



Homegrown 'kombucha' producer aiming for the sky

Country's leading fermented tea supplier set to expand into markets in Singapore, Indonesia.

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Innocence exploited

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Organised syndicates callously using children from vulnerable groups to beg on streets, in acts clearly within international definitions of trafficking and forced labour.

NGO Tenaganita said the scale of the scourge is widely underestimated, as many trafficked children are still treated as petty offenders or 'public nuisances' instead of victims.
- KIRTINEE RAMESH/THE SUN



Anwar announces new measures to boost social protection agenda

People's Welfare Insurance Scheme 3.0 approved with initial allocation of RM20 million.

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Mandatory microchipping plan to curb dog-dumping lauded

Move to identify owners could break common practice by irresponsible individuals: Groups

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PM unveils new measures to boost social protection

► People's Welfare Insurance Scheme 3.0 enhanced and Sahabat Penggerak Madani initiative launched

BY HARITH KAMAL
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PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim announced new measures to bolster Malaysia's social protection agenda, including enhancements to the People's Welfare Insurance Scheme 3.0 and the launch of the Sahabat Penggerak Madani initiative.

Speaking at the Rancangan Madani event yesterday, he said the insurance scheme had been approved by the Finance Ministry, with an initial allocation of RM20 million for the period from Oct 1 to Sep 30 next year.

He said compensation rates under the insurance scheme have been increased to RM13,500 for death, RM26,500 for accidental death and RM13,500 for permanent disability due to accidents.

"The aim is to strengthen communication and engagement with the people while expanding the reach of the Malaysia

Madani agenda."

The Sahabat Penggerak Madani programme empowers volunteers, trained by the Malaysian Academy of Nationhood, to act as grassroots ambassadors supporting field-level programmes and raising awareness on nationhood, leadership and government policies.

Since its inception, the programme has attracted 3,000 volunteers, many of whom were present at the launch. They serve as trainers and advocates, helping to communicate government initiatives directly to communities.

As recognition for their contribution, they will receive official ID cards, access to Malaysian Academy of Nationhood training as well as benefits from strategic partners.

Their participation will also be recorded in the nation's official volunteer registry.

Anwar thanked the volunteers for their dedication and highlighted the importance of

public engagement in government initiatives.

"This is about creating a stronger link between the people and the government, ensuring that programmes are understood, supported and implemented effectively at the grassroots level."

Both initiatives reflect the government's commitment to promoting Madani values, focusing on inclusivity and community-centred social protection.

The event was attended by deputy prime ministers Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, Cabinet ministers, senior civil servants and department heads.

The launch marked the culmination of the Rancangan Madani event which featured interactive exhibitions, sharing sessions and a forum on public service reform.

Running concurrently with the National Convention on Public Service Reform 2025, the event brought together civil servants, policy thinkers and industry players.

Organised by the Prime Minister's Office through the Performance Acceleration Coordination Unit, the two-day programme drew 304,107 visitors, surpassing its target of 300,000.

Nation on track to eradicate hardcore poverty

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia is on track to completely eradicate hardcore poverty as the nation's hardcore poverty rate is now only 0.09%, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He added that the problem of poverty is expected to be resolved before the first quarter of next year.

Speaking at the Rancangan Madani event yesterday, Anwar said Malaysia's performance in reducing hardcore poverty places it among the best globally, surpassing even advanced economies in tackling extreme deprivation.

"Malaysia is now among the few countries in the world that have almost ended hardcore poverty.

"Even in the United States and Europe, the number of people living on the streets remains high.

"We should be grateful that our rate is now only 0.09%."

He directed ministries and implementation units to prioritise the remaining cases.

"I told officers that if 0.09% is all that's left, plan your work and complete it immediately."

He said programmes such as Kampung Angkat, Sekolah Angkat and Sejahtera Madani are designed to ensure that no community is left behind as Malaysia advances its economic transformation.

Malaysia posted a GDP growth rate of 5.2% in the third quarter, among the highest in the region.

Anwar cited a strengthening ringgit, rising investments and a 44% surge in trade, bringing cumulative trade value to RM2.235 trillion.

"This is Malaysia, a moderate nation of 34.5 million people recording impressive and encouraging growth."

He also announced that taxpayers awaiting refunds would begin receiving them on Monday, following the government's decision to allocate RM4 billion to clear accumulated tax-refund backlogs.

"Refunds have been held up for too long. The government does not want the people to owe the country, and the government also cannot owe the rakyat."

"This is a matter of fairness, *ihsan* (compassion) and morality."

He acknowledged complaints from small traders about e-invoicing which had placed a burden on micro and small enterprises.

He said the mandatory e-invoicing threshold has therefore been raised from RM500,000 to RM1 million in annual revenue.

"We made this decision because we listen, not because of political pressure."

Anwar criticised past practices where wealthy corporations could negotiate tax matters easily while smaller taxpayers faced strict enforcement.

"This must change. If someone owes the country, they must pay. But the same principle must apply to the government – debts owed to companies must be settled as quickly as possible."

He said the government continues to face legacy issues, including billions in outstanding payments to contractors and suppliers.

"These are inherited problems. We can only pay in stages but we handle them with political will and moral clarity." – By **Harith Kamal**



Anwar officiating at the closing ceremony of the Rancangan Madani event in Putrajaya yesterday.
– AMIRUL SYAFIQ / THE SUN

Express dissatisfaction with understanding, respect: Anwar

PUTRAJAYA: People are free to express their opinions, including dissatisfaction, but it must be done with understanding and respect, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking at the Rancangan Madani event, he highlighted the government's commitment to listening to public feedback while continuing its programmes under the Madani administration.

He also expressed regret that some of the government's policies and achievements had not reached the *rakyat* as intended.

"I want to acknowledge the efforts of everyone involved, but what reaches the public often gets drowned in noise or criticism.

"In a free society and on social media some comments aim to belittle rather than build."

Anwar said discussions with key officials including deputy prime ministers Datuk Seri

Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof as well as 140 new initiatives officially announced and 167 in progress are not all widely publicised.

He called on civil servants to uphold professionalism and support government policies even if they hold differing personal views.

"You may have differing opinions but your duty is to convey what the government is doing and to offer constructive suggestions."

He emphasised that the success of the Madani governance agenda depends heavily on the commitment, integrity and cooperation of the civil service.

Anwar said Malaysia's recent gains, including 5.2% economic growth in the third quarter, rising investments and expanding trade, are the result of close collaboration between political leaders

and public administration.

He said key social programmes such as the Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah cash aid and the near eradication of hardcore poverty also demonstrate that public service delivery is functioning effectively.

On specific development projects, Anwar pointed to ongoing efforts in Sabah, including electricity, water supply and roads, which are progressing but not yet complete.

"People sometimes grow impatient waiting for results but progress is being made, and will be phased in early next year."

He also addressed longstanding concerns within the civil service, particularly about stagnant benefits and delayed pension adjustments.

Anwar reaffirmed the Unity government's

commitment to improving remuneration and retirement benefits, adding that recent allocations of RM10 billion this year and RM18 billion next year represent the most significant improvements in over a decade.

He said institutional reforms, including the Fiscal Responsibility Act, strengthened parliamentary oversight.

He added that the upcoming Ombudsman system is essential to build a more transparent and accountable administration.

"Change cannot happen without a clear vision and a committed civil service. Our progress is a shared effort, not the work of one person or one ministry.

"We want a government that is stable, responsible and responsive. The civil service is at the heart of that goal." – By **Harith Kamal**

Hidden networks behind child begging

➤ Rights group says syndicates use infants, sedated children and coercion, urges authorities to treat incidents as trafficking cases

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Behind the visible image of children begging in Malaysia's streets lies a hidden, organised network of exploitation, with syndicates systematically profiting from refugee and undocumented minors, Tenaganita executive director Glorene Das warned.

She said forced child begging is increasingly coordinated, falling squarely within international definitions of trafficking and forced labour.

"The scale, however, is widely underestimated, as many trafficked children are still treated as petty offenders or 'public nuisances' instead of victims," Das added.

A study by the International Labour Organisation has documented Rohingya children being forced to beg in Peninsular Malaysia, while the US Trafficking in

Persons Report noted that Malaysian orphans and refugee minors are also systematically exploited, she said.

"A stark illustration was the 2024 Immigration Department raid in Kuala Lumpur, which uncovered a syndicate using children - including infants - who were allegedly drugged before being sent out at night. This shows a systematic and profit-driven pattern."

Tenaganita's frontline work indicates that the crime involves both cross-border trafficking and local syndicate operations.

"Many victims come from communities already living without legal documentation - Rohingya refugees, stateless children and undocumented families from Indonesia or the Philippines," she added.

In June 2024, authorities in Kuala Lumpur raided a four-storey shophouse linked to a human trafficking and passport forgery syndicate.

Das said the building housed foreign nationals - both adults and children - who were reportedly under the syndicate's strict control.

According to her, children were sedated, kept indoors during the day and transported at night to high-traffic "earning points."

"The collection of money, as well as the movement, housing and transport of the children was centrally coordinated, disproving the assumption that these children beg independently." She added that local fixers from the same ethnic or language community often recruited families with false promises or pressured them into letting their children "help earn income."

"In some cases, parents trapped in debt were coerced into allowing their children to beg to repay the debt."

Das explained that children were rotated between traffic junctions and tourist zones, discreetly monitored by adults on motorbikes or in parked cars and quickly removed whenever enforcement officers approached.

She said syndicates specifically target very young children because they elicit more sympathy and income.

"People are more likely to give to a baby or toddler who looks hungry or distressed. This 'sympathy economy' drives profits."

Children are easier to control due to dependence, language barriers and fear, with traffickers using threats, deprivation or even drugging.

"An unattended child on the street isn't acting independently - it signals organised exploitation."

She said Rohingya refugee children remain the most frequently identified victims, followed by stateless Filipino children, undocumented Indonesian minors and children of migrant workers in informal sectors.

