhd has maintained its 2025-2027 earnings forecasts for MISC,

expecting a more stable Q4'25 performance.

"The LNG division is likely to remain under pressure from vessel oversupply and elevated newbuild deliveries, which continue to suppress freight rates.

"Earnings visibility may also soften owing to reduced earning days following expiry of time charter contracts and vessel disposals," it said in a separate note.

Overall, CIMB said Q4'25 earnings are expected to be supported primarily by the petroleum and offshore segments.

"We maintain 'Buy' with an unchanged RM9.19 (TP)," it added.

MBSB Investment Bank Bhd said MISC's financial results were in line with its expectations and consensus, achieving 73% of MBSB forecasts.

"Moving forward, we expected a mixed but ultimately positive outlook for MISC, driven by its diversified business model and opportunities in driving growth for its tankers and floating production storage and offloading vessels," it said in a separate note.

Nevertheless, MBSB said this positive outlook has been priced in; hence, given the limited upside, it downgraded its call on MISC to "Neutral" (from "Buy") with a TP at RM8.13. - Bernama

AutoCount 9M profit surges, aided by SME digital demand

KUALA LUMPUR: AutoCount Dotcom Bhd, a leading provider of business and financial management software, posted positive earnings for the nine-month (9M) period ending Sept 30, 2025 (FY25), reflecting continued momentum in small and medium enterprise (SME) digitalisation and sustained adoption of its software products.

For 9M'25, the group recorded a profit after tax (PAT) of RM27.41 million, a 90.9% increase from RM14.36 million in the same period last year.

Revenue rose 34.8% year-on-year to RM61.38 million from RM45.53 million posted in 9M'24, supported by higher uptake of AutoCount's financial management software and e-invoicing modules.

The group also generated RM37.7 million in operating cash flow for the period, reinforcing its financial resilience and capacity to support future expansion, research and development, and shareholder distributions.

For the third quarter (Q3) of FY25, the group posted revenue of RM15.66 million and PAT of RM5.14 million.

The lower revenue for the quarter was due to two temporary factors: the absence of MSME Digitalisation Grant recognition in Q3'25, which contributed significantly to Q3'24's higher base, and the deferment of e-invoicing implementation for businesses with revenue below RM5 million, announced on June 5, 2025.

Despite these external factors, PBT margin improved to 47.8% from 41.5% in Q3'24, driven by the group's

scalable cost structure, where major cost components – particularly staff-related expenses – remain fixed mainly.

This allows AutoCount to maintain resilient margins even in lower-revenue quarters.

Managing director YT Choo said the company's 9M results reflect the group's strong fundamentals.

"Despite the timing effects from the e-invoicing deferral, our margins remained healthy. The ability to deliver RM27.41 million in profit with strong cash flow demonstrates the scalability of our business model.

"We continue to see solid underlying demand from SMEs seeking digitalisation tools. With the upcoming phases of e-invoicing and the growing adoption of our cloud and POS solutions, we are confident about sustaining our growth momentum," he said.

Malaysia's five-phase e-invoicing rollout continues to offer multi-year growth visibility, beginning with taxpayers earning over RM100 million from Aug 1, 2024, followed by those in the RM25 million to RM100 million bracket on Jan 1, 2025, RM5 million to RM25 million on July 1, 2025, RM1 million to RM5 million on Jan 1, 2026, and finally those earning between RM0.5 million and RM1 million on July 1, 2026.

With Phases 3–5 covering the vast majority of SMEs, AutoCount expects a meaningful pickup in e-invoicing adoption from 2025 through mid-2026 as compliance becomes mandatory across all revenue tiers.

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A small toy figure and mineral imitation are seen in front of the Lynas Rare Earths logo in this illustration. Lynas is the world's largest rare earths producer outside China. — **REUTERSPIC**

Lynas Rare Earths warns of month-long output shortfall

➤ Hit by power supply disruptions at Kalgoorlie plant in Western Australia, finished goods production at M'sian facility to be affected

SYDNEY: Lynas Rare Earths warned yesterday of a one-month production shortfall this quarter due to significant power supply disruptions at its Kalgoorlie processing facility in Western Australia.

The production shortfall could be a potential setback for the world's largest rare earths

producer outside China as it tries to ramp up output amid a growing push from countries to reduce their reliance on China.

Lynas said its Kalgoorlie facility faced a substantial rise in power supply disruptions in 2025, with outages in November resulting in a significant loss in mixed rare earth carbonate (MREC) production.

The company expects the disruptions to impact production of finished goods at its Malaysian facility this quarter. MREC produced in Kalgoorlie is processed at Lynas Malaysia's advanced materials plant in the industrial town of Gebeng.

"Lynas is working constructively with the WA government and Western Power to identify causes of recent outages and options to improve power availability to the Lynas plant," the company said.

"Whilst these are being progressed on an urgent basis, even on a best-case scenario, they will not be in place in time to improve this quarter's forecast production."

Lynas recorded total rare earth oxide output of 3,993 metric tons and neodymium and praseodymium (NdPr) output of 2,003 tons for the September quarter. It reported sales revenue of A\$200.2 million (RM533.8 million) for the quarter.

Analysts at Canaccord Genuity cut their NdPr production forecast for the December quarter to 1.8 kilotons (kt) from 2.7 kt previously expected. Revenue expectations were lowered to A\$220 million from A\$280 million.

Shares of Lynas closed 0.1% lower at A\$15.02 after falling more than 2% earlier in the session. The broader benchmark index edged 0.1% higher. — Reuters

Vietnam's Binh Son refinery steps up US oil imports

HANOI/SINGAPORE: Vietnam's Binh Son oil refinery is set to receive 1 million barrels of West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude in January, its second purchase in three months as it steps up imports from the United States, two sources familiar with the matter said yesterday.

Vietnam has been seeking to buy more US goods to narrow a trade gap between the two countries since Trump threatened in April to impose tariffs on Vietnamese products.

Crude oil, liquefied natural gas, farm produce, and aircraft are among the US goods that Vietnam is looking to import.

Swiss trader Mercuria sold the one-million-barrel cargo which will be delivered on Jan 7-11, the sources said. The companies typically do not

comment on commercial deals.

BSR last received WTI on Nov 14, the country's first import since December 2024, data from shipping analytics firm Kpler showed.

That one-million-barrel cargo was also sold by Mercuria, one of the sources said.

BSR, which typically processes domestic crude, is importing WTI to replace Vietnam's Su Tu Den crude, which is being exported, the source said, adding that BSR may buy 700,000 to one million barrels of WTI every two to three months depending on gasoline margins.

The refiner said on Sunday that its output of refined products in the first 11 months of this year is estimated at 7.24 million tons, exceeding its target. BSR has been operating at 120% of

designed capacity this year, and is looking to ramp up to 123%-125% next year, it added.

In another development, fuel retailer Shell has agreed to buy 100,000 barrels of petrol from Indonesia's state energy firm Pertamina, the country's deputy energy minister Yuliot Tanjung said in Jakarta yesterday, after months of unavailability for certain fuels.

Private retailers in Indonesia were told to import gasoline through Pertamina after the government capped their import quota for the year, leading to shortages across their petrol stations.

Shell did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Yuliot told reporters that Shell had agreed to buy the oil but did not provide any other details. — Reuters

easyJet beats annual profit expectations, lifts target for holidays business

LONDON: British carrier easyJet reported better-than-expected full-year operating profit yesterday and upgraded its medium-term target for its holidays business after meeting the previous goal early.

European airlines have reported mixed results in the final quarters of the year as spiraling costs and repercussions from air traffic control strikes weigh on their balance sheets despite strong demand.

Low-cost carrier easyJet's headline operating profit for the financial year ended September grew to £703 million (RM3.8 billion)million, above the £669.37 million projected by analysts polled by LSEG.

EasyJet holidays, the company's high-margin package holiday arm, is now expected to log £450 million in pretax profit by 2030, having hit its previous medium-term target of £250 million this year.

"We are well placed to seize the significant opportunities ahead, and we are confident in achieving our medium-term goal of delivering over 1 billion pounds in profit before tax," CEO Kenton Jarvis said in a statement.

The holidays business has helped easyJet bolster its results in recent years, as a resurgence in price-controlled packaged holidays for price-sensitive consumers has boosted the airline sector.

The carrier said in July it expected good profit growth despite higher fuel prices and the negative impact of French air traffic control strikes on its earlier results.

easyJet, which operates an Airbus fleet equipped with CFM engines, has dodged many of the issues that have plagued the airline industry with servicing delays at engine maker Pratt and Whitney. — Reuters

Meta in talks to spend billions on Google AI chips: Report

BENGALURU: Facebook parent Meta is in discussions with Alphabet's Google to spend billions on using Google's AI chips in its data centres from 2027 and to rent chips from Google Cloud by next year, The Information reported on Monday.

Google has pitched tensor processing units, or TPUs, as a cheaper alternative to Nvidia chips, useful for firms seeking higher security standards, the report said, adding that Google has discussed aiming for 10% of Nvidia's revenue with its TPU chip business.

The TPUs, available for rent on Google Cloud, serve as an alternative to supply-constrained Nvidia chips.

Meta, Google and Nvidia did not immediately respond to requests for comment. Reuters could not immediately verify the report.

Meta announced earlier this year it will invest US\$600 billion (RM2,48 trillion) in US infrastructure and jobs over the next three years, including AI data centers.

The company has been one of Nvidia's biggest customers since 2022, amassing an arsenal of graphics processing units to train its models and also serve the more than three billion people who use its apps each day. — Reuters

Fed policymaker leans towards December **rate cut**

➤ US job market weak enough to warrant reduction next month but beyond that action more uncertain, says Waller

WASHINGTON: The job market is weak enough to warrant another quarter-point rate cut in December, though action beyond that depends on an upcoming flood of data delayed by the government shutdown, US Federal Reserve (Fed) governor Christopher Waller (*pic*) said on Monday.

Since the last Fed meeting, "most of the private sector and anecdotal data that we've gotten is that nothing has really changed. The labour market is soft. It's continuing to weaken," with inflation expected to ease, Waller said on Fox Business' Mornings with Maria.

While that makes a December cut appropriate, "January could be a little trickier, because we're going to get a flood of data that's released. If it is kind of consistent with what we've seen, then you can make the case for January. But if it suddenly shows a rebound in inflation or jobs or the economy's taking off, then it might give concern" about more cuts, Waller said.

Fed officials are divided over whether to cut rates again at the December meeting, though recent comments from top policymakers – including New York Fed president John Williams on Friday – have shifted market expectations strongly in favour of another quarter-point reduction at their Dec 9-10 meeting. According to CME Group's FedWatch tool, the futures market-implied probability of a quarter point reduction to a range of 3.50% to 3.75% is now about 83%,



roughly double what it had been a week ago. The Fed will remain information-constrained at that session, with government statistical agencies still digging through the backlog of work from the 43-day shutdown that ended Nov 14. The Bureau of Labor Statistics already has said it will not release a jobs or consumer inflation report for October, while the reports for November will not become public until after the Fed meets.

In the absence of those keystone data releases, officials are relying more heavily on information from private providers and on their own contacts in businesses and households around the country. Much of that information is compiled into a compendium known as the Beige Book that is released two weeks prior to each Fed meeting, with the next version due out on Wednesday.

"The labour market is still weak and ... we're getting no evidence telling me it's rebounding," Waller said. He downplayed the recently released September jobs report, showing the economy added a more-than-expected 119,000 jobs that month, as likely to be revised lower. The September report also showed the unemployment rate rose to 4.4% from 4.3% the month before.

One other policymaker joined Waller in voicing that concern on Monday. San Francisco Fed president Mary Daly, who had been on the fence over whether to support a

third consecutive rate cut next month, told the Wall Street Journal she now backs a reduction.

"On the labour market, I don't feel as confident we can get ahead of it," she said in an interview on Monday. "It's vulnerable enough now that the risk is it'll have a nonlinear change."

Daly, who does not have a vote on policy this year but like all Fed policymakers has a voice at the debate during meetings, now views an inflation surge as a lower risk.

By the time of the next meeting on Jan 27-28, however, Waller, Daly and their colleagues should be able to better gauge which of two views of the economy are starting to materialise – the one where inflation stays persistent with a risk of moving higher, a possibility that has led several regional reserve bank presidents to oppose further rate cuts, or the one where job growth remains weak and the unemployment rate increases, the outcome Waller finds most concerning.

Fed officials at the upcoming meeting will issue new economic projections that could reset expectations for any rate reductions next year. Policymakers were divided on the outlook in September, with the median official seeing only one further rate hike in 2026. Investors currently anticipate two to three cuts next year, according to data from the CME Group's FedWatch.

By the next meeting, the Fed should have in hand official estimates for jobs, the unemployment rate, and inflation through December.

"You may see a more of a meeting-by-meeting approach once you get to January," Waller said. "But I still don't think the labor market is going to turn around in the next six to eight weeks." – Reuters

Thai October exports miss forecast, but US shipments jump

BANGKOK: Thailand's exports fell short of expectations in October, growing at their slowest pace in 13 months despite robust shipments to the United States, with the total value hit by falling agricultural exports and earlier front-loading.

Exports, a key driver of the Thai economy, rose 5.7% in October from a year earlier, the ministry said yesterday, lower than an analyst forecast of 6.3% and following an annual jump of 19% in September.

The slowdown was partly a result of the surge in exports earlier in the year, which drove up stock levels, Nantapong Chiralerspong, head of the Trade Policy and Strategy Office, told a press conference.

Exports are expected to slow further going into next year, pressured by a strong baht and a possible decline in domestic farm output due to flooding, the commerce ministry said yesterday.

The baht has gained 6% against the US dollar so far this year, becoming Asia's second-best performing currency.

Over the January-October period, exports rose 13% from a year earlier. The commerce ministry forecast export growth of 10.7% to 11.4% for the whole of 2025.

"But exports are expected to slow next year due to this year's high base, the impact of US tariffs, and geopolitical issues," Nantapong said, without giving a specific forecast.