Meanwhile, Unicef case studies in Sabah highlighted that stateless and semi-documented children face high vulnerability to labour exploitation due to poverty, invisibility and lack of services - conditions syndicates readily exploit, Das said.

"Some Malaysian and long-term migrant families facing hardship may also be manipulated by syndicates offering 'help' or 'transport', which can escalate into exploitation."

Das said the common thread is structural vulnerability: insecure legal status, poverty, lack of education and fear of enforcement.

"These are the conditions traffickers look for."

Tenaganita urged a protection-first approach whenever a child is found begging.

Authorities should:

➤ treat all children as trafficking victims and activate the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 (ATIPSO) and child-protection protocols;

➤ separate children immediately from exploiters and verify adults claiming to be parents;

➤ conduct urgent medical checks for drugging, malnutrition, or trauma;

➤ use trained child protection officers and interpreters for child-sensitive interviews;

➤ place children in safe shelters - not immigration depots - and coordinate with the Social Welfare Department, UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) and qualified NGOs; and

➤ investigate the wider network controlling movement, transport and profits - not just street-level handlers.

NGOs, she said, must provide psychosocial support, legal aid and strong advocacy for systemic improvements, including mandatory trafficking screening and expanded access to education and legal documentation.

"Until these structural vulnerabilities are addressed, children will continue to be exploited in broad daylight, while traffickers operate with impunity."

Organised exploitation of minors becoming rampant

PETALING JAYA: Toddlers in traffic junctions, infants on pavements and young children wandering alone at night are not tragic coincidences - they are the visible frontline of a fast-expanding trafficking network coercing Malaysia's most vulnerable minors into organised begging.

Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) border-security expert Dr Mohd Ramlan Mohd Arshad said the phenomenon - long overshadowed by labour and sex trafficking - now demands urgent national attention, with cases already documented both locally and internationally.

"In 2021, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery identified the coerced begging of Rohingya refugee children in Malaysia as a significant issue.

"This aligns with the US Trafficking in Persons Report 2023, which repeatedly recorded cases of migrant and stateless minors forced into begging by syndicates."

He added that the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) had, as early as 2019, warned that undocumented children were exceptionally vulnerable to such exploitation.

Unlike dramatic cross-border trafficking cases, Mohd Ramlan said these networks primarily exploit local vulnerabilities and community linkages.

"Our research shows syndicates mostly use local connections, including familial or community ties, for recruitment."

Parents in high-risk migrant communities - particularly Rohingya, Indonesian, Filipino and stateless families - are often pressured or misled into surrendering their children, he said.

"Some victims are moved within Malaysia or between neighbouring countries such as Indonesia and the Philippines.

"Syndicates may also obtain custody through dubious 'informal adoption' arrangements or by paying impoverished parents a small fee.

"Once in control, traffickers maintain dominance through psychological manipulation, debt bondage and threats of violence."

He said children are targeted because they

yield high returns with minimal risk.

"People are far more likely to give money to very young children, especially toddlers.

"Their vulnerability and inability to seek help make them easy - and tragically disposable - tools for exploitation."

He said even when no adults are visibly present, children remain tightly controlled through fear.

"Traffickers instil threats - harm to the children or their families - so the child learns that disobedience has consequences."

Mohd Ramlan said debt bondage is common, with children told they must repay impossible sums, creating lifelong trauma and violating the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) standards and international conventions.

"Unicef assessments consistently identify non-citizen children with uncertain legal status as the most vulnerable.

"Rohingya refugees are disproportionately affected due to statelessness, poverty and lack of formal protection. Indonesian, Filipino and stateless children face similar risks, especially when their parents have been detained or deported.

"These children often share the same risk factors: absence of education, fear of authorities, extreme poverty and no legal safeguards.

"Syndicates know how to exploit every one of these weaknesses."

Forced child begging is most visible in high-traffic zones. In Kuala Lumpur, hotspots include Bukit Bintang, Masjid India and Petaling Street, and in Selangor, parts of Klang.

Enforcement officers have reported that organised groups can collect up to RM3,000 a day.

Mohd Ramlan stressed that responses must prioritise child safety over immigration enforcement.

"When a child is found, the first step is ensuring they are moved to a safe, non-detention shelter."

He added that a multidisciplinary team must conduct a best-interest assessment, including medical and psychological care, with NGOs facilitating communication and

Gaps leave vulnerable children unprotected: Unicef

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's legal framework protects children but gaps leave refugee, migrant, stateless and undocumented minors exposed to trafficking, exploitation and forced labour, Unicef Malaysia warns.

Deputy representative Sanja Saranovic said the Child Act safeguards all children, while the Anti-Trafficking in Persons and Anti-Smuggling of Migrants Act 2007 addresses trafficking.

Yet many marginalised children face practical barriers in accessing protection, welfare and justice services.

"These children risk detention due to lack of documentation or legal status. Limited access to schooling, healthcare and essential social services increases their vulnerability."

She said Unicef Malaysia has been collaborating with the Social Welfare Department and civil society partners to strengthen social workers' and child protection personnel's capacity, aiming to include refugee, migrant, undocumented and stateless children in the national protection framework.

"Addressing the gaps is essential to ensure that every child in Malaysia, especially those most marginalised, is protected and able to thrive."

As Malaysia prepares for its upcoming review by the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) next year, Saranovic urged the government to demonstrate commitment to non-discrimination, central to the Child Act and the CRC.

"At the heart of this principle is a simple idea - before anything else, a child is a child. Every child, regardless of status or origin, has the right to learn, to be safe, to be healthy, to play and to reach their full potential."


Ensuring these rights for all children, she added, will not only protect the most vulnerable but also strengthen Malaysia as a more inclusive and resilient nation.


- By Kirtinee Ramesh

FORCED CHILD BEGGING

VULNERABLE GROUPS

- Young children, including infants and toddlers from poor families.
- Rohingya refugees, stateless Filipino children and undocumented individuals from neighbouring countries.





CONTRIBUTING CIRCUMSTANCES

- No legal documentation → risk of detention, invisible to authorities.
- Poverty → exploited for income.
- No education or protection → easy to exploit, no safety net.
- Fear of authorities → apprehensive about seeking help.
- Parental coercion/debt bondage → forced to work.
- Absence of options and language barriers → easy control by traffickers.

safeguarding disclosures.

Mohd Ramlan said family tracing should follow but only when reunification is deemed safe.

"Rapid repatriation often leads to re-trafficking," he warned, adding that long-term protection plans - which are centred on rehabilitation, education and safety - are essential to break the cycle of exploitation.

- By Kirtinee Ramesh



Animal groups **back** microchip system, but call for balance

➤ Move described as progressive step that signals shift towards more compassionate and structured approach to animal welfare

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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PETALING JAYA: Every week, rescuers find dogs dumped on roadsides, markets and construction sites – animals with no names, no records and no one to hold accountable.

Animal-welfare groups say Malaysia's plan to introduce mandatory microchipping could finally break this cycle of abandonment by ensuring every pet has an identifiable owner who can no longer disappear from responsibility.

Persatuan Haiwan Terbiar Malaysia (SAFM) president Kalaivanan Ravichandran said the Housing and Local Government Ministry's announcement marks "a progressive and long-awaited step", especially as animal-related issues continue to burden local authorities and communities nationwide.

The initiative aligns closely with proposals submitted by SAFM and the Coalition of Animal Welfare NGOs in a memorandum to the ministry and the Agriculture and Food Security Ministry on May 16.

The memorandum strongly emphasised mandatory microchipping and neutering as essential measures to reduce abandonment and control the stray population, alongside establishing a national registration system to ensure traceability and accountability.

"Microchipping will make a real difference. It will help reunite lost pets with their owners, discourage irresponsible breeding and encourage a stronger sense of accountability.

"More importantly, it signals a shift towards a more compassionate and structured approach to animal welfare in Malaysia."

He added that SAFM – which works closely with rescuers, volunteers and local councils – stands ready to support the government and relevant agencies in implementing the system.

"In times of crisis, every life matters."

Kalaivanan stressed that microchipping alone will not solve Malaysia's stray problem unless supported by fair and



Mandatory microchipping could break the common practice of abandonment by ensuring every dog has an identifiable owner who can no longer dodge accountability. – AI GENERATED IMAGE BY AZURA ABAS

practical enforcement.

"Enforcement must encourage compliance, not punish pet owners unnecessarily."

"Pet owners should be given reasonable timelines to microchip their pets, supported by affordable fees and community-based outreach."

He called for penalties that consider the financial constraints of low-income households, warning against policies that may unintentionally push families to surrender or abandon their pets.

"We urge the government to consider flexible penalty structures, payment plans and even subsidies or fee waivers for B40 households."

"Our message is simple: enforcement must be strong enough to prevent irresponsible ownership, but compassionate enough to ensure families are not driven into giving up the animals they love."

Kalaivanan also emphasised that Malaysia's stray problem is rooted in lax breeding controls and the absence of mandatory neutering.

"A microchipping system becomes much more effective when paired with mandatory neutering and strict regulation of backyard breeders and puppy mills."

He added that microchipping, neutering and strict breeder licensing must operate together to tackle the root causes of overpopulation. Ethical breeders, he noted, should be required to maintain proper records tied to the microchip database.

Kalaivanan said a national pet-owner

database must be built with strong data-protection safeguards to maintain public trust.

"Only authorised government agencies, veterinarians and registered local councils should have access to owner information and only for legitimate purposes," he said, calling for encryption, secure storage, audit trails and penalties for misuse.

"With proper governance and transparency, the system can protect both animal welfare and the privacy rights of pet owners."

On Dec 3, Deputy Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Aiman Athirah Sabu told the Dewan Negara that the ministry is exploring the implementation of an integrated digital registration system using microchip technology.