The US imposed a 19% tariff on imported goods from Thailand, in line with other countries in the region.

In October, exports to the United States, Thailand's largest market, jumped 33% year-on-year, while shipments to China increased 9.3%.

Imports rose 16.3% from a year earlier, much higher than a forecast rise of 7.5%, leading to a trade deficit of US\$3.44 billion in October, wider than the forecast deficit of US\$500 million (RM2.06 billion). – Reuters

Ageing populations a 'ticking time bomb' for GDP growth: EBRD

LONDON: Countries must act now to keep slowing population growth from wreaking havoc on their long-term economic prospects, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) said in a semi-annual report yesterday.

The report said ageing populations have already begun to hinder economic growth in some nations – and that in emerging Europe, the drop in the share of working-age people is projected to reduce annual per capita gross domestic product (GDP) growth by an average of almost 0.4 percentage points a year between 2024 and 2050.

"Already today, demography is eroding growth in living standards, and it is going to be a headwind for GDP growth in the future," EBRD chief economist Beata Javorcik told Reuters.

Post-communist nations, she said, "are getting old before getting rich", with the median age hitting 37 at a time when the average GDP per capita stands at US\$10,000 (RM41,320). That was a quarter of the amount recorded when the median age hit that level in advanced economies in the 1990s.

The report pointed to a range of factors driving the fall in the birth rate – from shifts in social norms to a reduction in women's career earnings from having a baby. But while nearly all EBRD nations have at least some incentives in place to boost the birth rate, Javorcik said these measures have not produced a meaningful, sustained change in any country. Migration at the level needed to counteract falling births is not politically palatable in most places, the report said, and most citizens are "ambivalent" about boosting AI use to improve productivity.

The biggest lever, Javorcik said, is people working longer – which would require some retraining and, potentially, changes to pension schemes. – Reuters

Britons hope budget will cool energy costs

LONDON: Pub landlord James Fitzgerald will wait a while longer to switch on the outside Christmas lights at the Thatched House in London, as high energy bills cause financial pain across Britain.

Ahead of the UK government's annual budget today set to feature tax rises, the 44-year-old Irishman and millions of Britons are hoping for cost-of-living respite, including from cheaper electricity and gas costs.

"We don't have our lights on outside yet, because we've got to keep our costs down," Fitzgerald told AFP sat near an open fire heating the pub's interior.

The outside temperature in Hammer-smith, west London, sits slightly above freezing.

UK energy costs have continued to rise after surging in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine nearly four years ago.

"Our gas bill has seriously jumped" over the past year, said Fitzgerald.

"We haven't put the (central) heating on, even though it's quite cold ... we've got to, you know, cut back."

He said the pub's running costs jumped £22,000 (RM119,335) in the last year, with about one-fifth of the increase attributed to elevated energy bills.

Reports suggest that finance minister Rachel Reeves may introduce budget measures to help ease energy bills, having U-turned this year on plans to cut winter fuel payments to pensioners.

"At the budget I will take direct action to ease the cost of living for all households," she wrote in *The Times* newspaper.

Fitzgerald cited higher food bills along with hikes to the minimum wage and taxes,



Reeves delivering her keynote speech at the Labour Party's annual conference in Liverpool on Sept 29. She wrote in *The Times* on Sunday that she will take direct action to ease the cost of living for all households. – **REUTERS**

including on wine, in the Labour party's previous budget as other reasons for the "disastrous" increase to outgoings.

"Things are only going in one direction, it's going downhill, and so we really need help from the government to make it viable," he said.

Britain's energy regulator said on Friday its

price cap for households' gas and electricity usage would inch higher from January.

For the average UK household, the cost of gas and electricity would total £1,758 next year, Ofgem said.

"Energy prices ... across Europe, in particular in the UK, are too high," the chief executive of Octopus, Britain's biggest energy supplier, recently told AFP.

CEO Greg Jackson believes changes to UK regulation and infrastructure can ease the burden on households and businesses.

"When prices are too high, I don't think we can look bill payers in the eye, charge them that money, and know that costs could be lower if we were more efficient," he said.

His company's efforts to limit the impact of soaring price rises saw Octopus at the start of 2025 become Britain's largest household supplier, surpassing legacy firm British Gas nine years after its launch.

Jackson spoke to AFP from Octopus' London office, where screens display real time data showing the amount of energy produced by UK wind farms and customers' cost savings from using electricity they generate.

"We try to find as many ways as we can to help customers save money," he said, noting they can benefit from roughly half Octopus' electricity coming from clean energy sources.

"When it's windy or sunny, you'll often get really cheap electricity available on the wholesale market," Jackson added.

However, while the UK is one of Europe's biggest producers of renewable energy, it remains dependent on costly gas, which represents more than a third of its energy mix. – AFP

Finland remains 'happiest' despite economic challenges

HELSINKI: Harsh economic headwinds are sending a chill through the world's happiest country. But after 1,000 days of unemployment, 33-year-old Juho-Pekka Palomaa hasn't let Finland's problems get him down just yet.

Finland is grappling with economic stagnation, rising joblessness and strained public finances, but still managed to secure the title of world's happiest country for the 8th year in a row in this year's annual World Happiness Report.

Its success, experts say, is due in no small part to a generous welfare state - but that is now being trimmed back as ministers confront the surging social costs of an aging population.

"I've been grateful that in Finland there has been a safety net and social security that have supported me financially ... So maybe I'm not more unhappy than I was before," said Palomaa, who marked his 1,000 days of unemployment with a bring-your-own-food protest on the steps of parliament.

"But I don't feel there is very much I can do to change my situation," said the former video producer, who has submitted countless job applications and completed 11 unsuccessful interviews.

While unemployment benefits have been cut, the government has left untouched "almost sacred" pensions, he complained.

Finland's export-dependent economy has struggled since the phone business of Nokia, once Europe's most valuable company, collapsed in 2014 after it fumbled the switch to touch-screen smartphones. Sanctions on neighbouring Russia over its war in Ukraine have also hit exports and tourism, while uncertainty over tariffs and global trade present a further challenge.

The Bank of Finland is forecasting economic growth of 0.3% this year, down from 0.4% in 2024. Unemployment is among the worst in the European Union, at nearly 10%, with the rate more than twice as high at 21.2% among 15- to 24-year-olds.

The European Commission was expected to decide yesterday whether to propose placing Finland in what it calls an "Excessive Deficit Procedure", after it forecast Finland will have a budget deficit above the 3% EU limit for the next three years.

Poor public finances have already prompted the government to start pruning some parts of the welfare state, including

➤ Despite weak growth and rising joblessness, nation's stability and support systems keep its global standing intact



As welfare cuts roll out, citizens voice frustration over policies they fear may not address deeper issues.

– UNSPLASH PIX

unemployment and housing benefits and some medical facilities.

"I'm honestly terrified for younger people," said Hanna Taimio, 54, another unemployed Finn who joined Palomaa's commemoration and fears she may never work again.

The coalition government, in office since 2023, aims to "to strengthen public finances and to bring the growing debt under control", Minister of Employment Matias Martinen told Reuters.

Martinen called the high jobless rate "an awful situation", but defended the government's decision to make dismissals easier to lower the risks of hiring for companies, to ultimately boost employment.

Some critics argue, however, that austerity measures have exacerbated economic challenges and consumer pessimism.

Lauri Holappa, director of the Finnish Centre for New Economic Analysis, pointed to simulations suggesting the fiscal consolidation measures could have even led to an increased public debt rate.

But there's more to happiness than economics.

The life evaluations that people report in the happiness survey are determined more by factors like resilience and the ability to "deal collaboratively and constructively in bad times" than by national economic conditions, said the report's founding editor, emeritus professor John Helliwell.

Survey data for next year collected by analytics company Gallup and seen by Reuters shows no significant fluctuations in Finns' reported happiness. The survey also takes into account key indicators such as GDP per capita, social support and healthy life expectancy.

Reeling from the financial hit from his long jobless spell, Palomaa has looked to a free community sauna run and funded by volunteers by the Baltic Sea shore in Helsinki.

When he asked social media followers what to do on his 1,000th day of unemployment, he got a million views and a flood of suggestions - including the bring-your-own-food party he held on the steps of parliament.

DOGE Japan-style to reduce wasteful spending

TOKYO: Japan yesterday launched a scheme aimed at cutting wasteful government spending by reviewing existing subsidy projects and investment funds, a move the administration hopes will alleviate market concern over its expansionary fiscal policy.

The idea, dubbed by some analysts as the Japanese version of US President Donald Trump's Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), is among Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's priorities to convince the public her government is taking a careful approach on spending to avoid increasing Japan's already huge debt.

Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama said yesterday she is leading a team, consisting of officials from the finance and other ministries, tasked with identifying tax-break and subsidy programmes that have become outdated or unnecessary.

"Unlike DOGE, we're not aiming to overhaul government organisations" but instead the focus is on reviewing existing subsidies, tax break schemes and usage of government funds, Katayama told a news conference.

"To maintain trust in the sustainability of Japan's finances, it's very important to show the public how we are always looking into how we spend," she said.

While the review may lead to immediate cuts to some subsidies, its findings will be reflected more thoroughly in deliberations on the fiscal 2027 budget that begins around April through June next year, Katayama said.

The government plans to collect opinions from the public through social media on which subsidies or government schemes are seen as wasteful or questionable, she said. There will be no target set on the spending cuts, she added.

Takaichi's cabinet approved a ¥21.3 trillion (RM562 billion) economic stimulus package on Friday, highlighting her expansionary fiscal streak that has triggered a selloff in the yen and Japanese government bonds. – Reuters

Singapore orders Apple, Google to curb govt spoofing

SINGAPORE: Singapore's police have ordered Apple and Google to prevent the spoofing of government agencies on their messaging platforms, the home affairs ministry said yesterday.

The order under the nation's Online Criminal Harms Act came after the police observed scams on Apple's iMessage and Google Messages purporting to be from companies such as the local postal service SingPost.

In September, the government also threatened to impose fines on Meta Platforms if it did not introduce measures like facial recognition to help curb impersonation scams on Facebook, including those involving key government office holders.

While government agencies have registered with a local SMS registry so only they can send messages with the "gov.sg" name, this does not currently apply to the iMessage and Google Messages platforms.

"Members of the public may assume that messages they receive from accounts claiming to be from 'gov.sg' on iMessage or Google Messages are legitimate because messages sent through iMessage and Google Messages appear alongside and are not easily distinguishable from SMSes," the police said.

Under the order, Google and Apple will need to prevent accounts and group chats from displaying names which spoof "gov.sg" and other Singapore government agencies, or filter such messages out. – Reuters

Global ambitions behind yuan's steady rise

SHANGHAI: The yuan has shrugged off a trade war, slow growth, rock-bottom interest rates and a slump in foreign investment, to head for its sharpest annual gain since the pandemic year of 2020.

The steady appreciation of the tightly-managed currency has reignited speculation that Beijing is renewing its campaign to drive the yuan's global use, analysts say.

The People's Bank of China (PBOC), which manages the currency within a fixed trading band, did not comment when asked about the yuan's management this year or the strategy behind its strength.

Yet for market participants, the nature of gains on the dollar are telling. Where in 2018, the yuan was a shock-absorber for US trade restrictions and fell about 5%, in 2025 it is nearly 3% stronger.

That has happened because, for months, it has been guided higher almost every morning by the PBOC's midpoint settings, while at the

same time frequent state banks' dollar buying has capped volatility and steadied its grind higher.

"It's staying stronger than expected despite escalating US trade actions," said Kelvin Lam, senior China+ economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics.

"From a strategic optics point of view, China appears keen to project the image of a stable yuan to build international credibility, reminiscent of 1998 when the yuan refused to join the wave of competitive devaluations during the Asian Financial Crisis and cemented its status as a regional anchor."

Stronger-than-expected daily fixings by the PBOC since last November have gained attention in light of weak economic fundamentals. Benchmark interest rates are well below dollar counterparts. Growth has been held back by anaemic consumption and the capital account showed a US\$281 billion (RM1.2

trillion) deficit over 10 months to end October.

At the same time, China's economic blueprint appears to harden its ambitions for the currency. Having long promised to "prudently promote" yuan internationalisation, the 15th five-year plan published in October drops the word "prudently".

"Showcasing a strong and stable yuan amid a volatile market environment tends to be a good case for China to promote yuan internationalisation," said Kiyong Seong, lead Asia macro strategist at Societe Generale.

The strongest hand behind the yuan has been the central bank, which has encouraged investment bank analysts to expect gains and greater adoption to continue.

"For both economic and non-economic reasons, we believe yuan internationalisation has become a policy priority for the Chinese government and is likely to accelerate meaningfully in the coming years," analysts at Goldman Sachs said in a note. – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: NOV 25

25-Nov-2025

Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

	Net (in RM million)	Participation
Retail	-19.47	16.14%
Institutions	-29.90	43.63%
Foreign	+49.37	40.23%

QR Code to register for 1-to-1 Coaching



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

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



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

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

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

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

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Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,986.30 -33.16
FBMKLCI	1,611.74 -7.04
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	530.73 -8.50
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	163.55 -0.10
CONSTRUCTION	318.69 -3.36
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,469.00 -67.92
ENERGY	760.32 +2.99
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	477.92 -7.64
HEALTH CARE	1,524.68 +9.30
TRANSPORTATION	1,014.71 +3.51
PROPERTY	1,047.08 +11.29
PLANTATION	8,232.22 +14.65
FBMSHA	11,965.50 -30.30
FBMACE	4,925.04 +22.16
TECHNOLOGY	59.96 +0.61

TURNOVER: 4.354 bil VALUE: RM2.818 bil

Bursa closes lower in 'healthy' consolidation

BURSA Malaysia closed lower yesterday in consolidation mode as investors continued to seek value on small-cap stocks amid cautious sentiment, despite mostly upbeat regional market performance, a dealer said.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI fell 7.04 points, or 0.43%, to 1,611.74 from Monday's close of 1,618.78.

The benchmark index, which opened 0.76 of-a-point higher at 1,619.54, rose to a high of 1,620.99 during the early morning session before slipping to a low of 1,611.25 in late trading.

The broader market was negative with decliners beating gainers 588 to 556, while 569 counters were unchanged, 1,096 untraded, and 40 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng believed that the benchmark index has moved into a period of consolidation after its recent climb, nonetheless, the pause is viewed as a healthy part of the market's rhythm.

Among heavyweights, Maybank added two sen to RM9.98, Public Bank and CIMB remained unchanged at RM4.30 and RM7.47 respectively, TNB gained six sen to RM13.10, while IHH slipped four sen to RM8.04.

On the most active list, XOX Technology shed half-a-sen to five sen, Velesto eased one sen to 22.5 sen, Polymer Link was flat at 25 sen, while Zetrix added two sen to 83.5 sen, and Tanco climbed four sen to RM1.08.

Top gainers included MPI which rose RM1.38 to RM33.04, Kuala Lumpur Kepong advanced 32 sen to RM21.04, and Dutch Lady put on 26 sen to RM29.30.

Among the top losers, Nestle trimmed RM2 to RM110, Hong Leong Bank dropped 94 sen to RM21.28, and Petronas Dagangan lost 38 sen to RM20.62. - Bernama

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWK3	0.180	+0.015	+9.09	4,226,891
HSI-PWL4	0.150	-0.015	-9.09	3,377,490
HSI-CWKH	0.200	+0.015	+8.11	2,794,819
HSI-PWLO	0.130	-0.010	-7.14	2,739,777
HSI-PWLG	0.190	-0.025	-11.63	1,549,885
XOXTECH	0.050	-0.005	-9.09	728,974
VELESTO	0.225	-0.010	-4.26	675,428
ZETRIX	0.835	+0.020	+2.45	671,215
TANCO	1.080	+0.040	+3.85	666,496
ZETRIX-CAJ	0.120	-	-	600,000
ZETRIX-CAN	0.060	-0.090	-60.00	600,000
POLYMER	0.250	-	-	559,350
HSI-CWK8	0.100	+0.010	+11.11	449,732
VS	0.475	+0.005	+1.06	444,614
HSI-CWKO	0.255	+0.015	+6.25	423,214
HSI-PWNP	0.650	-0.050	-7.14	382,733
PTRANS	0.270	+0.005	+1.89	344,463
ALIBABA-C49	0.135	+0.005	+3.85	315,040
KHEESAN-R1	0.005	-	-	292,150
EKOVEST	0.345	+0.015	+4.55	269,430



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MPI	33.040	+1.380	10,747
KLK	21.040	+0.320	30,936
DLADY	29.300	+0.260	62
HSI-PWN5	1.280	+0.230	21,930
CHINAETF-MYR	5.640	+0.190	2,251
UWC	3.710	+0.180	56,379
HSI-PWN4	0.740	+0.150	104,000
KSL	2.870	+0.150	9,925
SCGBHD	2.190	+0.140	76,988
PLENITU	2.050	+0.130	4,684
SAM	3.850	+0.120	2,697
SCGBHD-WA	1.890	+0.120	4,941
KEYFIELD	1.710	+0.110	23,499
PIE	2.780	+0.110	4,578
THMY	0.870	+0.110	78,354
MNHLDG	1.820	+0.100	58,419
ABMB	4.630	+0.090	21,376
LWSABAH	1.210	+0.090	68,947
MNHLDG-WA	1.610	+0.090	1,520
PGF	1.840	+0.090	680

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
EIB-WA	0.010	+100.00	11,104
NEXG-C70	0.050	+100.00	4,351
RL-WA	0.010	+100.00	880
SERSOL-WB	0.030	+100.00	303
ZENTECH	0.010	+100.00	42,404
NICE-WC	0.025	+66.67	5,306
PIE-CP	0.040	+60.00	60
TM-CIW	0.070	+55.56	260
LYC	0.030	+50.00	3,082
OMESTI-WD	0.030	+50.00	13,604
ABMB-C22	0.055	+37.50	120
HSI-CWKZ	0.055	+37.50	300
ARMADA-C1J	0.020	+33.33	500
EKOVEST-C72	0.020	+33.33	3,730
EVD-WB	0.040	+33.33	100
MATRIX-CR	0.020	+33.33	2,000
MEITU-C1	0.060	+33.33	20,000
MRDIY-C47	0.020	+33.33	1,300
NEXGRAM	0.020	+33.33	1,640
RHBBANKC64	0.040	+33.33	7,665

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	46,448.27	202.86	0.44
S&P 500 [US]	6,705.12	102.13	1.55
NASDAQ [US]	22,872.01	598.93	2.69
NYSE [US]	21,271.60	94.62	0.45
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,525.74	-2.93	-0.05
FTSE 100 [UK]	9,541.54	6.63	0.07
DAX [GER]	23,199.13	-40.05	-0.17
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	48,659.52	33.64	0.07
TOPIX INDEX [JPN]	3,290.89	-6.84	-0.21
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	25,894.55	178.05	0.69
CSI 300 [CHN]	4,490.41	42.36	0.95
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	218.6	1.19	0.55
SHANGHAI SE COM [CHN]	3,870.02	33.26	0.87
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	3,857.78	11.72	0.3
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	85,029.35	128.64	0.15
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,537.05	11.95	0.14
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,824.24	23.88	0.27
FBM KLCI	1,611.74	-7.04	-0.43
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	4,485.15	-11.48	-0.26
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	58.34	-0.5	-0.83
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	62.8	-0.57	-0.85
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	4,148.60	17.8	0.43
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	51.28	0.31	0.62
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	1,548.08	-4.92	-0.32
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	512.4	7.1	1.4
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	10,773.00	-4.5	-0.04
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	438.5	1.75	0.4
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	535.5	0.75	0.14
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	50.21	-0.31	-0.61
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	5,190.00	31	0.6
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	170.6	-1.1	-0.64

As at 6pm, Nov 25.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	110.000	-2.000	2,103
HLBANK	21.280	-0.940	13,248
HEIM	22.480	-0.500	1,875
PETDAG	20.620	-0.380	2,848
MCEMENT	6.320	-0.330	24,845
HSI-CWM7	0.395	-0.285	24,000
MAXIS	4.100	-0.260	28,919
SUNCON	5.900	-0.230	39,011
PETGAS	18.180	-0.220	3,289
CARLSBG	16.860	-0.200	945
UTDPLT	28.600	-0.200	3,267
HSI-PWNC	1.250	-0.190	622
HSI-CWM6	0.235	-0.185	16,000
MISC	7.630	-0.160	16,972
99SMART	3.330	-0.150	126,828
KGB	5.400	-0.150	87,250
AJ1	13.460	-0.140	104
CKI-CA	0.010	-0.140	4,171
MSNIAGA	1.210	-0.130	20
PCHEM-C2B	0.025	-0.125	1,310

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
CKI-CA	0.010	-93.33	4,171
PCHEM-C2B	0.025	-83.33	1,310
VELESTO-C43	0.030	-80.00	10
BAUTO-C53	0.045	-70.00	19,600
MFLOUR-CM	0.055	-63.33	600
NATGATE-C5	0.055	-63.33	1,000
CKI-CB	0.010	-60.00	2,000
CKI-CC	0.020	-60.00	422
ZETRIX-CAN	0.060	-60.00	600,000
YTL-C1S	0.015	-57.14	14,655
99SMART-C26	0.070	-53.33	6,796
INARI-C4E	0.070	-53.33	200
HSI-CWKS	0.005	-50.00	6,006
KPJ-C23	0.010	-50.00	1,187
PARLO-WA	0.005	-50.00	9,391
PHB	0.005	-50.00	320
SIME-C91	0.005	-50.00	777
YB-LA	0.005	-50.00	2
UNISEM-C54	0.080	-46.67	600
HSI-CWM6	0.235	-44.05	16,000

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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Polymer Link deepens presence in Australia with new warehouse

KUALA LUMPUR: Plastic powder manufacturer Polymer Link Holdings Bhd expects a new warehouse in Australia, to be developed following its ACE Market debut, to bolster the group's regional performance once operations begin.

Its group senior vice-president Koh Tat Chuan said the facility is expected to be fully operational within three to six months, noting that all existing operations in the country will continue without any disruption during the setup period.

He added that the new warehouse, which will be located in Brisbane, will complement the company's current facilities in Melbourne and Sydney, strengthening its overall distribution network in Australia.

"While we are setting this warehouse up, we are still continuing to deliver to our customers in the region (Australia)," he said during a virtual post-listing conference yesterday.

At 9am, Polymer Link debuted on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia at 25 sen, unchanged from its initial public offering price, with 10.57 million shares traded.

Meanwhile, its head of supply chain and administration Koh Tat Wei said the company is actively exploring potential partners in Europe as part of its long-term growth strategy. He noted that the team has already identified several parties that could support the company's expansion plans in the region.

"We have identified (several) parties that we would like to work with in the European market. We do see the need to broaden our revenue base, and that is why we are looking to Europe," he said.

He said the company will begin its European expansion in Poland and will drive its market development for the region from there. – Bernama

Ringgit extends gains against US dollar on dovish Fed signals

THE ringgit continued to perform favourably against the US dollar at the close yesterday, as the greenback weakened on dovish remarks by US Federal Reserve (Fed) officials.

At 6pm, the ringgit advanced to 4.1300/1345 against the US dollar, up from Monday's close of 4.1370/1420.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the possibility of a US rate cut has been fuelled by recent comments from senior Fed officials such as governor Christopher Waller, who highlighted the need to reduce interest rates to support the US labour market.

Mohd Afzanizam noted that US rate cut expectations have gained momentum ahead of the next Federal Open Market Committee meeting on Dec 9-10.

"As such, the ringgit continues to perform favourably against the US dollar, gaining as high as RM4.1283 during the morning session before retreating towards RM4.1350 in the second half of the session," he told Bernama.

At the closing, the ringgit mostly traded lower against a basket of major currencies.

It was stronger against the euro at 4.7635/7687 from 4.7700/7757 at Monday's close, but eased against the yen to 2.6420/6451 from 2.6392/6426 and weakened against the British pound to 5.4235/4294 from 5.4153/4219.

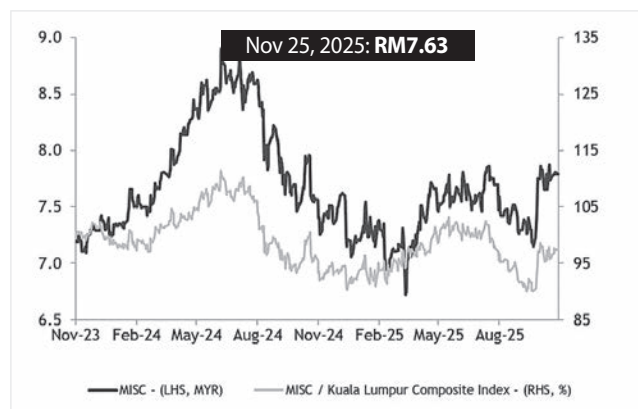
The ringgit also trended mostly lower against Asean currencies.

It rose against the Philippine peso to 7.01/7.02 from Monday's close of 7.02/7.04 but declined against the Singapore dollar to 3.1708/1745 from 3.1689/1730. It was lower against the Thai baht at 12.7793/7999 from 12.7324/7525 on Monday.

Exchange Rates			
FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.2080	4.0620	4.0520
1 Australian Dollar	2.7270	2.6160	2.6000
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2180	3.1170	3.1090
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9740	2.8910	2.8790
1 Euro	4.8420	4.6860	4.6660
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.3620	2.2750	2.2590
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2180	3.1170	3.1090
1 Sterling Pound	5.5090	5.3320	5.3120
1 Swiss Franc	5.2270	5.0040	4.9890
100 UAE Dirham	115.6400	109.6300	109.4300
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.5100	3.2560	3.0560
100 Chinese Renminbi	59.5000	56.9800	N/A
100 Danish Krone	66.4700	61.1600	60.9600
100 Hongkong Dollar	54.5100	51.7900	51.5900
100 Indian Rupee	4.8100	4.4700	4.2700
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0263	0.0233	0.0183
100 Japanese Yen	2.6970	2.5730	2.5630
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	42.1200	38.7400	38.5400
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5600	1.3700	1.1700
100 Philippine Peso	7.2400	6.8100	6.6100
100 Qatar Riyal	116.5100	110.6100	110.4100
100 Saudi Riyal	113.1600	107.4200	107.2200
100 South Africa Rand	25.1500	22.7100	22.5100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4400	1.2500	1.0500
100 Swedish Krona	45.3400	41.2900	41.0900
100 Thai Baht	13.5400	12.0100	11.6100

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

MISC Bhd Hold. Target price: RM8.22



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

MISC'S Q3'25 core net profit of RM466 million (-17% QoQ, +42% YoY) brought cumulative 9M'25 core earnings to RM1,785 million (+13% YoY). The results came in within expectations at 74%/77% of ours/consensus full-year estimates. A 3rd interim DPS of 8 sen was declared, in line with past practices. Total 9M'25 dividends stood at 24 sen (+0% YoY) and should meet our full year 36 sen DPS forecast.

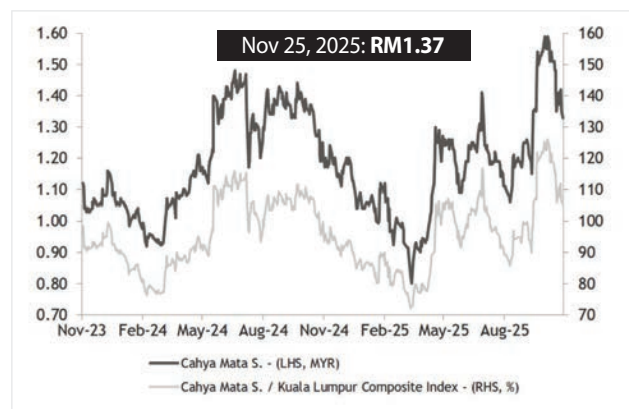
Post-earnings call, we believe LNG shipping spot rates would remain soft in Q4'25 due to: i) vessel oversupply from strong newbuild deliveries; ii) more vessels coming off LT charters; iii) high EU inventory levels and subdued Asian demand. However, recovery could emerge in 2026 supported by a likely uptick in global LNG export capacity as new liquefaction projects come online. On the flipside, the petroleum tanker market is expected to remain stable in Q4'25, supported by stronger vessel demand arising from increased Opec+ output and steady tonne-mile demand along the US-Asia trade routes.