Spearheaded by the Department of Veterinary Services, the system would centralise dog ownership details, including licensing, vaccination, sterilisation records and monitoring data.

Responding to Senator Che Alias Hamid, she said microchipping could support breeding control and enhance local authorities' ability to manage stray populations – from capturing and reclaiming to adoption, NGO collaboration and humane methods widely practised internationally.

She added that these approaches remain among the most widely used globally to address stray dog overpopulation and reduce risks associated with animal attacks.

19 items under MA63 resolved: DPM Fadillah

PUTRAJAYA: A total of 19 items under the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) have been resolved to date, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof.

Fadillah, who also chairs the MA63 Implementation Action Council, said they include the handover of Sabah Electricity Sdn Bhd (SESB) to the state government through the Energy Commission of Sabah (ECoS).

"Although the entity has been handed over, the federal government continues to provide support to Sabah with an allocation of RM3.54 billion in electricity subsidies until 2030."

He said this at a public dialogue held in conjunction with the closing of Rancangan Madani Bersama Malaysiaku yesterday.

Also present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Fadillah said however, several items have yet to be finalised due to differing legal interpretations, including issues related to the Federal Constitution and state laws, which require detailed examination.

"This is a legal matter and views may differ at the state and federal level. There are still a few issues pending, but the majority have been settled."

MA63 refers to the agreement that unified the Federation of Malaya, Sabah, Sarawak and Singapore to form Malaysia.

Fadillah, who also leads the Energy Transition and Water Transformation ministry, said Malaysia has made the Asean Power Grid (APG) a key priority during its Asean Chairmanship to boost regional energy cooperation and secure a more stable, sustainable and competitive power supply.

He said the APG is vital for creating a regional grid that enables Asean countries to exchange electricity across borders and support any member facing shortages.

"For example, if Thailand faces an energy shortage, other countries can supply electricity. This system creates flexibility and strengthens regional energy security."

He said the project's first phase is already underway through the Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Energy Integration Project, which lays the groundwork for wider Asean energy integration.

The next phase involves linking Borneo – home to the region's highest renewable energy potential – to Peninsular Malaysia and Singapore via an undersea cable. – Bernama

Madani policies not politically biased, says Zahid

PUTRAJAYA: The Madani government has always adopted a 'colour blind' approach without distinguishing political leanings in policy implementation, said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim himself "has never marked out political geography in the implementation of his policies", including in matters of regional development and allocation distribution.

"The Madani government has never seen political differences as a basis for revenge, never," he said as a panel member at a forum titled "The Madani government – Retrospective and Mapping the Journey Forward" here yesterday.

The forum was part of the National Convention on Public Service Reform held in

conjunction with the Rancangan Madani Bersama Malaysiaku programme.

Commenting further, Ahmad Zahid, who is also the minister of Rural and Regional Development, said this was proven when opposition states also received large allocations through various regional development boards.

"We can see how Kelantan, Terengganu, Kedah, Perlis get more allocation than the states that originally supported Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim."

Meanwhile, Ahmad Zahid, as Umno president, said his party would continue to support the Madani government until the end of its term to ensure political stability and the continuity of the national reform agenda.

He said support was important to ensure that government policies could be

implemented without political interference.

"God willing, I surrender myself and my party to support the Madani government until the end of its term."

In the forum, Ahmad Zahid outlined various reforms implemented in the government to strengthen the transformation of the public service.

He said ministries and agencies were changed from cost centres to profit centres, while a cross-functional approach was implemented to break down bureaucratic silos and increase the effectiveness and impact of government policies.

Ahmad Zahid also highlighted important achievements in the field of education and human capital development, particularly through the Technical and Vocational Education

and Training (TVET) ecosystem.

"The number of SPM holders who chose TVET has increased from 57.4% to the current level, with the target of reaching 70% by the end of 13MP."

The three-day Rancangan Madani, which began on Friday, offers more than 300 public service touch points, career carnivals, interactive exhibitions, family entertainment and special promotions for visitors.

Rancangan Madani is a continuation of the one and two-year programmes with the Madani government which have become a tradition of the government reporting directly to the people.

The national convention brought together policy experts from the public sector and industry players. – Bernama

Over 800 illegal immigrants detained in immigration sweep

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 843 illegal immigrants were detained in an integrated operation in Selayang Baru on Saturday for suspected offences under the Immigration Act.

Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari, who was present, said the group comprised 808 men and 35 women aged between 21 and 53, involving Indonesians, Bangladeshis, Indians, Myanmar nationals, Nepalese and Pakistanis.

"The operation was conducted after receiving complaints from the community about the influx of foreign workers, including those running businesses along the roadside. Intelligence work was carried out before inspections began," he said at a press conference on site.

He added that similar operations had previously been carried out in Seri Muda, the Selangor Wholesale Market and several other locations.

Also present last night were Immigration deputy director-general (operations) Datuk Lokman Effendi Ramli, Selangor police chief Datuk

Shazeli Kahar, Selangor Immigration director Khairul Aminus Kamaruddin and 358 personnel from various security agencies, including the Immigration Department, police, Armed Forces, National Registration Department and local authorities.

Amirudin said two locals were also arrested on suspicion of drug abuse.

He said those detained were suspected of not having identification documents, violating pass conditions, overstaying or using unrecognised identity cards, among other immigration offences, before being taken to the Semenyih Immigration Depot for further investigation.

On claims that low rental costs had attracted foreigners to Selayang Baru, he said the trend was driven more by demand and supply, as well as its proximity to the city centre and status as a hub for trade and daily-wage work.

Amirudin said the previous integrated operation at the Selangor Wholesale Market had also produced positive outcomes for the community. – Bernama



Amirudin (centre) observing operations during the raid. – BERNAMAPIC

Cops confirm receipt of audio recording linked to shooting

➤ Evidence to be examined by special investigation team, says IGP

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have confirmed receiving a compact disc containing audio evidence linked to the Durian Tunggal shooting incident in Malacca, submitted on Saturday by a family member of one of the three individuals killed in the incident.

Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mohd Khalid Ismail said the disc is believed to contain an audio recording of a telephone conversation between one of the deceased and his wife prior to the shooting.

He said to strengthen the investigation, the Criminal Investigation Department director had formed a special investigation team last Wednesday, led by a senior officer with the rank of senior assistant commissioner to take over and conduct a comprehensive probe at the Bukit Aman level.

"This step was taken to ensure that every aspect of the investigation is examined systematically, professionally and without compromise," he said in a statement yesterday.

Mohd Khalid reaffirmed the police force's commitment to a thorough and integrity-driven investigation, stressing that misconduct will not be tolerated, Bernama reported.

He urged the public not to speculate or spread unverified information that could compromise the investigation, and called on anyone with relevant information to contact

the hotline at 019-376 4763 to assist efforts to safeguard public safety and order.

The incident, which occurred at 4.30am on Nov 24, involved three men aged between 24 and 29, who were shot dead after one of them allegedly attacked a police corporal with a *parang* at an oil palm plantation in Durian Tunggal.

The officer, in his early thirties, sustained serious injuries to his left arm.

Police said the men were members of the Durian Tunggal Gang, active since early 2024 and linked to 22 criminal cases – 20 in Malacca and one each in Negeri Sembilan and Selangor – causing losses of about RM1.35 million.

The gang reportedly targeted small businesses and commercial premises, often using weapons to intimidate victims.

Three children die in drowning incidents

KUALA LUMPUR: Three children died in separate drowning incidents in Kajang and Port Dickson over the past two days.

In Kajang, the body of a 14-year-old boy, the second of two brothers who went missing on Thursday, was found in a retention pond in Taman Prima Saujana at 8.35pm on Saturday, said Kajang police chief ACP Naazron Abdul Yusof.

"The victim's body was taken to the Kajang Hospital for an autopsy," he added.

The brothers, aged 12 and 14, were swept away by strong currents while trying to retrieve a ball from a large drain at Lorong 1/3A in Taman Prima Saujana.

The younger boy's body was recovered earlier at 7.47pm on Thursday at Sungai Merbau in Kampung Sungai Kantan, about two kilometres from where they were swept away.

Meanwhile in Port Dickson, a four-year-old boy is believed to have drowned in a swimming pool at a homestay in Batu 4, Jalan Pantai on Saturday.

Port Dickson police chief Supt Maslan Udin said authorities were alerted by the emergency department of the Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital in Seremban. The child was pronounced dead at 8.40pm by an attending doctor and the case has been classified as sudden death. – Bernama

Former national mosque grand imam dies

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Grand Imam of the National Mosque Tan Sri Syaikh Ismail Muhammad (*pic*) passed away early yesterday morning at the age of 81, leaving a legacy of Islamic scholarship and service to the Muslim community in Malaysia.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi described him as a distinguished educator, Quranic scholar and *mursyid* (spiritual guide), who dedicated his life to imparting knowledge.

"The late Syaikh Ismail's service as a judge at both national and international *Quran* recital and memorisation assemblies also elevated Malaysia's standing in the eyes of the world," he wrote in a Facebook post yesterday.



Ahmad Zahid added that the highly respected religious figure was soft-spoken, deeply knowledgeable and made immense contributions in advancing the *Quran*, Islamic scholarship and *dakwah*.

"His exemplary character will continue to inspire us.

"My deepest condolences to family members of the late Syaikh Ismail. May they be granted strength and fortitude in facing this difficult time. May Allah SWT forgive all his sins, accept his good

deeds and place his soul among the righteous."

Syaikh Ismail, who was named National Tokoh Maal Hijrah 1443H/2021, served as grand imam of the National Mosque from

2007 to 2019, the longest tenure to date.

He also served as a member of the Selangor Quran Literacy Committee and a lecturer of Advanced Talaqi at the Selangor Quran Literacy Academy.

Born in Dungun, Terengganu, he was among the first cohort of Malaysian students to pursue studies at Al-Azhar University in Egypt.

Before his appointment as grand imam, he served for five years as imam of the Putrajaya Mosque.