MISC's LNG shipping/petroleum tanker segments' term:spot ratios are 95:5 and 75:25 respectively. MISC's LT LNG, petroleum tankers and FPSO/FSO assets provide recurring, stable cash flows – allowing a consistent dividend payout. Our DPS estimate of 36 sen (FY25-27) offers a stable yield of >4%, which we believe would be supportive of its share price.

Backed by Petronas, MISC maintains a strong balance sheet and continues to expand in LNG, ammonia, and low-carbon shipping solutions as part of its energy transition strategy.

HOLD with RM8.22 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Nov 25**

Cahaya Mata Sarawak Bhd Buy. Target price: RM1.66



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

CMS reported Q3'25 core net profit (CNP) of RM34.2 million. Unrealised forex losses, the Q3'25 CNP brought 9M'25 CNP to RM86.6 million which accounted for only 58% of our FY estimate. On closer inspection, the earnings shortfall was due to the: (i) phosphates segment generating 9M'25 core pre-tax loss of RM70.5 million or 97% of our FY estimate on higher-than-expected pre-operating costs; and (ii) oil-tools segment pre-tax profit falling 77% QoQ to RM8.7 million on reduced rig activities across most of its markets.

Q3'25 CNP was down 48% YoY due to higher pre-operating costs at the phosphates segment and reduced rig activities across most of its markets negatively impacting its oiltools segment. That said, Q3'25 CNP was up 61% QoQ as its cement and road maintenance segments (top 2 largest earnings contributors) appear to have recovered from the relatively wetter weather of Q1'25 and Q2'25 while the phosphates segment's core pre-tax losses were narrowed a tad QoQ at RM21.6 million (Q2'25: RM23.6 million).

Recall that after years of dispute, Syarikat SESCO (Not Listed) restored electricity to the phosphate plant in early Sept 2025. With production of phosphate expected to commence, we gather that the segment's losses will narrow and may even turn profitable from Q4'25 onwards. The property development segment will also benefit from developing the RM550 million Borneo Convention Centre Kuching II (BCKKII). Development of BCKKII commenced in Q3'25 is expected to be completed by Q1'28.

BUY with RM1.66 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Nov 25**

Telekom Malaysia Bhd Buy. Target price: RM7.50



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

TELEKOM Malaysia is the dominant fixed-line telecommunication company in Malaysia.

Excluding unrealised forex and other gains, TM's Q3'25 core net profit of RM542 million (+76% YoY, +56% QoQ) bringing 9M'25 core net profit to RM1,276 million (+10% YoY), 76%/75% of our/consensus full-year forecasts respectively. Q3'25 net profit was higher QoQ as lower finance (normalisation due to one-off debt settlement expense in Q2'25) and taxes more than offset sequential core EBIT decline. No dividend was declared in the quarter, consistent with past practice.

Q3'25 revenue was 8% higher QoQ (and 3% YoY), driven mainly by sequential growth in the Carrier-to-Carrier segment (notably from cross-border connectivity and advanced data services). Internet revenue was higher QoQ on sequentially higher Unifi subscribers and ARPU. TM also reported QoQ higher other operating income from physical copper sale. Total cost meanwhile also trended higher QoQ on higher direct and manpower costs, resulting in Q3'25 EBITDA margin contracting by 2.5ppt QoQ to 38.5%.

Management flagged a potential risk to its FY25E EBIT guidance (stable YoY) from possible VSS provisions (amount depends on take-up). We note the original EBIT guidance already implies a sequential decline in Q4'25 EBIT.

There are several risk factors for our earnings estimates, price target, and rating for TM. Competitive developments, such as price wars would adversely affect monetisation and thus profitability. Regulatory developments pertaining to taxation or product pricing also pose a risk to earnings.

BUY with RM7.50 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Nov 25**



the Sun **LYFE**

WEDNESDAY | NOV 26, 2025

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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

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Merging samurai tradition, death games

- AFPPIC



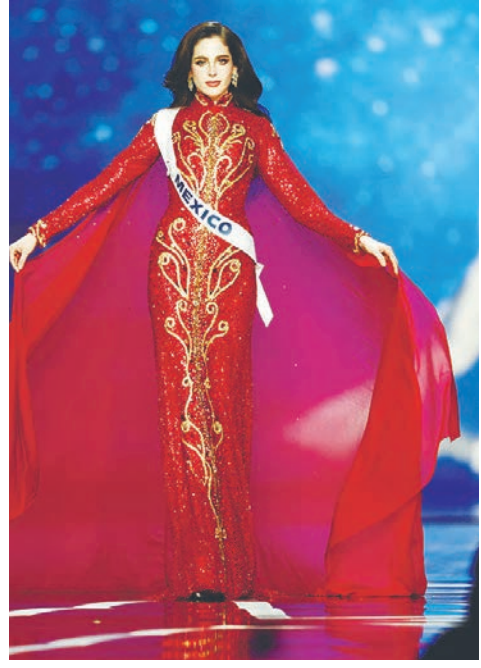
LYFE'S LOOKBOOK



Bosch is crowned Miss Universe 2025.



Lim wearing the Miss Universe Malaysia 2025 finale evening gown. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @MISSUNIVERSEMALAYSIA



Bosch of Mexico walks the runway.



Ahtisa Manalo of Philippines.

Universal beauty on display

► Fatima Bosch of Mexico takes pageant crown

AFTER a languorous week, the 74th Miss Universe pageant in Bangkok, Thailand took place last Friday, crowning Fatima Bosch of Mexico as its reigning queen. In what may have been the most scandalous pageant season, following a massive walkout over the behaviour of Thai pageant official Nawat Itsaragrisil and the resignation of two judges, one of whom accused organisers of rigging the competition, a queen still reigns despite all adversity.

Our very own Chloe Lim strutted the runway as she proudly carried the country's name and pride. Despite not placing in the competition, the 27-year-old beauty queen carried herself with grace and elegance as she powered through with quiet vigour. Bouncing back from trials and tribulations in her pageant journey, Lim's resilience was evident in her strut, poses and smile.

To Lim, here is to a job well done and thanks for representing Malaysia! To commemorate the effervescent night, here is a curated lookbook by *theSun*.



Miss Universe Malaysia Lim (right) and other contestants.



Praveenar Singh of Thailand. – PICS FROM AFP



Nadeen Ayoub of Palestine. – PICS FROM REUTERS



Zhao Na of China.



Tangia Methila of Bangladesh.

Modesty in pastels

LOOKBOOK

BY ASHIQIN AHMAD



A vibrant look with a neon-lime ruffled skirt that moves like liquid and sharp oversized blazer in muted taupe, embellished with delicate floral patterns along one shoulder to soften the silhouette with a touch of whimsy.



An experiment with textures and colours, this shocking pink dress paired with ruffled skirt and jacket is a creative take on high fashion.

FASHIONABLY Modest Asia brought a soft, dreamlike palette to the runway, merging contemporary tailoring with the delicate poetry of modest wear. Pastels dominated the evening as models glided down a floral runway, transforming modest fashion into a gentle, cinematic experience.



Boxy silhouette dress adorned with delicate floral patterns all over – a beautiful contrast of modern-day femininity.



A soft yellow tailored set embellished with floral motifs brings refined elegance to the runway.



A soft green pastel dress that fully embraces feminine energy on the runway.



A soft lime green puffy dress that is paired with a cream blazer that screams summer vibes.



A formal suit with a soft pastel colour palette serves class with a side of sweet.

Golden, glitzy night

THE 62nd Golden Horse Awards in Taipei, Taiwan took place last Saturday. Some of the best in the Taiwanese film industry were honoured during the night, reminding the world that thespian excellence thrives in the East Asian horizons.

Malaysian filmmakers also made waves on the golden night. *Mother Bhumi*, directed by Chong Keat Aun, won three major awards: Best Original Film Song (Penny Tai), Best Cinematography (Liang Mingjia) and Best Actress, which was awarded to Datuk Fan Bingbing.

Another Malaysian production that was the talk of the town is *The Waves Will Carry Us*, directed by Lau Kek Huat. The eventful night was a reminder that cinema is not dead. Here is a lookbook to remember the night.



Ariel Lin. – ALL PICS FROM REUTERS



Ang Lee.



Chang Chen after winning the award for Best Leading Actor for *Lucky Lu*.



Tseng Jing-hua poses with the Best Supporting Actor award.

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Tai (left) and Chong pose with the award for Best Original Film Song.



Hidetoshi Nishijima.



Rhydian Vaughan.



Singaporean actor Richie Koh.



Lloyd Lee Choi.



Jun Li wins the Best Director award for *Queerpanorama*.



Anthony Wong.

BUZZ SPOTS

**Lego Ferrari Build & Race,
Legoland Malaysia Resort**

The race experience puts guests in the driver's seat from start to finish, across five interactive zones designed to ignite curiosity, creativity and friendly competition. The journey begins at "Ferrari Garage" to explore iconic memorabilia, fun facts and the centrepiece of the world's first life-sized Lego Ferrari F50, built from 421,652 Lego elements which weighs 1,603kg and took 1,306 hours to build. Let your imagination take the wheel as you design and assemble your own Lego Ferrari race car from scratch at the "Build Zone". Put your creation to the test at the "Test Zone" across three tracks designed to challenge your car's power, precision and performance. Scan your car and take it to the



digital tracks at the "Virtual Race Zone", a virtual replica of Ferrari's Pista di Fiorano track in Italy. "Duplo Build Area" is a special corner for the youngest builders, with larger Duplo bricks for safe, hands-on fun.

**Ballet Theatre Malaysia,
Petaling Jaya**

Founded in 2020 as the nation's first professional ballet company, Ballet Theatre Malaysia returns after a three-year period of restructuring and rebuilding with a renewed



artistic team, a newly established independent dance company and a dedicated theatre, poised to reinvigorate Malaysia's ballet landscape with fresh energy and vision. The company now embarks on a new chapter, themed "Planting the Seed of Dance", which symbolises hope, growth and the promise of a flourishing artistic future here at home. In this next phase, Ballet Theatre Malaysia will establish an international-standard ensemble, bringing together full-time dancers from around the world to collaborate with Malaysian artists in an environment that celebrates ballet at its finest. At the same time, the newly launched Scholar Programme will provide a structured development pathway for young dancers in Malaysia by equipping them with world-class training, mentorship and performance opportunities that prepare them for professional careers in ballet and beyond.

**Birkenstock,
One Utama**

The reopening of its 1 Utama store unveils its new retail concept. The refreshed design reimagines the Birkenstock experience, bringing the brand's rich heritage and craftsmanship to life through natural materials and thoughtful design details. A key highlight of the space is the Brand Timeline, showcased on the central pillar within the store. This feature traces Birkenstock's rich heritage and evolution over more than 250 years, offering visitors a visual journey through the milestones that have shaped the brand. Developed by Birkenstock's in-house retail design team, this new concept marks an evolution after five years with the previous design direction. The result is a refreshed space that showcases Birkenstock's enduring



values of craftsmanship, natural materials and the world-renowned Footbed, while celebrating over 250 years of shoemaking heritage.

**Sacoor Brothers,
Sunway Pyramid**

The Portuguese fashion brand unveiled its latest boutique at Sunway Pyramid Shopping Mall. The boutique's design blends minimalist architecture with natural textures, creating an ambience that feels contemporary and inviting. Inside, the boutique houses the brand's menswear and womenswear collections, including the latest Autumn/Winter collection which features everything from tailored suits to elevated everyday essentials.

**Cuckoo Cash-and-Carry Brandshop,
IOI Mall Damansara**

The new Cuckoo Brandshop pioneers a unique retail format within Cuckoo Malaysia's omni-channel distribution network, emphasising accessibility, convenience and immersive customer experience. Different from existing Cuckoo Brandkiosk and Brandstore formats, the space features a modern, bright and welcoming design defined by a contemporary minimalist, woody tone for a truly homely feel. The Cuckoo Brandshop offers retail convenience with its cash-and-carry format, enabling shoppers to purchase and bring home small-ticket items, such as rice cookers, shower heads and cookwares on the spot. The store also doubles up as an experience centre with a full display of all Cuckoo Malaysia's product lines, allowing customers to fully interact



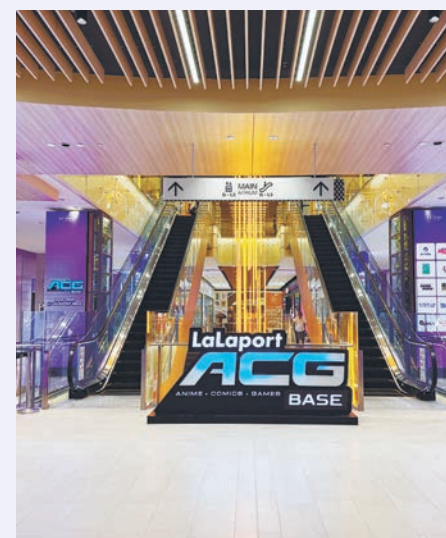
with Cuckoo Malaysia's holistic ecosystem of wellness solutions, from water purifiers, air purifiers, massage chairs, mattresses, air conditioners and other Smart Healthy Home solutions.