According to the Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Mosque official Facebook page, Syaikh Ismail's remains were taken to the mosque in Shah Alam for bathing and shrouding after the *Subuh* prayer, followed by the funeral prayer at 9am. His remains were later taken to the USJ 22 Muslim cemetery for burial. – Bernama

Man nabbed over electricity theft

BALIK PULAU: Police arrested an elderly man and seized 30 bitcoin mining machines in a raid on several premises around Jalan Air Putih on Saturday that were found to be operating through illegal electrical connections.

Southwest district police chief ACP Anuwal Ab Wahab said police, together with a Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB) team, conducted an inspection at 10pm and discovered bitcoin mining machines at the premises.

"TNB's assessment found that the estimated loss from the electricity theft was RM22,744," he said.

Police arrested a 60-year-old local man and seized 30 bitcoin mining machines and a modem unit.

The case is being investigated under Section 37(1) of the Electricity Supply Act 1990 and Section 427 of the Penal Code. Police are also working to trace other suspects linked to the operation. – Bernama



Cultural village showcases best of Sabah heritage

KOTA KINABALU: The Kadazan Dusun community's ancient tradition of burying bones along with personal belongings in a large *tanjau* (urn), symbolising the soul's journey to the afterlife, is no longer practised today.

This custom is highlighted at the Mari Mari Cultural Village (MMCV) in Inanam, a cultural preservation centre that ensures the heritage of Sabah's various ethnicities continues to be known by the younger generation and tourists.

At the village, visitors not only get to see the heritage of various Sabah communities but also have the opportunity to enjoy cultural performances and traditional dishes from the five main ethnicities of the Land Below the Wind, namely the *Dusun, Rungus, Lundayeh, Bajau* and *Murut*.

According to MMCV tour guide Mohd Aidil Pulian Abdullah, since it began operating in 2009, the centre has become an important platform for local and international visitors to understand Sabah's culture as a whole because it showcases the practices and traditions of the state's ethnicities, some of which are becoming rare.

He said among the unique cultural practices that are on showcase at the village are the traditional technique of lighting a fire

➤ Centre in Inanam aims to preserve and highlight unique traditions, customs of five main ethnicities of Land Below the Wind

using bamboo and the traditional game of *lansaran*, in which a bamboo floor much like a trampoline is used to welcome warriors on their return from a hunt.

In the game, a prize will be hung on a *kinkilat* (tall structure used as a place to hang a target object). Participants must jump as high as they can from the *lansaran* (floor) to reach the prize.

"The higher the jump, the greater the chances of winning."

"So, we try to introduce these traditions to tourists every day. Many of the younger generation no longer

know their own culture. We record and learn directly from the elders before passing it on to visitors."

The village has 26 permanent tour guides, with some from other countries such as Korea, China, Russia and Japan acting as translators for their respective tourist groups.

On the number of visitors to the village, Mohd Aidil said it depends on the season, with the highest number arriving between June and July when people from China and Korea are on holiday for the summer.

"The highest number we have ever received is about 4,000 visitors a

month. There are certain days when the morning session alone could reach 300 people."

He said MMCV also serves as an educational platform for young workers aged between 18 and 20 who serve as guides or dancers in cultural performances, Bernama reported.

"If they themselves do not understand the culture, they cannot explain it to visitors. This is where they learn and can eventually share that knowledge with the outside community."

Apart from the cultural exhibition and traditional houses, cultural performances held twice a day at the village, at noon and 4pm, also serve as a huge draw.

Five types of dances are performed, including the *limbai* of the *Bajau* community and the popular *anggalang magunatip* of the *Murut* group, in which dancers have

to dance between two bamboo poles that are tapped according to a certain rhythm.

The *limbai* is a traditional dance that is performed to welcome the arrival of the groom, using the waving of shawls to invite him to the bride's house for the wedding ceremony.

Mohd Aidil, who is of *Dusun* descent, acknowledged the importance of the centre in helping the Sabah community maintain its cultural identity despite facing the tide of modernisation.

"In other museums or exhibitions, there may be no one to answer questions of visitors. However, at MMCV, we try to provide the best information possible and make it a reference centre on Sabah culture."

He called on the public to visit MMCV to understand Sabah's ethnic diversity without having to travel all over the state.

WonderBrew to double kombucha production next year

KUALA LUMPUR: WonderBrew, the homegrown kombucha (fermented tea) producer, aims to double production in 2026 as it scales up innovation.

Its founder and CEO Joseph Poh outlined in an interview the company's strategy to extend its footprint across Southeast Asia.

He said since its inception in 2018, WonderBrew has sold more than 1.5 million bottles, and is exploring opportunities to penetrate markets in Singapore and Indonesia as part of its regional growth strategy.

He added that the brand continues to focus on innovation, both in flavours and development of new products.

On WonderBrew's journey, Poh recounted meeting his co-founder and COO Loke Boon Eng at a kombucha workshop eight years ago.

He said they embarked on a steep, uncharted journey, mastering everything from the craft of brewing to distribution and wholesale marketing.

"We had no prior knowledge of kombucha or business."

From a humble home kitchen in Subang Jaya, WonderBrew has grown steadily, expanding to a small shoplot in Kelana Jaya and later to a full-fledged manufacturing hub in Bandar Sunway, Selangor.

Poh said the hub houses three tanks, each capable of producing 10,000 bottles, enough to cover two days of sales at a daily rate of 5,000 bottles.

He added that WonderBrew has grown to become the country's leading kombucha producer, with more than 2,000 retail touchpoints across supermarkets, convenience stores, cafes, hotels and restaurants nationwide.

Poh said recognition for the company was recently boosted at the World Kombucha Awards 2025, at which the brand emerged as one of the biggest winners, clinching one



Loke (left) and Poh during the interview in Kuala Lumpur recently. – BERNAMAPIC

gold, four silvers and one bronze award across the Taste and Design categories.

He said they are very happy to be recognised on a global stage.

"We are actually quite surprised that we managed to win a total of six titles. We were only expecting maybe a few, so that was beyond

our expectations."

The winning entries comprised one gold (Taste) for its best-selling Passionfruit Mint Kombucha, three silvers (Taste) for Nihon Green Tea, Mango Jasmine and Raspberry Lemon Jun Tea, one silver (Design) for Nihon Green Tea in the World's Best Bottle Design category, and one

bronze (Taste) for Pink Guava Jun Tea.

The World Kombucha Awards, now in its third year and organised in collaboration with Kombucha Brewers International, is a globally recognised benchmark for quality and creativity in the rapidly growing kombucha industry.

This year's edition was its most

competitive yet, featuring 360 entries from 39 countries competing for top honours in 22 distinct categories, up from 250 entries in 2024.

Poh said the awards augur well for WonderBrew's plan to promote kombucha to more Malaysians, boosting local brands and consumer confidence. – Bernama

Survivors trek to aid centre as flood deaths exceed 900

► Suspect firms under probe for illegal land clearing

ACEH TAMIANG: Residents in Aceh Tamiang have had to climb over slippery logs and walk for about an hour to get aid, as the death toll from floods and landslides that hit Sumatra reached more than 900.

The number known to have died as a result of the cyclone-induced floods and landslides across three provinces on Sumatra, including Aceh, was 916 on Saturday, with 274 listed as missing, government data showed.

The storm systems also killed about 200 people in southern Thailand.

Survivors in the Aceh Tamiang region, on the northeast coast of Sumatra, trekked for an hour on Saturday, scrambling over scattered logs and passing overturned cars to reach an aid distribution centre.

Volunteers handed out clean clothes and brought in a tanker truck of fresh water so people could fill plastic bottles.

Dimas Firmansyah, a 14-year-old at a boarding school, said Aceh Tamiang had been cut off, and that students had stayed at the school for a week, taking turns to search for food and boiling and drinking floodwater.

"We stayed for about a week there," Dimas said, urging the government to come to the area to see the calamity themselves.

Local government officials in Sumatra have called on the national government in Jakarta to declare a national emergency to free up additional funds for rescue and relief efforts.

President Prabowo Subianto said last week the situation was improving and current arrangements were sufficient.

Environmental groups say deforestation linked to mining and logging aggravated the impact of the floods, and Indonesia is investigating companies suspected of clearing

forests around flood-hit areas.

The Environment Ministry said it had halted the operations of the suspected companies, and that it will require them to perform environmental audits.

The companies include North Sumatra Hydro Energy, which runs the China-funded 510-megawatt hydropower plant in the Batang Toru region of North Sumatra, miner Agincourt Resources, which operates the Martabe Gold Mine, also in Batang Toru, and state agricultural group Perkebunan Nusantara III, that did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

North Sumatra Hydro Energy also did not immediately respond to a query sent on LinkedIn.

Agincourt Resources declined to comment, a spokesperson said, as it had not received an official letter on the halt.

Aerial surveys show land-clearing in Batang Toru that may have exacerbated the flooding, the ministry said. – Reuters

Goa orders probe after fatal nightclub fire

BENGALURU: Indian authorities ordered an investigation and offered compensation to victims after a fire ripped through a nightclub in the western state of Goa early yesterday, killing 25.

"I have ordered a magisterial inquiry into the incident to identify the cause and fix responsibility" for the fire in the village of Arpora, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant posted on X, saying six injured people were in stable condition and receiving medical care.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he had spoken to Sawant and offered condolences to the bereaved families. Modi posted on X that his office would offer compensation of up to 200,000 rupees (RM9,047) to each family of the victims and 50,000 rupees to the injured.

Police were alerted to the blaze at the Birch by Romeo Lane club at 12.04am (2.34am in Malaysia), Goa's police chief told the ANI news agency.

All the bodies have been recovered, ANI reported.

Images on local and social media showed firefighters dousing flames and ambulances lining up. Reuters could not immediately verify the authenticity of the images.