**TopTen10,
Sunway Pyramid**

It is set to make its Malaysian debut in early 2026 with its first store opening at Sunway Pyramid, promising a new take on what it means to dress "the K-way": effortlessly stylish, functional and made for real life. From essentials for men, women and children to athleisure, innerwear and everyday accessories, TopTen10 brings the clean, confident aesthetic that defines K-fashion: minimalist, functional and quietly bold. The upcoming store at Sunway Pyramid will be Malaysia's first look into this signature Korean style ethos.

**ACG Base,
Lalaport BBCC**

Level 2 of LaLaport BBCC is now a lifestyle playground where fans can explore, shop, dine and connect in a setting inspired by their favourite characters and creators. The space boasts over 20 stores, featuring some of Japan's most influential brands and fandom platforms, offering exclusive and authentic merchandise, limited-edition collaborations and an interactive retail environment. The ACG Base line-up also includes an exclusive selection of stores such as Bad Egg Club, Dimension Poptown, Doko Koko zones (Cafe, Goods, Pick Up, Space), K+ by Kadokawa Gempak Starz, Kobo 7, Mori Mory, Nullset Goods, Not Only Toy, Orb Cafe, Photoism Play, Q Pocket, The Pink Room, Vibe Max and Xumi Good.

**J Jade and Jewel,
Bukit Jalil**

The acclaimed jade and jewellery brand celebrated another milestone with the grand opening of the brand's fourth boutique at Bukit Jalil City Signature Shop Office. Founded in 2016, the brand has earned global recognition for redefining jade jewellery through innovative design and masterful craftsmanship, transforming traditional jade into pieces that express modern sophistication and timeless beauty.



TV SHOW REVIEW

BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

FROM Akira Kurosawa to Masaki Kobayashi, and Rurouni Kenshin to Afro Samurai, of the countless historical and fictional Japanese films and TV shows that have been produced about the samurai class and feudal Japan, it is surprising that none were made with the same or similar premise as Netflix's *Last Samurai Standing*.

As a cholera outbreak sweeps through Meiji-era Japan, former samurai Shujiro Saga (Junichi Okada) struggles to care for his sick wife and children due to the lack of an income and access to medicine.

When news pamphlets are distributed in his town calling for able-bodied samurai and warriors to congregate at the Tenryu-ji Temple in Kyoto to compete in a challenge and win ¥100,000, Shujiro makes a desperate decision to join.

However, at the temple, Shujiro and the other 291 warriors soon come to a startling realisation of the true nature of the competition, called a *Kodoku* - participants need to kill each other and collect the tags of the deceased to pass checkpoints on the way to Tokyo.

Merging death games, samurai tradition

Though "death games" have been done in Japanese entertainment media before such as both *Battle Royale* films and the recent *Alice in Borderland* series, while others such as Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* and *Ran* or the original *13 Assassins* and its remake featured ensemble casts in giant samurai battles, *Last Samurai Standing* is the first to merge the core premise of both into one.

Adapted from Shogo Imamura's novel into a brisk six-episode series, which by the end reveals that this is the first chapter in a multi-season series, *Last Samurai Standing* is impressive in scope, execution and creativity.

Directed by Michihito Fujii,



Shujiro (left) and Bukotsu share a bloody past from before the events of the series. - ALL PICS FROM NETFLIX

Samurai survival challenge

➤ In Netflix series set in Meiji-era Japan, former warriors gamble lives in deadly contest

with Okada also fulfilling roles as the series' creative director and producer, *Last Samurai Standing* is a monumental series, beyond just how it balances a mountainous amount of characters and tells a story around them.

Its story also weaves a taut narrative involving themes of the dying samurai class, political intrigue, class warfare and socio-economic commentary during the Meiji Restoration transition from feudal to imperial rule.

Diverse cast driving high-stakes drama

Though a bulk of the 292 warriors are largely dispensable extras who exist either to fill the series' corpse quota or pack the series with impressive swordplay and action sequences, the initial core cast of Shujiro, Futaba Katsuki (Yumia Fujisaki), Iroha Kinugasa (Kaya Kiyohara), Kyojin Tsuge (Masahiro Higashide), Bukotsu Kanjiya (Hideaki Ito), Gentosai (Hiroshi Abe), Toshimichi Okubo (Arata Iura) and Toshiyoshi Kawaji (Gaku



The superintendent-general of police Kawaji and the police force play a role in the *Kodoku* competition.

Hamada) propel the series forwards throughout a combination of charisma, solid characterisation and strong performance.

Equally impressive is how the series juggles, expands and ties the various characters and their personal arcs without missing a beat in just six episodes.

For example, the series lead is Shujiro. He inevitably ends up protecting Futaba, a teenager who joins the competition due to the same cholera outbreak afflicting her mother and the children in her village.

This draws the attention of Bukotsu, a psychotic samurai that once clashed with Shujiro a decade ago. Shujiro's adoptive sister Iroha and brothers have also joined the same competition, which draws Gentosai, a towering elderly

samurai that has hunted the siblings from their teenage years due their shared past.

These barely scratch the surface of *Last Samurai Standing's* epic breadth in storytelling and colourful characters, as there is also the secondary but equally critical storyline involving the mysterious figures orchestrating the competition and their political goals involving the 292 warriors killing each other.

At the time of writing, *Last Samurai Standing* has yet to announce its renewal status for a second season despite it being a giant hit across critics and casual viewers. The network needs to strike the iron while it is hot, for the longer Netflix takes to draw its katana from the \$\$\$-etched scabbard, the more agency the series will lose.



From left: Iroha, Shujiro and Futaba form an alliance with the ninja Kyojin to investigate the real nature of the competition.



Team Usyk in AJ's corner for Paul fight

ANTHONY JOSHUA is not expected to have Oleksandr Usyk in his corner for December's fight with Jake Paul, but the Ukrainian icon could be present for future bouts, according to one of his advisers.

On Dec 19, Joshua will fight *YouTube*-turned-boxer Paul in a professional contest in Miami. While the matchmaking itself is some of the strangest in boxing history, fans were also surprised by "AJ's revelation that he has been training with Usyk's team in recent months.

Usyk beat Joshua via decision on each occasion, as the former undisputed cruiserweight champion continued his journey to undisputed status at heavyweight. The Ukrainian, 38, ultimately achieved that goal in 2024 and again this year.

Joshua said at Friday's press conference: "I won't be trained by Ben Davison. I said that London's a bit distracting to me.

"I was invited to train with Team Usyk, so we've been doing some good training in Spain.

"He's one of the best in the world, (that's) also down to his team.

"I don't spar with Usyk. He's been

somewhere else, he's in and out of camp, (but) Ben said: '100%, that's a great move (to join Team Usyk). They're killing me, drilling me.'

Joshua also said "Igor" will be his head coach on Dec 19 although it is unclear to whom he was referring. Yuri Tkachenko is the longtime trainer of Usyk.

In any case, Usyk's friend and business partner Sergey Lapin has now addressed the situation, saying: "(His trainer is) not one person. It's a team: a head coach, an assistant, and several strong specialists – a structural system where everyone is responsible for their part.

"AJ came over, he and Usyk worked together, but there was no sparring; Jake Paul isn't a southpaw, so it didn't make sense.

"Nothing happens by accident. AJ is someone who's always looking to grow, that's why he reached out. He wants new solutions and honest work that can take him to the next level.

"All the focus is on the plan for the next steps. The work is ongoing, and the result will be seen in the fight (against Paul)." – The Independent

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RESERVED PRICE	RM 682,344.00
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PLAINTIFF : AMBANK (M) BERHAD
DEFENDANT : CHAI TUCK CHON
STRATA TITLE NO./LOT NO. : HAKMILIK STRATA GERAN 72077/M1-A/17/80
LOT NO. 49941
MUKIM/DISTRICT/STATE : PETALING / KUALA LUMPUR / WILAYAH PERSEKUTUAN KUALA LUMPUR
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H/P NO.: 012-327 5047
E-mail: aasb@arenaauctioneers.com Website: arenaauctioneers.com

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DEFENDANT : NAGARA JALAN A/L SUMARAN
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E-mail: aasb@arenaauctioneers.com Website: arenaauctioneers.com

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF MONOBINA SDN BHD (199101006565 (216875-U)) (IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING-UP)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016, the Final Meeting of the Company will be held at 199 Jalan 8, Taman Tan Yew Lai, 58200 Kuala Lumpur on 29 December 2025 at 10.30 a.m. for the following purposes:-

- To receive an account from the Liquidator showing the manner in which the winding-up has been conducted and of hearing any explanations that may be given by the Liquidator; and
- To determine the manner in which the books, accounts and documents of the Liquidator and of the Company thereof shall be disposed of.

Date: 26 November 2025

CHONG THIAN KEW
Liquidator

A member of the Company entitled to attend and vote at the Meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote instead of him. The instrument appointing a proxy must be in writing under the hand of the appointor or his attorney duly authorised in writing or if the appointor is a corporation under its common seal or the hand of its attorney and must be deposited at the above address not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time set for the Meeting.

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF AMITY HOMES SDN. BHD. Company Registration No. 199501040735 (369939-P) (In Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016, that a Final Meeting of the Company will be held on Friday, 26 December 2025 at No. 356-358, Jalan Pasir Puteh, 31650 Ipoh, Perak at 11.00 a.m. for the following purposes:-

- To receive and consider the Liquidator's Statement of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding-up has been conducted and to hear any explanation arising therefrom.
- To resolve under Section 518(3)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016, that the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator thereof, be destroyed after the expiration of three months from the date of the Final Meeting.

Dated this: 26 November 2025

Loh Lam
Liquidator
10A, Highland Park,
33000 Kuala Kangsar,
Perak

322 Notices

DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA
DI SUNGAI PETANI DALAM NEGERI KEDAH DARUL ANJAN, MALAYSIA
KEBANKRAPAN NO.: KB-29NCC-72-03/2025

BERKENAAN :
GOBALAKRISHNAN A/L NAGAPAN (No K/P: 600323-08-6275) ...PENGHUTANG PENGHAKIMAN

EX-PARTE :
SELVAKUMAR A/L SUPPIAH (No K/P: 710719-01-6393)

INDRANI A/P RAMASAMY (No K/P: 720618-10-5134) ...PEMUTUANG PENGHAKIMAN

NOTIS IKLAN

Kepada:
GOBALAKRISHNAN A/L NAGAPAN No.1525, Persiaran Hi-Tech 3, Kulim Golf and Country Resort, Kulim Hi-Tech Park, 09000, Kulim, Kedah

AMBIK PERHATIAN bahawa suatu Petyesen Pemutuan dan Perintah telah dikeluarkan terhadap kamu di Mahkamah Tinggi di Sungai Petani oleh Selvakumar a/l Suppiah dan Indrani a/p Ramasamy yang mempunyai alamat penyampaian di No.38, Jalan Puteri 8/9, Bandar Puteri, 47100 Puchong, Selangor dan Mahkamah telah memerintahkan bahawa Petyesen Pemutuan dan Perintah ini diserahkan kepada kamu secara penyampaian ganti dengan menampalkan selesikan Petyesen Pemutuan dan Perintah Mengenal Kebenaran Pernyataan Dalam Petyesen yang termeterai di alamat terakhir Penghutang Penghakiman yang diketahui iaitu di No.1525, Persiaran Hi-Tech 3, Kulim Golf and Country Resort, Kulim Hi-Tech Park, 09000, Kulim, Kedah dan penampalan di Papan Notis Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia Sungai Petani dan juga mengiklankan di dalam surat-khabar harian Bahasa Inggeris, The Sun dan Penampalan serta pengiklankan tersebut adalah disifatkan penyampaian yang sempurna dan mencukupi ke atas kamu tujuh (7) hari selepas tarikh penampalan atau pengiklankan tersebut.

DAN AMBIK PERHATIAN bahawa Petyesen Pemutuan ini akan didengar di hadapan Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Mahkamah Tinggi Sungai Petani pada 18 December 2025 jam 9:00 pagi dan kamu dikehendaki hadir pada hari tersebut dan sekiranya kamu gagal hadir, Mahkamah boleh memsukkan perintah kebancrapan ke atas kamu.

Petyesen Pemutuan ini boleh diperiksa oleh kamu atas permohonan kamu di Mahkamah ini.

Bertarikh pada 27 Oktober 2025

Penolong Kanan Pendaftar
Mahkamah Tinggi
Sungai Petani

NOTIS IKLAN ini telah difailkan oleh Tetuan Revathi & Partners peguacara bagi Pemutuan Penghakiman yang berlamat di No.1-11, Jalan Cenuk 2, Prima Avenue 3, Batu 10, Jalan Puchong, 47100 Puchong, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

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[No.Tel: 03-8082 2789]
[No.Fax: 03-8-82 3207]
[Email:revathipartners@gmail.com]

322 Notices

Eng Foo (Lim) Enterprise Sdn. Bhd. 198101000875 (66984-M)
Heng Foo Lim Enterprise Sdn. Bhd. 200501014895 (691942-W)
(Companies in Members' Voluntary Liquidation)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT pursuant to Section 459(2) of the Companies Act 2016, the Final Meeting of the above Companies shall be held at 71A Jalan Dedap 6, Taman Johor Jaya, 81100 Johor Bahru, Johor on 26 December 2025 at 11:30 and 12:00 respectively for the purpose of:

Having an account laid before the meeting showing the manner in which the Winding Up has been conducted and the property of the Company disposed of and of hearing any explanation by the Liquidator

Dated this 26 November 2025

Teoh Lye Huat, Liquidator

322 Notices

PERISYTIHARAN JUALAN
DALAM MAHKAMAH TINGGI MALAYA DI PULAU PINANG
PERMOHONAN UNTUK PERLAKSANAAN NO: PA-38-1351-09/2025

Dalam perkara mengenai Seksyen 256 dan 257 Kanun Tanah Negara, 1965 Dan
Dalam perkara mengenai Gadaian Perserahan No: 28470/2007 (bertarikh: 12/09/2007), 0799SC2015016369 (bertarikh: 11/05/2015) ke atas semua bahagian tanah yang dipegang di bawah Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik: Geran 56701/M1B/5/126, Lot 544, Mukim 17, Daerah Timur Laut, Pulau Pinang

Dalam perkara mengenai Aturan 83 Kaedah-Kaedah Mahkamah, 2012

ANTARA ...PLAINTIFF
Public Bank Berhad (No. Syarikat: 6463-H)

DAN ...DEFENDAN
Tong Siew Chin (No. Kad Pengenalan: 550623075524)

Menurut Perintah Mahkamah Tinggi Malaysia di PULAU PINANG mengenai Perintah Jualan dan Perintah bertarikh 6 Januari 2025 dan 3 November 2025, adalah dengan ini disyorkan bahawa Timbalan Pendaftar/Penolong Kanan Pendaftar Pusat Operasi e-Lelong di Kuantan

AKAN MENJUAL SECARA LELONG AWAM
Pada Hari Isnin, 15 Disember 2025, Pada Jam 11:00 pagi,
SECARA ELEKTRONIK DI LAMAN WEB e-LELONG, PUSAT OPERASI e-LELONG, KOMPLEKS MAHKAMAH KUANTAN, PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR

NOTA: Bakal pembeli adalah dinasihatkan agar membuat carian Hakmilik secara rasmi di Pejabat Tanah dan memeriksa semua tanggungan, bebanan serta mengenal pasti dengan tepat hartanah tersebut sebelum jualan lelongan dijalankan.

Sila layari <https://eelong.kehakiman.gov.my/bidderweb>

BUTIR-BUTIR HAKMILIK:
No. Hakmilik : Hakmilik Strata No. Hakmilik: Geran 56701/ M1B/5/126
Lot 544
No. Lot Mukim / Daerah / Negeri : 17 / Timur Laut / Pulau Pinang
Pegangan : Hakmilik Kekal
No. Bangunan : 126 / 5 / M1B
Keluasan Tanah : 1324.0000000000 kaki persegi
123.0000000000 meter persegi
Pemilik Berdaftar : Tong Siew Chin
Syarat Nyata : Petak ini hendaklah digunakan untuk tujuan pangsapuri sahaja.
Sekatan Kepentingan : Tiada
Bebanan / Lain-Lain : Charged twice to Public Bank Berhad
Kawasan Rizab :
Kaveat : Nombor Pars: 0799B202000670 Kaveat Persendirian Atas Petak oleh PLUS GRANDVIEW SDN. BHD. didaftarkan pada 22 Januari 2020.

LOKASI DAN PERIHAI HARTANAH :
Hartanah tersebut adalah A corner three-bedroom condominium comes with two car parking bays yang berlamat pos di Unit No. 7-3A-5, Persiaran Tanjung Bungah, Twin Tower, 11200, Tanjung Bungah, Pulau Pinang.

HARGA RIZAB :
Hartanah tersebut akan dijual atas "sepertimana sedia ada" tertakluk kepada satu harga rizab sebanyak RM 448,000.00 (RINGGIT MALAYSIA: EMPAT RATUS EMPAT PULUH LAPAN RIBU SAHAJA) dan kepada syarat-syarat jualan yang dilampirkan. Pembida yang berminat hendaklah menandatangani 10% daripada harga rizab dalam bentuk Bank Draft di atas nama PUBLIC BANK BERHAD 1 HARI BEKERJA sebelum tarikh lelong awam. Baki harga belian hendaklah dibayar oleh pembida yang berjaya kepada PUBLIC BANK BERHAD dalam tempoh seratus dua puluh (120) hari dari tarikh jualan. Untuk butiri-butiri selanjutnya, sila berhubung dengan:-

Firma Guaman : WONG-CHOOI & MOHD NOR
Alamat : NO. 27, 1ST & 2ND FLOOR
JALAN MAJU JAYA
PUSAT PERNAGAAN MAJU JAYA, 14000, PG, MY
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Time to prioritise

... as shark Verstappen circles, McLaren must now nominate Norris as No. 1 driver

Red Bull Racing driver Max Verstappen celebrates his victory after the Las Vegas GP at Las Vegas Strip Circuit over Sunday. – REUTERS/PIC

BY KIERAN JACKSON

THE first sign that something was amiss, under the bamboozling lightshow that is the Las Vegas strip, came in the final three laps.

Out of nowhere, why was Lando Norris's pace dropping off at a rate of knots?

Safely in second place, seven seconds behind the race leader, Norris eventually finished 23 seconds off Max Verstappen. Now, we know why.

Norris's shock disqualification from the Las Vegas Grand Prix has handed his F1 title rivals the biggest of reprieves.

Ironically, the double McLaren DSQ – with Oscar Piastri's race result wiped out for the same reason, excessive plank wear on the car – is a much-needed saving grace for the Australian. His deficit was 30 points; now it's back to the original 24 points.

But by a country mile the biggest beneficiary is Verstappen: a man and a driver whose refusal to surrender has breathed new life into this helter-skelter title fight.

A terrific win from second on the grid in Vegas, coupled with nada on the points tally for the McLaren pair, means he is now level on points with Piastri – a man he was 104 points short of as recently as seven races ago.

No doubt, it will be the irrepressible Dutchman chasing a fifth consecutive title who Norris seriously fears now, as opposed to teammate Piastri.

McLaren team principal Andrea Stella apologised to his drivers in a statement afterwards, having cancelled his customary post-race written media session amid the commotion in the stewards' room.

The regulations are in place so teams don't run their cars too close to the ground, from both a safety standpoint for the drivers and a performance benefit for the cars. All teams have to find the balance, and this weekend McLaren screwed-up in search of performance.

And it is an all-time screw-up, at crunch time in the race for the title. At this stage of the season, it is simply indefensible that they would take a too-aggressive approach

on the ride height, given what is at stake.

In Austin last month, they were too conservative on their ride height after losing out on data from sprint race retirements. In Vegas, they put it all on red, and it came up black.

It is a crushing blow for the rejuvenated Norris, who had one hand on the championship trophy. Of course, 24 points is still a sizable advantage and, sprint race dependent, a win in Qatar on Sunday could seal a maiden title for the 26-year-old from Bristol. But now it's not just Piastri breathing down his neck.

The shark-like Verstappen can taste blood. He'll be the one leaving Sin City feeling like he's hit the jackpot.

If McLaren somehow squander the drivers' title from here, Vegas will undoubtedly be the cataclysmic turning point they look back on.

It is now, with two rounds and 58 points left on the table, that they finally decide to take the plunge and prioritise Norris? It won't be – but it should be. – The Independent

Ferrari boss tells Lewis to 'calm down'

BY PHILIP DUNCAN

FERRARI team principal Fred Vasseur has urged Lewis Hamilton to "calm down" following the seven-time world champion's latest public critique of his own performance.

Hamilton recently described his inaugural season with the Italian outfit as the worst of his 19-year career, a sentiment expressed in the wake of a challenging Las Vegas Grand Prix where he qualified last.

The 40-year-old driver also admitted he was eager for the year to conclude, with two rounds remaining in Qatar and Abu Dhabi, and confessed he was not looking forward to the next season either.

However, Vasseur offered a more measured perspective, stating: "I understand the reaction from Lewis just after the race. But he has to calm down and be focused on the next two races."

"Lewis was there in practice and the pace was good, but starting from 20th is not the best way to have good results," he explained.

"For now, we have to calm down. To jump out of the car and make the first comments, it is always a bit too much."

Hamilton's difficult debut campaign for Ferrari reached a low point in Sin City, where he posted the slowest time in qualifying.

Despite this, he managed to climb to 10th by the end of the race, later upgraded to eighth following the disqualifications of Lando Norris and Oscar Piastri, though he crossed the line nearly a minute behind winner Max Verstappen.

Currently, Hamilton trails teammate Charles Leclerc by 74 points in the drivers' standings and is still awaiting his first podium for Ferrari. He has been out-qualified by Leclerc in 17 of his 22 appearances this season.

Ferrari has slipped to fourth in the constructors' championship, 53 points behind Mercedes.

When questioned about the *Scuderia's* chances of securing a runners-up spot, a dejected Hamilton responded: "At this rate, with my performance, we don't (have a chance). I have had 22 bad weekends (this season) so I anticipate another couple."

Hamilton is set to return to his Ferrari cockpit in Doha on Friday, where compatriot Norris will be vying for his maiden world crown.

The British driver could clinch the title if he outscores both Red Bull's Verstappen and McLaren teammate Piastri by at least two points over the weekend. – The Independent

Next-gen ready to challenge Alcaraz, Sinner

CARLOS ALCARAZ and Jannik Sinner may have turned men's tennis into a duopoly over the last two years by sweeping the Grand Slams, but International Tennis Federation CEO Ross Hutchins is convinced a new wave of challengers will emerge.

The early 20-somethings, dubbed "Sincaraz", split the majors again this year and clashed in six finals overall, reinforcing their grip on the men's game and signalling a power shift after the retirements of Roger Federer, Rafa Nadal and Andy Murray.

While 38-year-old Novak Djokovic remains a huge threat as the only active member of the "Big Four" that amassed 69 Grand Slam trophies over two decades, it is the "Sincaraz" rivalry that is defining a new era for the sport.

"It's exciting, isn't it?" Hutchins told *Reuters*. "I mean, what a story. Every time that we see amazing players come to the end of their careers, it seems like two, four, six, eight new players pop up and take the level forward to another dimension."

"They keep taking the sport to another level, which is just embracing the world with such excitement every time they get on court. But the sport has a strong contingency of groups behind them as well."

Hutchins pointed to emerging talents like Brazilian Joao Fonseca as evidence that the next generation are knocking on the door.

Fonseca has burst into the top 25 in the world after starting the year ranked No. 145.

American teenager Learner Tien impressed by capturing his maiden title in Metz this month, as did Czech 20-year-old Jakub Mensik.

"Alcaraz and Sinner have created a gap in terms of their successes, but there are other young players, like Fonseca ... I wouldn't be surprised if there's someone that pushes through," Hutchins added. – Reuters



South Africa's Marco Jansen bowls during the third day of the second Test match against India at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium in Guwahati. – AFP/PIC

Jansen spearheads Proteas bouncer plan

SOUTH AFRICA'S towering pace bowler Marco Jansen said yesterday his plan to bounce out India worked wonders after his figures of 6-48 put the visitors in sight of a historic Test series win.

The 2.03m tall Jansen, a left-arm quick, helped bundle out India for 201 in response to South Africa's 489 on day three in Guwahati.

After winning the first Test in the two-match series in Kolkata, South Africa are closing on a first series win in India since Hansie Cronje's team triumphed in 2000.

South African spinners dismissed India's top three before Jansen took charge to get key wickets with the bouncer and reduce India to 122-7.

"To be honest, we just said we're going to try it," Jansen told reporters.

"The ball wasn't nipping as much like in Kolkata, the ball wasn't squatting as much so we had to figure out a plan.

"I think when I got my first wicket with a bouncer we said, okay cool, let's see how long this is going to work for and it just came off."

Jansen, who claimed his fourth five-wicket haul across 21 Tests, said, "It's a good wicket, there's good pace, good bounce. If you play the short ball well, you'll score runs. If you bowl well, you'll get wickets."

Jansen sent back Dhruv Jurel who fell to a pull shot on the short ball for an 11-ball duck.

Jansen then bowled a rising delivery to Nitish Kumar Reddy who attempted to fend it away, but Aiden Markram took a stunning diving catch from second slip.

Ravindra Jadeja fell to another bumper from Jansen as India slumped further, and later the lanky quick wrapped up the opposition innings in 83.5 overs.

"Today was just one of those days I got the pace and the bounce out of the wicket, and where everything clicks and everything works." – AFP

Hot Kane ready to strike

England captain relishing new Bayern role ahead of Arsenal clash

BAYERN MUNICH striker Harry Kane returns to north London tomorrow (4am Malaysian time) to face old rivals Arsenal arguably in the best form of his career after dropping into a deeper position.

Always a consistent goalscorer, the England captain has become a more complete player at Bayern, shouldering more creative and defensive duties.

The 32-year-old's form is a big reason for Bayern's remarkable start to the campaign.

The German champions have won 17 and drawn one of their 18 games in all competitions this season, with Kane playing every match.

Kane, who has scored 15 times in 21 matches against Arsenal, may be the key to unlock the Gunners' stingy defence.

Mikel Arteta's side are the only team not to have conceded in the Champions League this season. In the Premier League, Arsenal have shipped just six goals – the best record in Europe's top five leagues.

Kane is again producing incredible numbers this campaign, with 24 goals in 18 Bayern appearances and five from five for England.

But Kane's weight of numbers only tells part of the story this season.

Always willing to drop deep, Kane has often been deployed as a creative midfielder by Bayern coach Vincent Kompany, sitting behind either Nicolas Jackson or Serge Gnabry.

Whether by design or necessity – Jamal Musiala has been out with a broken ankle since the Club World Cup – the move has not only unleashed Kane's game, the England captain is having fun.

"I know I'm not just a goalscorer," Kane said after Saturday's come-from-behind 6-2 win over Freiburg. "I can impact the team with passing, one-on-one situations, and taking the pressure off the team."

"This is the most I've enjoyed my football because I'm just involved more. I love the way we play. A really

aggressive style, no fear.

"I love tackling, I love helping the team out and blocking shots and all that part of it as well."

"Obviously, I'm going to be judged on goals, but I think, especially this season, people will appreciate some of the other stuff I do as well."

Kane will need to shoulder a bit more of the scoring load with Luis Diaz, who netted both of Bayern's goals in their 2-1 win over Paris Saint-Germain, suspended for three Champions League matches after his red card for a tackle on Achraf Hakimi.

Kane moved to Bayern in 2023 after coming through the ranks at Tottenham after being cut by north London rivals Arsenal as a child.

"I was there for a couple of years and got released," Kane said Saturday, but declined to use the rejection as a motivator.

"It's all part and parcel

of the journey of football. That was 20 years ago, a long time ago. We've moved on a long way since then."

Kane faced Arsenal in the Champions League quarterfinals in 2023/24, scoring a penalty as Bayern won over two legs.