At least four of the dead were tourists and 14 were club staff, police told ANI. Police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Goa, a small coastal state, is a popular tourist destination especially among foreigners, offering beaches and hilly landscapes.

About 5.5 million tourists, including 271,000 from abroad, visited Goa in the first half of the year, according to government data. – Reuters

Sri Lanka issues fresh landslide warnings

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan authorities issued fresh landslide warnings yesterday as rains lashed areas devastated by a powerful cyclone, with the death toll rising to 618.

More than two million people, nearly 10% of the population, have been affected by last week's floods and landslides triggered by *Cyclone Ditwah*, the worst on the island this century.

The Disaster Management Centre said monsoon storms were adding more rain and making hillsides unstable, including the central mountainous region and the northwestern midlands.

Helicopters and planes were being used to supply communities cut off by landslides in the centre of the country.

The Sri Lanka Air Force said it had received a planeload of relief supplies from Myanmar yesterday, the latest batch of foreign aid.

The government has confirmed 618 dead – 464 from the lush tea-growing central region – while 209 people remain unaccounted for.

The number of people in state-run refugee camps had dropped to 100,000 from a peak of 225,000 as floodwaters receded across the island yesterday. – AFP



Residents sorting donated clothes in Batang Toru, South Tapanuli in North Sumatra province. – REUTERS/SPIC

Japan protests 'dangerous' flight incidents

TOKYO: Japan said yesterday that Chinese fighter jets had directed fire-control radar at its military aircraft in two "dangerous" incidents near the Okinawa islands, an account Beijing denied.

"These radar illuminations went beyond what is necessary for the safe flight of aircraft," Defence Minister Shinjiro Koizumi posted on X.

He said Japan had lodged a protest with China over Saturday's "regrettable" incident.

Meeting with Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles in Tokyo, Koizumi said Japan would respond "resolutely and calmly" to China's conduct to maintain regional peace and stability.

A Chinese navy spokesperson, Col Wang

Xuemeng, said Japanese aircraft had repeatedly approached and disrupted the Chinese navy as it was conducting previously announced carrier-based flight training east of the Miyako Strait.

The encounters near islands claimed by Japan and China are the most serious run-ins between the two militaries in years and are likely to further escalate tension.

Directing fire-control radar at another aircraft is a threatening step because it signals a potential attack and may force the targeted plane to take evasive action. Japan did not say whether the Chinese had locked on their planes or how Japan's aircraft responded.

Wang, in a statement on official social media channels, countered that Japan's statement was

erroneous and its actions had seriously endangered flight safety.

"We solemnly demand that the Japanese side immediately stop slandering and smearing and strictly restrain front-line actions. The Chinese Navy will take necessary measures in accordance with the law to resolutely safeguard its own security and legitimate rights and interests," Wang said.

Marles, at a press conference with Koizumi after discussions on deepening defence cooperation, said: "We are deeply concerned by the actions of China in the last 24 hours. We will continue to work with Japan and stand with Japan in upholding rules-based order." – Reuters



Landmark pesticide study retracted

WASHINGTON: A flagship study that declared the weedkiller Roundup posed no serious health risks has been retracted with little fanfare, ending a 25-year saga that exposed how corporate interests can distort scientific research and influence government decision-making.

Published in *Regulatory Toxicology and Pharmacology* in 2000, the paper ranks in the top 0.1% of citations among studies on glyphosate – the key ingredient in Roundup, owned by agrigiant Monsanto and at the centre of cancer lawsuits worth billions of dollars.

In his retraction note last week, the journal's editor-in-chief, Martin van den Berg, cited flaws from failing to include carcinogenicity studies available at the time to undisclosed contributions by Monsanto employees and even questions around financial compensation.

Elsevier, the journal's Dutch publisher, told AFP in a statement that it upholds the "highest standards of rigour and ethics" and that "as soon as the current editor became aware of concerns regarding this paper a matter of months ago, due process began".

But it did not address the fact that concerns date back to 2002, when critics wrote to Elsevier about "conflicts of interest, lack of transparency, and the absence of editorial independence" at the journal, including specific worries about Monsanto.

The matter exploded into public view in 2017, when internal corporate documents released during litigation showed one of Monsanto's own scientists admitting to "ghostwriting".

Harvard University science historian Naomi Oreskes, who co-authored a paper this September detailing the extent of the "fraud" in the 2000 study, told AFP that while she was "very gratified" at the "long overdue" action, but warned that "the scientific community needs better mechanisms to identify and retract fraudulent papers".

"This is completely in alignment with what we were calling them out for at the time," said Lynn Goldman, a paediatrician and epidemiologist at GWU who co-signed the 2002 letter. – AFP

17 found dead in migrant vessel

ATHENS: Seventeen men were found dead on Saturday after a migrant vessel was found drifting off the Greek island of Crete.

"Two survivors in critical condition have been hospitalised," said a coastguard spokeswoman.

"Autopsies have to be carried out as the circumstances of the sinking are not known."

Greek state television channel ERT said the bodies had been found inside the vessel, which was taking on water and partly deflated.

Manolis Frangoulis, the mayor of Cretan port Ierapetra, told reporters that all the victims had been young.

"The vessel the migrants were on was deflated on two sides, which forced the passengers into a reduced space," he said.

Coroners are looking at the possibility that the migrants died of dehydration, ERT reported.

The vessel was found 48km southwest of Crete, said Greek officials.

A Turkish cargo ship spotted it and alerted the authorities. Two coastguard vessels, and another from the EU's border agency Frontex travelled to the scene, as did a Frontex aircraft and Super Puma helicopter, said the coastguard.

They said the two survivors had said that their vessel had become unstable because of bad weather, and they had had no way to cover up nor to eat or drink anything.

Migrants have for the last year turned their attention to the Greek island of Crete, in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, as a way of reaching European Union territory from Libya.

The UN's refugee agency says more than 16,770 people seeking asylum in the EU have arrived there since the start of the year. – AFP



Lee casting his vote yesterday. – AFP/IC

Hong Kong votes in shadow of deadly fire

➤ Push to draw more voters

HONG KONG: City residents began voting yesterday to choose new lawmakers under Beijing's "patriots only" rules, though government efforts to drive turnout have been overshadowed by the city's deadliest fire in decades.

Beijing revamped Hong Kong's electoral system in 2021 following the city's huge and sometimes violent pro-democracy protests, but the first contest under those rules saw a record low turnout of 30%.

The voter turnout just before noon yesterday stood at 10.33%, while the comparable figure in the last election was 9.35%.

Hong Kong leader John Lee again urged the public to head to the polls.

"(Your) vote represents a vote that pushes forward reform, and a vote to protect those affected by the disaster," Lee told reporters after casting his vote.

Political campaigning was abruptly paused after a blaze tore through the housing blocks of Wang Fuk Court in northern Hong Kong last month, killing at least 159 people.

A woman surnamed Poon, whose home went up in flames, said the fire must be "thoroughly investigated", adding that she believed the government responded promptly.

"Whoever is at fault must be held responsible," Poon said outside the polling station closest to the charred buildings.

She said the next batch of lawmakers "should monitor the government".

Jacky Lam, a 56-year-old teacher who lived in the affected Tai Po district, said the government's top priority should be proper resettlement.

"(Lawmakers) ought to regularly meet residents and record their views," Lam said.

The government will propose a bill at the first meeting of the new Legislative Council to discuss relief and rebuilding efforts.

City leader Lee had earlier announced a judge-led "independent committee" to

investigate the fire, which devastated seven apartment blocks undergoing renovations.

Authorities extended voting times with yesterday's polls opening at 7.30am, an hour earlier than in the previous election.

The race will once again be devoid of the two largest pro-democracy parties: the Civic Party disbanded in 2023 and the Democratic Party, which is winding down.

Before the fire, authorities had blanketed much of the city in promotional material and extended the operating hours of polling stations.

Trains will also extend services on election day, while some businesses have promised to give employees who vote a half-day off.

Around a third of the outgoing cohort of lawmakers, including veterans such as Regina Ip and legislature president Andrew Leung, are not seeking another term.

Newcomers include Olympic champion fencer Vivian Kong, who is contesting a seat in the tourism functional constituency, where the winner is determined by industry representatives, not popular vote. – AFP

Disaster relief for New South Wales fire victims

SYDNEY: Australia yesterday activated disaster relief for residents affected by wildfires that have burnt properties, infrastructure and thousands of hectares of bushland.

More than 60 wildfires were burning in New South Wales yesterday, a day after they destroyed at least 12 homes in the state's central coast region, with a population of more than 350,000 people, about 45km north of the state capital Sydney.

Authorities have warned of a high-risk bush fire season this summer with increased risk of extreme heat forecast for large swathes of the

country, after several quiet seasons. Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said fortunately there had been no loss of life so far in the fires.

"This summer, of course, like all summers it would appear in recent times, is going to be a difficult one," Albanese said in remarks on Australian Broadcasting Corp television.

Federal and New South Wales Labor governments said in a statement that disaster assistance was activated for six state regions hit by fires, which sparked in extreme heat on Saturday.

"Initial assessments indicate a number of homes have been destroyed with extensive

damage to more private property, critical infrastructure, fencing, agricultural assets and National Parks," the statement said, adding that the extent of damage would become clearer as impact assessments were done.

The aid included "immediate financial help as well as clean-up, rebuilding and recovery assistance," according to the statement.

Two fires in New South Wales continued to burn out of control yesterday at the second-highest danger rating, according to the state's Rural Fire Service.

New South Wales is one of the most wildfire-prone regions in Australia. – Reuters

LOS ANGELES: President Donald Trump's outgoing Ukraine envoy said a deal to end the Ukraine war was "really close" and now depended on resolving two main outstanding issues: the future of Ukraine's Donbas region and the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022 after eight years of fighting between Russian-backed separatists and Ukrainian troops in the Donbas, which is made up of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions.

The Ukraine war is the deadliest European conflict since World War Two and has triggered the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the depths of the Cold War.