"It's very familiar territory for me. Having played for Tottenham for so long, it adds a bit more to the game," Kane said.

Bayern are flying high but they are vulnerable to set-pieces which is one of Arsenal's biggest strengths.

Bayern have conceded four goals in their past two games, all of which came from set plays.

Arsenal have scored 24 goals in the Premier League this season, 10 of which have come from set-pieces.

Kompany admitted his side had an "issue" with dead-ball situations, saying: "You can't hide it, everyone saw it. Arsenal's analysts will see it too."

"We have to show personality, character and defend those things. But I have confidence in our side." – AFP



Bayern Munich's Harry Kane celebrates after the Bundesliga match against Freiburg. – REUTERS/SPIC

Inter's big game credentials in doubt

INTER MILAN head into tomorrow's (4am) match at Atletico Madrid still reeling from a derby defeat to AC Milan and with doubts about their ability to handle big games under new coach Cristian Chivu.

Four wins out of four have given Inter a great chance of direct qualification for the last 16 of the Champions League but the trip to Spain is the first true test of their European credentials.

Inter's 100% record comes thanks to wins over Ajax, Slavia Prague, Union Saint-Gilloise and Kazakh minnows Kairat Almaty, but a much trickier run of fixtures awaits over the rest of the league phase.

After Atleti, Inter host Liverpool and Premier League leaders Arsenal before travelling to Borussia Dortmund in their final fixture.

Last season 16 points was enough to secure a top-eight finish, meaning Inter will likely need to collect four points from those fixtures in order to avoid the playoffs.

But their record in high-profile matches under Chivu is worrying, with Sunday's defeat to Milan the latest in a key fixture.

Inter have also lost to Serie A title rivals Napoli and Juventus this season, with Chivu's new team already suffering four defeats in Italy's top flight.

"I see my players give their all in training and I can't point the finger, nor do I want to make any excuses. We are in this together and everyone is responsible, for the good and for the bad," said Chivu on Sunday.

Defeat to Milan was particularly galling as Inter twice struck the wood-

work, while the normally reliable Hakan Calhanoglu fluffed his lines from the penalty spot.

"We all could have done better, we could have scored earlier, or dealt with the moments of the match better. Now we have to get back on our feet," added Chivu.

Romanian Chivu, who won the treble with Inter under Jose Mourinho in 2010, was given one of the biggest jobs in European football just a handful of matches into his senior coaching career.

The 45-year-old saved Parma from relegation after replacing Fabio Pecchia in February, and although Inter's performances have belied his novice status he is yet to convince on the biggest stage.

Making Inter's task more difficult is the absence of key wing-back Denzel Dumfries, who along with Federico Dimarco on the left flank provide crucial width to attacks, as well as goal threat.

Dumfries has scored in two of Inter's Champions League fixtures but an ankle injury will keep the Dutch international out of action until next month.

That is a problem as Dumfries' usual substitute Matteo Darmian is still unavailable with a calf knock and Carlos Augusto, who deputises for Dimarco, did little on the opposite side of the pitch.

Atletico have been beaten by both Liverpool and Arsenal in the Champions but are on a run of five straight wins in all competitions and are just four points behind La Liga leaders Real Madrid. – AFP

Palhinha promises 'big reaction' against PSG

■ BY GEORGE SESSIONS

JOAO PALHINHA apologised to the Tottenham fans after a painful 4-1 defeat at rivals Arsenal, but promised a "big reaction" this week.

Spurs were embarrassed by their north London counterparts at Emirates Stadium and conceded twice in each half, while they only produced two shots on target in a total xG (expected goals) tally of 0.07.

Thomas Frank is only five months into his tenure at Tottenham, but this meek display occurred a matter of weeks after a similar tepid performance in a 1-0 home loss to Chelsea and an ominous trip to Paris St Germain tomorrow (4am).

"We first of all need to say sorry to our supporters," a downbeat Palhinha said.

"There are not many words to be fair.

"It is always frustrating to lose the game with this reality against them. I think we deserve. I think it is fair, the result and we need a big reaction.

"In the next two games, a big reaction because we have to show the team we showed in the past.

"I don't need to speak too much about this, but we need to react, analyse the game but don't think too much about what happened."

Frank's decision to ditch his usual 4-2-3-1 formation and go to a three-at-the-back system at Arsenal backfired.

Summer target Eberechi Eze was on several occasions afforded too much space outside the Tottenham area and walked away with a hat-trick after he had been extremely close to joining the club in August.

A halftime change by Frank back to his usual system helped Spurs improve – despite Eze being able to score 35 seconds into the second period – but Palhinha acknowledged it was not good enough.

The Bayern Munich loanee promised an improved display against PSG, who beat Tottenham on penalties in the Super Cup in August.

Palhinha added: "I think we just played with that formation against PSG in the Super Cup."

"We tried to press them in the same way or a bit closer that we did in this (PSG) game, but yeah after we took the decision to change on half-time, I think the team improved."

"Even after we suffered really early, the goal that we conceded after half-time. I think when we swapped, we did better but yeah we need to analyse."

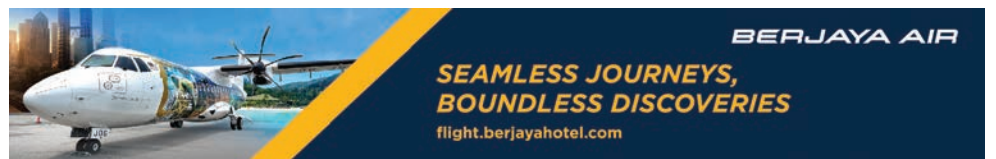
"The ways we conceded the goals, especially playing with five at the back line, we cannot concede these goals."

"And coming here and being punished with four goals is not our level. We will get our level again for the next two games."

"The only thing I can promise is we will give everything to get the wins in the next games." – The Independent



Spurs' Joao Palhinha looks dejected after the EPL match against Arsenal on Sunday. – AFPPIC



'I like my players fighting'

Moyes praises team spirit despite Gueye's red card

BY JAMIE BRAIDWOOD

DAVID MOYES won a Premier League game at Manchester United as an away manager for the first time in 18 attempts as he praised the "togetherness and resilience" of his Everton team despite Idrissa Gueye's red card for slapping teammate Michael Keane.

On an extraordinary night at Old Trafford, Everton became the first team in Premier League history to beat United away from home while down to 10 men, as Moyes defeated his former employers.

Gueye's 13th-minute red card for raising his hands at Keane's face looked to have put Everton in trouble but Moyes's players were magnificent as they ground out a famous win secured by Kieran Dewsbury-Hall's first half strike.

"If nothing happened, I don't think anyone in the stadium would have been surprised," Moyes said when asked about Gueye's dismissal, with the 36-year-old midfielder becoming the first Premier

League player to be sent off for fighting a teammate since 2008.

"I thought the referee could have taken a bit longer to think about it. I got told that the rules of the game that if you slap your own player, you could be in trouble.

"But there's another side to it: I like my players fighting each other, if someone didn't do the right action. If you want that toughness and resilience to get a result, you want someone to act on it."

Moyes said Gueye apologised to his teammates and thanked them for pulling together to get the victory.

Everton's match-winner Dewsbury-Hall said Gueye's red card brought those on the pitch closer together as they fought to see out the win.

Goalkeeper Pickford made some key saves, while there were also a number of blocks from the Everton defence that stopped United finding an equaliser.

"Rollercoaster game. I'll sleep well tonight, put it that way," Dewsbury-Hall said. "So genuinely happy for the lads and how hard they worked."

"A fantastic performance of gritting away, getting a goal and keeping that spirit. So glad we got the three points.

"We started really well - the situation happened. It was a moment of madness, avoidable. But all I can say is Idrissa has apologised to us at fulltime, said his piece and that's all he can do. We move on from it.

"The reaction from us, was unbelievable. Top tier. We could have crumbled but if anything, it made us grow."

Moyes was in charge of Manchester United on the last occasion where Everton won at Old Trafford, as a Toffees side managed by Roberto Martinez won 1-0 in December 2013.

"Incredibly proud of the players and the supporters here today because we've had so many encounters here where we've not got a result," Moyes said.

"We've come close but not been able to get over the line. But incredibly we've got over the line with 10 men, which is the hardest way to get a result here." - The Independent

Eze an amazing signing: Merino

BY GEORGE SESSIONS

MIKEL MERINO hailed Arsenal attacker Eberechi Eze as "complete" after his north London derby hat-trick and believes he can make the difference in the Premier League title race.

Defeats for Liverpool and Manchester City on Saturday opened the door for Arsenal to extend their lead at the summit and Eze's wonderful treble inspired a 4-1 victory over Tottenham.

Spurs had been close to signing Eze from Crystal Palace in August until Mikel Arteta pulled off a major hijack and makeshift Gunners forward Merino says the England international has instantly slotted into a group at Emirates Stadium determined to achieve silverware this season.

"I think he is very complete. He can dribble, he can pass the ball," Merino reflected.

"In Spain we are born and we are raised with this talent of playing with each other, passing the ball and connecting.

"He is also mentality-driven to passing the ball and sharing the game but at the same time he can dribble and is very strong. He can shoot and is really complete. An amazing signing.

"Just saying 'hi' to him for the first time, you can see the calmness in his voice and the way he presents himself.

"He is very confident and also every morning, we sit in a sauna at the training ground and we can have a really good talk with him about everything.

"He is just a nice guy and already very integrated within the team and we need those type of players."

It had been a relatively slow start for Eze in north London with only two goals in his first 15 appearances for Arsenal, but Merino was always confident his big moment would arrive.

Asked if Eze can be a difference-maker in the title race after near-misses in recent seasons, Merino pointed to the club's summer activity where Viktor Gyokeres, Noni Madueke and Martin Zubimendi were also signed.

Merino added: "We have signed so many players who can be a difference. I think now, everyone judges players in terms of goals and assists - numbers.

"It is what it is, but as football players we know that he is providing the team with a lot of quality and a lot of good movements, technically.

"In training sessions, you know how good he is. So yes, goals came but he is an unbelievable player and we are really, really lucky to have him. He can play in different positions and adapt to different styles. It was a massive signing for Arsenal." - The Independent

Pep embarrassed, ashamed for confrontation with cameraman

BY RICHARD JOLLY

PEP GUARDIOLA has apologised to a television cameraman and said he feels ashamed and embarrassed of his behaviour after Manchester City's defeat at Newcastle on Saturday.

The City manager confronted a cameraman after the final whistle, grabbed his headphones and pushed him in a brief altercation.

But Guardiola said it was a consequence of his personality and his determination to stand up for City and revealed he was quick to say sorry.

He said: "I apologise. I feel embarrassed, ashamed when I see it. I don't like it. I apologised after one second to the cameraman. I am who I am.

"After 1,000 games I'm not a perfect person, I make huge mistakes. It's not about that. What is for sure, I defend any team and my club, that's for sure. The reason why is I want to defend my team and my club."

Guardiola explained why he confronted Newcastle captain Bruno Guimaraes at the end of the match and believes he did nothing wrong.

"We have known Bruno for many, many years and every time after the game, even at the Etihad, we talk in the tunnel or wherever we talk, always," he said.

"I don't know what happened. Our paths always cross and I always have a good relationship with him. I love it. I'm an emotional guy, I love to talk and move my hands and my arms and everything." - The Independent



Everton's Idrissa Gueye (2nd left) is shown the red card by referee Tony Harrington as he clashes with teammate Michael Keane (right) during yesterday's English Premier League match against Man Utd. - REUTERS/PIC

Other times when teammates have had scuffles on the pitch

EVERTON midfielder Idrissa Gueye was sent off in the 13th minute of his side's Premier League game at Manchester United after slapping teammate Michael Keane.

Gueye remonstrated with Keane after a Manchester United attack broke down and then appeared to slap his teammate.

He was then sent off by referee Tony Harrington and had to be held back by a number of his Everton teammates before eventually going down the tunnel.

This isn't the first time, however, that emotions have spilled over and teammates have had scuffles on the pitch. Here are some famous examples.

RICARDO FULLER & ANDY GRIFFIN

Stoke striker Fuller was sent off for slapping his captain in a 2-1 defeat at West Ham in December 2008. The flashpoint came as the Potters waited to kickoff after Carlton Cole held off Griffin to claim the Hammers' equaliser. Fuller, who accused Griffin of being "very rude and disrespectful", received a three-match ban, with Stoke boss Tony Pulis calling a team meeting to address the incident.

LEE BOWYER & KIERON DYER

The Newcastle duo came to blows

towards the end of a 3-0 home defeat by Aston Villa in April 2005. Dyer grabbed Bowyer by the throat and they traded punches before being separated by Villa's Gareth Barry. Both men were dismissed by referee Barry Knight - Magpies defender Steven Taylor had earlier been sent off for handball - and later hauled before the media by manager Graeme Souness to apologise for their conduct.

GRAEME LE SAUX & DAVID BATTY

Le Saux was left with a painful reminder of his bust-up with David Batty during Blackburn's 3-0 Champions League defeat at Spartak Moscow in November 1995. Four minutes into the game, Batty made his displeasure abundantly clear when the pair collided as they tried to retrieve a Mike Newell pass. The row descended into a pushing match before Le Saux struck out, breaking his left hand during a scuffle in which skipper Tim Sherwood took a blow to the cheek.

HUGO LLORIS & SON HEUNG-MIN

Tottenham goalkeeper Lloris and forward Son became involved in a heated row on the pitch as the half-time whistle sounded in a 1-0 Premier League victory over Everton in July

2020. Lloris angrily confronted the South Korea international over his failure to track back and the pair had to be separated by Giovanni Lo Celso and Harry Winks. The spat continued down the tunnel and into the dressing room, although the two men embraced after the final whistle.

DEREK HALES & MIKE FLANAGAN

Charlton strike partners Hales and Flanagan came to blows during an FA Cup tie against Maidstone in January 1979. The source of the spat was allegedly Flanagan reacting to Hales failing to pass to him by making a disparaging remark about his teammate's genitals. Both were sent off.