US Special Envoy for Ukraine Keith Kellogg, who is due to step down in January, told the Reagan National Defence Forum that efforts to resolve the conflict were in "the last 10 metres" which he said was always the hardest.

The two main outstanding issues, Kellogg said, were on territory – primarily the future of the Donbas – and the future of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant, Europe's largest, which is under Russian control.

"If we get those two issues settled, I think the rest of the things will work out fairly well," Kellogg said on Saturday at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley, California. "We're almost there."

"We're really, really close," said Kellogg.

Kellogg, a retired lieutenant general who served in Vietnam, Panama and Iraq, said the scale of the death and injuries caused by the

Ukraine peace deal really close

➤ Remaining issues are Donbas region and nuclear power plant, says US envoy

Ukraine war was "horrific" and unprecedented in terms of a regional war.

Kellogg said that, together, Russia and Ukraine have suffered more than 2 million casualties, including dead and wounded since the war began. Neither Russia nor Ukraine disclose credible estimates of their losses.

Moscow says Western and Ukrainian estimates inflate its losses. Kyiv says Moscow inflates estimates of Ukrainian losses.

Russia controls 19.2% of Ukraine, including Crimea, which it annexed in 2014, all of Luhansk, more than 80% of Donetsk, about 75% of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia, and slivers of the Kharkiv, Sumy, Mykolaiv and Dnipropetrovsk regions.

A leaked set of 28 US draft peace proposals emerged last month, alarming Ukrainian and European officials who said it bowed to Moscow's main demands on Nato, Russian control of a fifth of Ukraine and restrictions on Ukraine's army.

Those proposals, which Russia now says contain 27 points, have been split up into four components, according to the Kremlin. The exact contents are not in the public domain.

Under the initial US proposals, the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, whose reactors are in cold shutdown, would be relaunched under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency, and the electricity produced would be distributed equally between Russia and Ukraine.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Saturday that he had had a long and "substantive" phone call with Trump's special envoy Steve Witkoff and Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner.

The Kremlin said on Friday it expected Kushner to be doing the main work on drafting a possible deal. – Reuters

Qatar, Egypt call for next steps in Gaza truce

DOHA: Qatar and Egypt, guarantors of the Gaza ceasefire, called on Saturday for the withdrawal of Israeli troops and the deployment of an international stabilisation force as the necessary next steps in fully implementing the fragile agreement.

The measures were spelt out in the US- and UN-backed peace plan that has largely halted fighting, though the warring parties have yet to agree on how to move forward from the deal's first phase.

Its initial steps saw Israeli troops pull back behind a so-called "yellow line" within Gaza's borders, while Hamas released the living hostages it still held and handed over the remains of all but one of the deceased.

"Now we are at the critical moment ... A ceasefire cannot be completed unless there is a full withdrawal of the Israeli forces (and) there is stability back in Gaza, Qatari premier Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani told the Doha Forum, an annual diplomatic conference.

Qatar, alongside Egypt and the United States, helped secure the long-elusive truce, which remains delicate as Israel and Hamas accuse each other of breaching its terms.

Key sticking points have also emerged over the implementation of the second phase, which has yet to begin, including the question of Hamas's disarmament.

Hamas is supposed to disarm under the 20-point plan first outlined by US President Donald Trump, with members who decommission their weapons allowed to leave Gaza. The group has repeatedly rejected the proposition.

Hamas said on Saturday that it was ready to hand over its weapons in the Gaza Strip to a Palestinian authority on the condition that the Israeli army's occupation ends.

"Our weapons are linked to the existence of the occupation and the aggression," Hamas chief negotiator Khalil al-Hayya said in a statement.

"If the occupation ends, these weapons will be placed under the authority of the state."

Asked by AFP, Hayya's office said he was referring to a sovereign and independent Palestinian state.

Under the plan endorsed by the UN in November, Israel is to withdraw from its positions, Gaza is to be administered by a transitional governing body known as the "Board of Peace", and an international stabilisation force is to be deployed. – AFP



Residents and visitors enjoying the view of the Christmas tree in Manger Square. – REUTERSPIC

Bethlehem Christmas tree lit up again

BETHLEHEM: Christmas cheer returned to the traditional birthplace of Jesus Christ on Saturday as Bethlehem in the occupied West Bank lit up a tree for the first time since the war in Gaza began over two years ago.

Covered in red and gold baubles, the Christmas tree standing metres away from the Church of the Nativity on Manger Square has become a symbol of hope.

At the end of a two-hour ceremony, the tree was illuminated to cheers, its yellow lights twinkling and a bright red star on top shining against the clouded night sky irradiated by a

luminescent, almost full moon.

It is the first time the city has held the celebrations since the outbreak of the war in Gaza.

"It's like a symbol for resilience," said 27-year-old Abeer Shtaya, who works at Al-Zaytoonah University of Science and Technology in Salfit in the West Bank.

She had travelled 100km with a group of the university's students because "we want to celebrate and be with our brothers and sisters in Bethlehem to enjoy this day".

"It's a message for the world that it's calm,"

Mike Shahen, 43, said at his ceramic store on the square.

Thousands of people attended, including Christians and Muslims, and many who travelled from Palestinian territories and Israel, some from even further afield, to enjoy the festive spirit return.

Nuns could be seen watching from one roof, while many families including small children filled balconies and roofs to catch a glimpse of the tree lit up.

Laughter filled the air as many could not help but smile despite some rain. – AFP

Venezuela swears in 5,600 new troops

CARACAS: The Venezuelan army swore in 5,600 new soldiers on Saturday, as the United States cranks up military pressure on the oil-producing country.

President Nicolas Maduro has called for stepped-up military recruitment as the United States deployed a fleet of warships and the world's largest aircraft carrier to the Caribbean under the pretext of combating drug trafficking.

American forces have carried out deadly strikes on at least 22 vessels, killing at least 83.

Washington has accused Maduro of leading the alleged Cartel of the Suns, which it declared a terrorist organisation last month.

Maduro asserts the American deployment aims to overthrow him and seize the country's oil reserves.

"Under no circumstances will we allow an invasion by an imperialist force," Colonel Gabriel Alejandro Rendon Vilchez said on Saturday during the ceremony at Fuerte Tiuna, Venezuela's largest military complex, in Caracas.

According to official figures, Venezuela has 200,000 troops and 200,000 police officers.

Also Saturday, a former opposition governor died in prison where he had been detained on charges of terrorism and incitement, a rights group said. – AFP

COMMENT by Catherine Lian

Scaling digital heights securely

AS Asean's digital economy races towards a projected value of US\$1 trillion by 2030 – and potentially double that with the Asean Digital Economy Framework Agreement – AI's transformative potential risks being compromised by a lax cybersecurity approach.

Our region has witnessed a sharp rise in cyber threats, with attacks rising in scale and sophistication. Singapore's latest cyber landscape shows phishing and ransomware as dominant threats and a sharp uptick in infected systems while Malaysia ranked among the top in Southeast Asia for web-based threats last year.

The rapid adoption of AI is introducing new vulnerabilities – 66% of organisations expect this to have the most significant impact on cybersecurity in the year to come, according to Global Cybersecurity Outlook 2025.

However, only 37% of these organisations have processes to assess the security of AI tools before deployment, revealing the gap between rapid AI implementation without necessary cybersecurity safeguards and the recognition of AI-induced risks.

As enterprises deploy AI at scale, attackers are evolving their tactics by exploiting vulnerabilities in AI models, targeting proprietary data and leveraging phishing campaigns to infiltrate systems.

IBM's 2025 X-Force Threat Intelligence Index revealed that 84% of phishing emails now deliver info stealers and 30% of breaches stem from abuse of valid accounts.

The economists argue for action. At US\$4.44 million on average per breach and a world-leading 34% of global cybersecurity incidents happening to Asian enterprises, the stakes have never been higher.

Encouragingly, governments are



Companies should not only enhance threat detection but also automate response workflows. – **ADAM AMIR HAMZAH /THESUN**

“Today's mature AI algorithms can contextualise vast volumes of data – from raw signals to behavioural patterns – enabling security teams to detect threats faster and respond with precision.”

Companies should not only enhance threat detection but also automate response workflows, freeing up valuable time and improving overall resilience.

Here is a pragmatic playbook for Asean businesses to consider:

➔ **Secure-by-design AI:** Treat AI systems (models, data, prompts, agents) as critical assets – inventory them, restrict access, monitor usage and red-team continuously.

➔ **Identity-first protection:** Roll out phishing-resistant authentication, close authentication gaps, and monitor for info stealers and credential abuse across endpoints and cloud.

➔ **Automate the Security Operations Centre:** Use mature AI plus gen AI to accelerate investigations, cut alert fatigue, and keep cybersecurity professionals in the loop and in charge.

➔ **Invest in skills jointly:** Expand public-private talent programmes and regional information sharing under Asean frameworks.

As Asean's digital economy scales new heights, let's ensure our cybersecurity posture rises with it. In the race to harness AI, security should not be an afterthought but a foundation.

Catherine Lian is the general manager and technology leader for IBM Asean. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

acting: the Asean Cybersecurity Cooperation Strategy (2021-2025) advances information-sharing and joint readiness while Singapore's Cybersecurity Act and Malaysia's National Cyber Security Agency (NACSA) are designed to strengthen enforcement and resilience.

While policy-level initiatives provide the framework and impetus, it is AI itself which presents a powerful opportunity to strengthen our cyber defences.

Today's mature AI algorithms can contextualise vast volumes of data – from raw signals to behavioural patterns – enabling security teams to detect threats faster and respond with precision.

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Third vote only way to restore accountability

THE recent Selangor Smart Integrated Parking (SIP) controversy underscores the urgent need for accountable and transparent local governance.

Since the abolition of local elections decades ago, it has been widely known that councillors are appointed, not elected, making them largely invisible and inaccessible to the communities they are meant to serve.

Sections 10 and 15 of the Local Government Act (LCA) enshrine this system, leaving councillors susceptible to political influence and depriving residents of direct control over local decisions.

As a result, state assemblypersons and MPs often perform councillor duties – from grass cutting and rubbish collection to street lighting, drainage, and road maintenance – tasks that should rightly fall under the councillors' responsibility.

Local government issues are not abstract or distant; they affect people's daily lives, comfort and peaceful living.

Whether rubbish is collected on time, whether drains are clogged, whether streetlights function or whether neighbourhoods are clean and safe – all these depend on an effective and accountable local authority.

When councillors are appointed rather than elected, residents lose the ability to demand performance, transparency or responsibility.

Opponents of local government elections sometimes invoke racial arguments, claiming elections will divide towns

along ethnic lines. These claims are outdated and unsustainable.

Globally, voters prioritise competence, accountability and service delivery over ace. The election of Zohran Mamdani in New York City – a Muslim and South Asian representative chosen by a multiethnic electorate – demonstrates that communities value principle and performance, not ethnicity.

It is important to recall that DAP was once among the strongest voices demanding the restoration of local elections. The Penang State Government went further than advocacy – they passed the Local Government Elections Enactment 2012 and even brought the matter to court in an attempt to reinstate the “third vote”. Now that the same coalition leads the Federal Government, why the silence?

The solution is straightforward: amend Sections 10 and 15 of the LCA to allow local elections.

The only sustainable way to restore accountability is to return power to the people. Amending Sections 10 and 15 of the LCA will enable residents to elect councillors who are visible, accessible and answerable to the public they serve.

People's participation is not just a democratic ideal; it is the only practical path toward transparent, effective and responsible local governance, improving the everyday lives of millions.

K. Kunsekaran Ipo

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COMMENT by Dr Najah Zainal Abidin

Hidden cost of rage bait

OXFORD recently announced “rage bait” as its Word of the Year for 2025. The term refers to digital content created purposefully with the aim of triggering anger and annoyance in users.

The content itself can be inflammatory or provocative, as it commonly relies on emotional cues designed to capture attention.

Rage bait is commonly used in marketing advertisements to promote products or personal accounts. In Malaysia, for instance, audiences have come across videos showing someone offering a homeless man a package of chicken bones and rice with the intent to drive traffic to their account, and another depicting a couple “arguing” in a grocery store, which turned out to be a marketing stunt.

These examples may appear ordinary but they are designed to make viewers react and engage. The purpose is to farm engagement and increase viewership by amplifying discourse surrounding the content.

Apart from being a marketing tactic used to promote a specific message, rage bait is also a linguistic phenomenon that affects the digital environment. The way messages are phrased, including their wording, framing and tone, can trigger certain groups of people. As a result, content can pull users into cycles of hostility or emotional overload.

Rage baiting is commonly used by media outlets through sensationalised headlines designed to hook readers emotionally.

In some cases, the headline does not reflect the actual content of the news, creating a misleading first impression. Users who scroll through and read only the headlines can therefore be easily misled by this strategy. This subsequently creates

another cycle of outrage and misinformation.

In such situations, readers commonly respond to a simplified or exaggerated version of the issue rather than the full context. Their understanding is shaped by partial information. This, in turn, limits their ability to make an informed judgement or to interpret the issue accurately and fairly.

As this becomes normalised, different groups begin to rely on headline-level narratives that reinforce existing biases, which in turn leads to people understanding issues differently across communities.

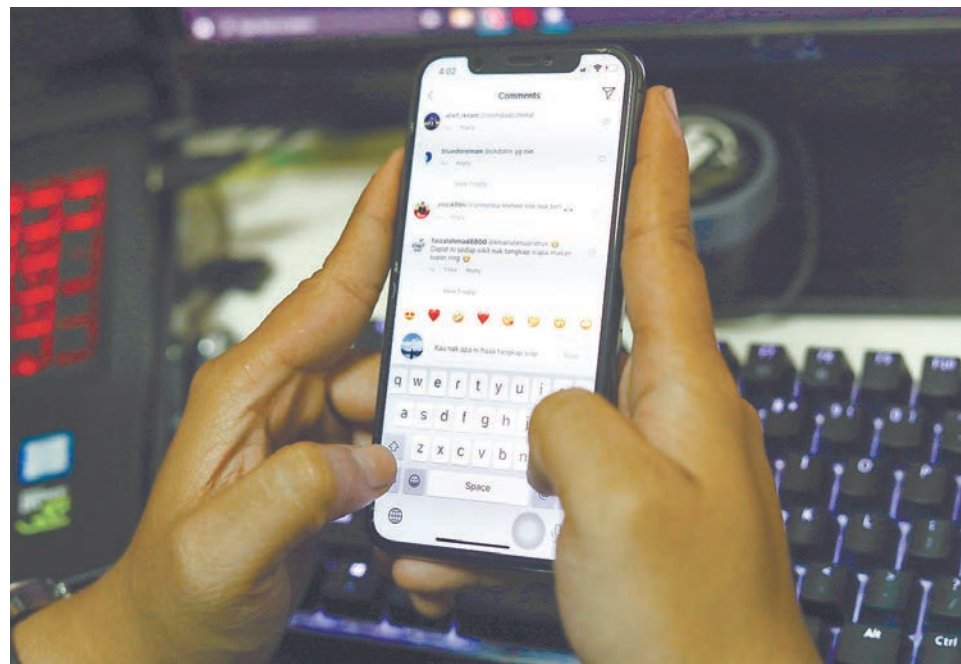
People tend to understand issues differently when they overlook nuances when discussing complex topics such as policy, social issues or cultural debates. This can further promote discourse that is reactive rather than reflective.

Consequently, informed engagement becomes more difficult and reactive tendencies remain deeply entrenched in interactions in online spaces.

Studies have shown that outrage-driven reactions are rewarded with likes and shares, which are then amplified by algorithmic visibility. This pushes content creators to produce what performs well and engages the audience rather than what informs.

To make matters worse, the combination of anonymity and high visibility afforded by online platforms reduces accountability.

More importantly, rage baiting can also affect users’ well-being. Constant encounters with anger-inducing headlines and hostile comment sections can heighten stress and make online spaces feel emotionally draining. Over time, this exposure desensitises users to



Studies have shown that outrage-driven reactions are rewarded with likes and shares, which are then amplified by algorithmic visibility. This pushes content creators to produce what performs well and engages the audience rather than what informs.

– SUNPIC

conflict while normalising adversarial communication.

Not surprisingly, internet users tend to forget that their writing is being read by actual human beings. This cycle, if left unaddressed, has a range of implications that affect digital behaviour, public understanding and social interaction. Breaking the cycle, therefore, requires targeted effort.

So, what do internet users need to do when they log into the digital world? First, they must approach digital content with awareness rather than impulse. This means reading beyond headlines, seeking context and verifying information before reacting or sharing, especially when the content appears intentionally provocative.

Second, users should be mindful when communicating online by

remembering that comments are (whether intentional or not) directed at real people with emotions and identities. This awareness will help reduce unnecessary hostility and encourage civil exchanges. Mindfulness also promotes the habit of pausing before responding, which can change the tone of online interactions.

Third, users need to consciously cultivate digital literacy. This includes understanding how algorithms amplify certain content and recognising linguistic cues of rage bait, which allow users to navigate online spaces more calmly.

Additionally, awareness of how content is prioritised will help users avoid being manipulated by sensationalism.

Recognising emotional cues can also train users to differentiate between information

and provocation.

Fourth, users can benefit from setting boundaries around their digital consumption. Curating their feed, taking breaks or choosing sources that prioritise accuracy over dramatisation can improve their online experience. These small adjustments can help protect their emotional well-being in the long run.

Finally, fostering empathy in digital interactions can promote civil exchanges. Empathy shifts online culture away from hostility and towards reflective engagement. The world is shaped by how we interact with each other.

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LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Putra Heights victims deserve dignity

I WRITE not as a political observer, nor as an interested bystander, but as a family member of one of the victims of the Putra Heights incident in April – a tragedy that upended lives, erased homes and left families grappling with the slow, uneven process of rebuilding.

I attended the recent “Majlis Serah Kunci” organised by the Local Government Ministry, hopeful that the ceremony would mark a dignified closure to months of hardship.

Instead, what unfolded felt uncomfortably like a stage production, with the residents still nursing wounds, cast as grateful spectators to a script written entirely for applause.

Let us be clear: no one begrudges genuine assistance. The residents, my family included, appreciate every party that has contributed, whether financially, operationally or emotionally.

Rebuilding homes takes resources; rebuilding lives takes

compassion. What rankles is not the support but the spectacle – the unmistakable air of self-congratulation that permeated the event.

From the moment the ceremony began, it became evident that the narrative belonged not to the victims but to those on stage.

One may almost forget that several other parties had also contributed significantly and in the millions to the rebuilding efforts.

But in the grand choreography of that morning, their roles were mysteriously edited out. Credit, apparently, is a limited commodity.

The most uncomfortable moment, however, came with the video presentation.

One may assume a “serah kunci” event would honour resilience, celebrate rebuilding and gently usher families towards closure.

Instead, the video lingered gratuitously on scenes of devastation, charred homes,

shattered belongings and the raw pain of the aftermath.

If the intention was to inspire gratitude, the effect was quite the opposite.

It reduced suffering to symbolism and trauma to a storytelling tool.

For families who lived the devastation, the experience was not cinematic.

It was not footage to be replayed for dramatic effect; it was the day everything changed, the moment security vanished, the beginning of months spent navigating uncertainty and bureaucracy.

It is worth noting that many residents’ letters and complaints went unanswered for months.

Follow-ups were made, doors were knocked on and emails were sent into the void.

Assistance came, yes, but often slower than needed and only after prolonged pleas. Yet, the event glossed over these uncomfortable truths.