CRAIG LEVEIN & GRAEME HOGG

The Hearts duo became involved in a disagreement during a pre-season friendly at Raith in August 1994 after their side had almost conceded. Both men threw punches, but it was Levein's which did the damage, breaking Hogg's nose. Hogg was sent off as he was carried off on a stretcher, with Levein suffering the same fate. They were later handed 10 and 12-match bans respectively.

The Independent

RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE: Man United 0 Everton 1 (Dewsbury-Hall 29).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	12	9	2	1	24	6	29
Chelsea	12	7	2	3	23	11	23
Man City	12	7	1	4	24	10	22
Aston Villa	12	6	3	3	15	11	21
Crystal Palace	12	5	5	2	16	9	20
Brighton	12	5	4	3	19	16	19
Sunderland	12	5	4	3	14	11	19
Bournemouth	12	5	4	3	19	20	19
Tottenham	12	5	3	4	20	14	18
Man Utd	12	5	3	4	19	19	18
Everton	12	5	3	4	13	13	18
Liverpool	12	6	0	6	18	20	18
Brentford	12	5	1	6	18	19	16
Newcastle	12	4	3	5	13	15	15
Fulham	12	4	2	6	13	16	14
Nottm Forest	12	3	3	6	13	20	12
West Ham	12	3	2	7	15	25	11
Leeds	12	3	2	7	11	22	11
Burnley	12	3	1	8	14	24	10
Wolves	12	0	2	10	7	27	2

LA LIGA: Espanyol 2 (Milla 48, Fernandez 84) Sevilla 1 (Marcao 86).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Real Madrid	13	10	2	1	28	12	32
Barcelona	13	10	1	2	36	15	31
Villarreal	13	9	2	2	26	11	29
Atletico	13	8	4	1	25	11	28
Betis	13	5	6	2	20	14	21
Espanyol	13	6	3	4	17	16	21
Getafe	13	5	2	6	12	15	17
Athletic	13	5	2	6	12	17	17
Real Sociedad	13	4	4	5	17	18	16
Elche	13	3	7	3	15	16	16
Sevilla	13	5	1	7	19	21	16
Celta	13	3	7	3	16	18	16
Rayo	13	4	4	5	12	14	16
Alaves	13	4	3	6	11	12	15
Valencia	13	3	4	6	12	21	13
Mallorca	13	3	3	7	13	20	12
Osasuna	13	3	2	8	10	16	11
Girona	13	2	5	6	12	25	11
Levante	13	2	3	8	16	24	9
Oviedo	13	2	3	8	7	20	9

SERIE A: Sassuolo 2 (Matic 6, Thorstvedt 90+5) Pisa 2 (Nzola 4-pen, Meister 81), Torino 1 (Vlasic 45+2-pen) Como 5 (Addai 36, 52, Ramon 71, Paz 76, Baturina 86).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Roma	12	9	0	3	15	6	27
AC Milan	12	7	4	1	18	9	25
Napoli	12	8	1	3	19	11	25
Inter Milan	12	8	0	4	26	13	24
Bologna	12	7	3	2	21	8	24
Como	12	5	6	1	17	7	21
Juventus	12	5	5	2	15	11	20
Lazio	12	5	3	4	15	9	18
Sassuolo	12	5	2	5	16	14	17
Udinese	12	4	3	5	12	20	15
Cremonese	12	3	5	4	13	16	14
Torino	12	3	5	4	11	21	14
Atalanta	12	2	7	3	14	14	13
Cagliari	12	2	5	5	12	17	11
Parma	12	2	5	5	9	15	11
Pisa	12	1	7	4	10	16	10
Lecce	12	2	4	6	8	16	10
Genoa	12	1	5	6	11	19	8
Fiorentina	12	0	6	6	10	19	6
Verona	12	0	6	6	7	18	6

Heartbreak in Tokyo

Mixed team keglers miss out on second round by one pin

MALAYSIA ended the penultimate day of the Deaflympics 2025 broken-hearted after the national bowlers finished ninth to miss out on a place in the second round of the mixed team event by a single pin at the Higashiyamoto Grand Bowl, in Tokyo yesterday.

The Malaysian quartet - Ho Choon Seong, Syabil Azam Syamsul Azam, Siong Mui Hong and Siw Sing Hie - toppled 1,109 pins to finish behind eighth-placed Germany (1,110 pinfalls).

National deaf bowling head coach Joe Tay said that once the quadrennial Games conclude tomorrow, he will meet with the Malaysian Deaf Sports Association (MSDeaf) to discuss his future, although he only joined the team in October last year.

"I will probably need to have a proper one-on-one discussion with MSDeaf president Ong Shin Ruenn to look at the direction moving forward and what others have planned. As of now, I am not sure

whether I will continue or not," Tay told reporters yesterday.

"For future Deaflympics, I hope there will be better strategic and logistical planning because we faced some issues with Team Malaysia.

"For example, other teams stay near their venues and their travel time is around 15 minutes. Our players, however, have to wake up as early as 5am to get to their venues. I hope the management can learn from this," Tay added.

On Sunday (Nov 23), Tay claimed that the shocking first-round exit of the national men's bowling team, regarded as Malaysia's best gold-medal prospects at the Deaflympics 2025, was due to transportation issues, which led to them arriving late at the venue and having no time to warm up.

The journey from Deaflympics C, the designated bus pickup point to the Higashiyamoto Grand Bowl is about 37km and normally takes around one hour and 45 minutes.

Tay, however, stressed that the players are

highly talented, although the pressure of competing abroad may have affected their ability to produce more breakthroughs.

"I am satisfied with one gold and one silver we picked up, but based on our overall form, we actually could have bagged more.

"Overall, I'm very happy with our haul of one gold and one silver. Definitely very happy," he said.

Bowling remains Malaysia's most successful sport at the Games this year, delivering a gold in men's doubles and a silver in women's doubles.

With the mixed team event being the final outing for the national contingent, Malaysia concluded their Deaflympics 2025 campaign with a four-medal haul: one gold (men's doubles bowling), two silvers (women's doubles bowling and men's karate individual kumite below 84kg) and one bronze (mixed doubles badminton).

The national contingent, thus, failed to meet the MSDeaf target of three gold medals. - Bernama



Malaysia's Faris Harizan (left) in action against Canada's Brendan Guraliuk (right) on Monday at the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in Ipoh, Perak.

India to give Speedy Tigers stern test

BY P. CHANDRA SAGARAN

FANS can expect an exciting match between hosts Malaysia and Asia Cup champions India in the 31st Sultan Azlan Shah Cup Invitational tournament at the Azlan Shah Hockey Stadium in Ipoh, Perak today at 8pm.

Indian will give a tough time to the homesters as they lost 2-3 to third world ranked Belgium in a delayed match on Monday.

They would go all out to collect full points as they moved down to fourth place in the six team table.

Malaysia with four points from two matches are grouped in third spot with Belgium and

New Zealand.

Malaysia coach Sarjit Singh said: "We must learn some tough lessons from the 2-2 draw against New Zealand and the come from behind 3-2 win over Canada.

"We cannot lose balls... we need to keep the ball in possession more... learn to kill off the game. "All games are tough... there are no easy matches," he said.

His main concern is how the "Speedy Tigers" will manage its defense against the five times champions who are returning after a six year break.

It was evident in the first game against the Kiwis who were trailing 1-2 but drew level with two minutes remaining to force a draw.

BAM open to joint training

THE Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) is open to having professional shuttlers train together or spar with national players in an effort to strengthen the men's singles department.

BAM singles coaching director Kenneth Jonassen admitted that professional shuttlers, like world No. 49 Aidil Sholeh Ali Sadikin and 68th-ranked Jacky Kok, have produced some encouraging results this season, thus proving that they can be considered for the joint training sessions to further strengthen the national squad.

"I have looked at many angles regarding all the independent (professional) players. However, they might have signed contracts with different sponsors and have different objectives.

"For me, that is not something I can decide. They have to decide for themselves. The players, if they want, can come and try out," he said when met at Akademi Badminton Malaysia (ABM) in Bukit Kiara, Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

The Dane said he is prepared to accept any outside player to join the governing body, either permanently or through collaboration, to undergo joint training sessions from time to time.

"For me, the overall goal is to raise the level of the Malaysian men's singles shuttlers. That is the objective.

"Yes, when we play in tournaments, we might compete against each other, but here at home, we should find the best ways to train together so that we as a nation, remain strong," he said.

Jonassen said that having the national and professional shuttlers take part in joint training sessions is one of the best methods to get the men's singles department back to a high standard.

The national men's singles shuttlers have experienced a disappointing season, thus far, with Leong Jun Hao and Justin Hoh frequently suffering early exits in international tournaments. - Bernama

Sarjit not jumping for joy after Canada win

NATIONAL men's hockey head coach Sarjit Singh is far from pleased despite his men managing to edge Canada 3-2 in a Sultan Azlan Shah Cup (SASC) match at the Sultan Azlan Shah Hockey Stadium on Monday night.

His two main concerns are the national team's profligacy and their tendency to concede too many penalty corners.

"We often lose the ball and, on top of that, we fail to convert the chances created. That's very disappointing.

"We were actually lucky because Canada failed

to convert many of their penalty corner set-piece moves, otherwise, the outcome would have been different," he said.

Earlier, the Speedy Tigers got their goals through Akhimullah Anuar (fourth minute), Abu Kamal Azrai (19th minute) and Faizal Saari (24th minute), while Canada replied through Sean Davis (12th minute) and Matthew Sarmiento (16th minute).

Sarjit also warned his men not to take any of the teams competing this year lightly, as they each have their own strengths.

"For example, take last night's match. Canada are ranked 20th in the world but still managed to hold world No. 3 Belgium to a draw. That's not an easy thing to do, and it only highlights their (Canada's) strength," he said.

Meanwhile, Canadian head coach Patrick Tshutshani, though disappointed with the defeat, was pleased with his men's overall performance, saying he was proud of the way his players matched the Speedy Tigers.

"I think we're quite clinical when we have the ball and when we go forward. Unfortunately, we

didn't have enough (quality) to get it over the line.

"But the boys showed a bit of grit and determination, especially in the third and fourth quarters, where we started to put a lot more pressure (on the Malaysian team)," he said.

Malaysia, who began the tournament with a 2-2 draw against New Zealand on Sunday (Nov 23), will take on India today, followed by Belgium (Nov 27) and South Korea (Nov 29).

The top two teams after the round-robin league format will clash in the title showdown on Nov 30. - Bernama



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Man United captain Bruno Fernandes reacts after the match.
- AFP/IC

Toothless Devils

Amorim blames Man Utd players for Everton loss

RUBEN AMORIM was “really frustrated” and pointed the finger of blame at his Manchester United players after they lost 1-0 to Everton despite playing against 10 men for nearly 80 minutes.

Idrissa Gana Gueye’s unusual first half red card for fighting his own teammate meant nothing as a toothless United failed to find a leveller after Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall’s strike on the half-hour mark sealed three points for the visitors at Old Trafford.

Bruno Fernandes and Joshua Zirkzee came closest but the Red Devils only mustered six shots on target despite having an extra man on the pitch.

Amorim was visibly disappointed post-match and told *Sky Sports* repeatedly how frustrated he was.

The Portuguese coach criticised his players for their decision-making and for allowing their level to “drop” as their five-match unbeaten run came to a sorry end.

Amorim said: “Really frustrated like any other person that supports Man United. The way we started the game, the way we didn’t understand how we should play against 10 men.”

“They deserved to win. Even suffering with 10 men that is normal. We had a lot of chances but the quality and the decision-making was not there.”

“The understanding of every situation of the game was not there. And then the quality near the box. But the most important is the intensity.”

“You can feel it right away when you start the game in the first minute you can feel when we are at the top level of intensity and when we are not. Then when we are not we cannot win in this way.”

Asked if he was surprised, Amorim

Everton’s Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall (right) shoots to score his team’s opening goal as Manchester United’s Leny Yoro tries to defend during the English Premier League match at Old Trafford yesterday. - AFP/IC



added: “Of course. But I said in many occasions that I understand that we have a lot to do.”

“But I am really frustrated with the way we played the game, especially at home and understanding what happened this weekend with the other clubs, looking at the table

and felling everything.

“And the way we presented from the first minute is really frustrating. This is more than that (a missed opportunity).”

“We need to play the game in a different way. Sometimes we can do it, sometimes we can have good runs of

results and performance, but sometimes we drop.”

Leny Yoro and Bruno Fernandes were guilty of poor defending for the decisive Dewsbury-Hall goal while goalkeeper Senne Lammens didn’t get a strong hand to the shot.

Questioned about what United

could have done better, Amorim responded simply: “Everything.”

“I don’t want to put anything specifically. We didn’t play well. We didn’t understand and we were going with the flow of the game. That is my biggest concern.”

And centreback Matthijs de Ligt reacted: “It’s quite clear. A bad night for us... 70 minutes more or less 11 vs 10, conceded a goal and not creating many chances. A few but not enough for a match against 10. A disappointing night.”

“From our side, we didn’t do enough. Didn’t make the runs or bodies into the box. They are strong in the air so we didn’t have the players to score from that.”

“We basically played to their strengths. These are the main aspects, but we have to look at ourselves and it’s not good enough.”

“We’ve been away and trained for a while together. I just think we lacked a bit of urgency in several situations. They get punished if you lack this urgency.”

“If you don’t score, you lose this game. We lacked this hunger to make a difference on the most important moments.”

Amorim even agreed with Everton manager David Moyes in saying he felt the Gueye-Keane spat showed a welcome sign of desire.

It is a sight he wants to see from his own team - without the red card of course.

“Fighting is not a bad thing,” he said. “Fighting doesn’t mean that they don’t like each other.”

“Fighting is that you lose the ball and ‘I will fight you because we will suffer a goal.’”

“I hope my players, when they lose the ball, fight each other.” - The Independent/Agencies