The homes handed over are appreciated but even that carries a nuance the ceremony conveniently omitted.

The replacement houses are smaller than those that were lost.

For some families, cherished memories built over years were reduced to rubble overnight.

No ribbon-cutting ceremony can fully compensate for that, and certainly not one delivered in a tone that bordered on patronising.

What struck me most was the atmosphere in the hall. The residents were polite – they are, after all, grateful for the assistance – but beneath the applause was a quiet discomfort.

Many felt the event was less about closure and more about claiming credit.

An unspoken expectation hovered in the air as though the residents ought to be perpetually indebted for the homes they received, grateful not only for what

was given but for the opportunity to publicly validate the narrative of heroism.

Things happen – accidents, tragedies, failures of systems or circumstances. People recover at different paces. Gratitude is real and so is fatigue.

No one asked for perfection, only sincerity. But sincerity is built on humility, and humility was in short supply.

The residents of Putra Heights did not attend the ceremony to become political accessories.

They attended because they survived something unimaginable, endured months of emotional strain and were finally receiving the keys to a new beginning.

They deserved a ceremony that honoured them – not one that used their pain as a backdrop for a victory lap.

A Concerned Family Member of a Putra Heights Victim

HSBC wealth management expertise on tap in Johor

➤ State an ideal location for bank's new centre, given its proximity to international financial centre Singapore

PETALING JAYA: HSBC Bank Malaysia has opened a wealth centre in Johor Bahru, reinforcing the lender's commitment to expand its wealth and affluent banking capabilities across the country.

Johor serves as an ideal location for HSBC's wealth centre, given its proximity to international financial centre Singapore, and further propelled by investments pouring in from the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone. Johor's diversification beyond manufacturing into data centres, digital infrastructure and advanced manufacturing have contributed to its growing wealth trajectory.

At the recent opening of the wealth centre located at the bank's Jalan Bukit Timbalan branch, Johor State Investment, Trade, Consumer Affairs and Human Resources Committee chairman Lee Ting Han said, "The positive spillover effect from the rapid growth in Johor's economy is to be channelled towards the prosperity of its people, via the creation of new job opportunities and an increase in household income.

"The pursuit of higher growth, coupled with a stronger ringgit, is elevating living standards, bringing the achievement of higher-income status closer to fruition. The pivotal role of the financial sector is paramount in this trajectory, while international connectivity is key to further spur the growth of investments. Today, I am glad to see international banks such as HSBC expanding their presence in Johor."

Commenting on the significance of the new wealth centre, HSBC Bank Malaysia international wealth and premier banking country head Linda Yip said, "We are proud to celebrate the opening of our new wealth centre in Johor Bahru, an important milestone that underscores our long-term commitment to expanding our wealth management franchise across Malaysia. This investment reflects our confidence in the growth potential of the state of Johor and the increasing need for sophisticated wealth solutions among our



From left: HSBC Bank Malaysia CEO Datuk Omar Siddiq, Lee and Yip at the opening of the wealth centre.

growing Premier Elite clients."

It has been a pivotal year for HSBC in the affluent banking and wealth management space. In August, HSBC launched the all-new HSBC Premier in Malaysia, with a focus on four pillars – wealth, health, travel and international – to meet the evolving demands of the affluent and high net worth segment in Malaysia.

"For the wealth pillar, we want to bring the best in wealth offerings to our customers, from personalised and curated portfolios to a comprehensive suite of exclusive wealth, protection and legacy planning solutions. Our wealth centres are designed to provide an exclusive environment where our Premier Elite customers can engage with senior relationship managers and wealth specialists and gain valuable regional and global market insights. With Malaysia's fast expanding affluent segment, the demand for bespoke wealth products and solutions is here to stay, and we look forward to being a trusted partner to our customers," said Yip.

Also marking their presence in Johor are HSBC's lions, Stephen and Stitt. The iconic duo, which are known to guard HSBC offices across the globe, are strategically placed at the Bukit Timbalan branch, facing the Straits of Johor,

signifying the international flow of wealth, and serving as tangible symbols of HSBC's international capabilities, and the bank's commitment towards customers around the globe.

HSBC's presence in Malaysia dates back to 1884 when The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited established its first office in the country in Penang, with the permission to issue currency notes. HSBC Bank Malaysia Bhd was incorporated in 1984 and is a wholly owned subsidiary of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited, a founding member of the HSBC Group.

In 2007, HSBC Bank Malaysia was the first foreign lender to be awarded an Islamic banking subsidiary licence in Malaysia, namely HSBC Amanah Malaysia Bhd. HSBC Malaysia offers a comprehensive range of banking and financial services including Islamic financial solutions. It has also led innovation in Malaysia by introducing Malaysia's first automatic teller machine and electronic touch banking in the early 1980s. Today, HSBC Malaysia has launched innovative solutions such as HSBCnet for secure banking for businesses, trade transaction tracker and facial recognition on supported mobile phones.

AmBank approves RM718m financing for China Vital's Asus plant in Kedah

PETALING JAYA: AmBank Group has approved a financing facility amounting to RM718 million for Asus Advanced Technologies (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, a wholly owned subsidiary of China Vital Technology Group, marking a significant milestone under AmBank's Foreign Direct Investment Desk initiative to support Chinese investors in Malaysia.

The financing will facilitate the establishment of their manufacturing plant in Kulim Hi-Tech Park, Kedah, which is expected to start operation in 2028 – bringing in advanced technologies, creating opportunities for local businesses and generating employment for Malaysians.

AmBank has also partnered with Sinosure, a state-owned Chinese export credit insurance company, to support this initiative. The partnership strengthens the bank's role in promoting cross-border financial cooperation and solidifies its position as a trusted partner for international investors.

China Vital Technology Group is a globally integrated materials technology company with over 30 years of history, operating across North America, South America, Europe, and Asia, and employing more than 10,000 people worldwide.

AmBank Group business banking managing director Christopher Yap said, "This partnership reflects AmBank's commitment to supporting Malaysia's position as a preferred destination for foreign direct investment, particularly from China. Through collaborations like these, we aim to foster stronger economic ties, drive industrial growth, and create sustainable opportunities for both nations."

China Vital Technology Group co-president Zhenfu Hou said, "Vital Materials Group has made the decision to launch the group's largest manufacturing base outside China in Malaysia for many reasons, including the friendship between two countries, the easiness to do business on legal and financial perspectives, the specific industry cluster advantages and the talent pool with bilingual abilities.

"From this base, we will not only support our customers in solar and semiconductor businesses in Malaysia, but also provide world-leading materials and devices to global customers, thanks to the support from AmBank and Sinosure. We believe we can make a team and find more collaboration opportunities in future."

Malaysians less confident about financial future: Vodus study

PETALING JAYA: Malaysians are becoming less confident about their financial future, leading many to cut back on non-essential spending and focus on day-to-day necessities, according to the Vodus Consumer Sentiment Study 2025.

The nationwide study of 10,673 adults found that concerns over budgeting, credit use and retirement planning have increased compared with last year. Only 44% of respondents said they feel prepared for retirement, while confidence in long-term financial planning continues to decline.

As confidence weakens, households are adjusting their spending habits. Most respondents said they now prioritise food, utilities and housing, and have reduced discretionary purchases.

Only 13% reported saving more and spending less, suggesting that many are trying to

maintain stability rather than grow their savings.

Vodus Research founder Dr Kelvin Goh said the findings show how declining confidence is shaping household behaviour. "Malaysians are not reacting impulsively. They are responding to financial uncertainty by narrowing their focus to essentials and delaying non-essential spending. The shift is driven less by preference and more by a need to manage risk."

The study found that financial stress is rising across several demographic groups, including Chinese respondents, those aged 35 to 44 and among residents of the East Coast. More respondents in these groups said they feel worried about money, yet they continue to allocate most of their income towards daily necessities.

Spending discipline remains strong. Nearly 45% avoid purchases they cannot afford and 34% prefer to save first and buy later. However,

the growing use of Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) schemes poses concern. Respondents already under financial strain are more likely to see their situation worsen when using BNPL, while those who save first or use personal loans report better stability.

Debt levels remain moderate. Sixty-five per cent of Malaysians said they are either debt-free or owe less than RM50,000. Women are more likely than men to have no long-term debt. Urban households in central regions carry higher borrowing, while East Malaysia and the East Coast record higher debt-free rates.

Savings habits continue to influence how Malaysians perceive their financial well-being. Four in five respondents who save more than 11% of their income said they feel better off than last year.

In contrast, only about half of those saving less than 10% share the same view. More than

40% still struggle to meet essential expenses, especially lower-income households and younger Malaysians.

Goh said the pattern reflects a population coping well in the short term but feeling uncertain about the long term.

"People are adapting to rising costs by planning carefully and avoiding unnecessary commitments. But the gap between short-term adaptability and long-term readiness is widening. Strengthening retirement confidence will require better access to financial education and planning tools," he added.

The report draws on data collected through the Vodus Media Network, which includes platforms such as Astro and Media Prima.

The survey ran from July 25 to August 15, 2025 and was stratified to mirror national census demographics across Peninsular and East Malaysia.



BY **HAYATUN RAZAK**
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KUALA LUMPUR: The reclamation of 500 acres for the development of Maharani Freeport, Malaysia's first duty-exempt energy freeport, is expected to be completed in under two years, according to Maharani Energy Gateway Sdn Bhd CEO Muaazam Mahmud.

"We have already reclaimed 50 acres. We can reclaim around 200 acres within 12 months, but completing 500 acres will take less than two years. The bigger task after that is allowing the land to settle before physical development begins," he told *SunBiz*.

The development timeline, he said, is investor-driven. Once investors firm up their plans, construction work will commence.

"Storage development is likely to begin very soon because demand is already strong."

Muaazam said it already has confirmed clients for bio-LNG production, liquefied natural gas (LNG) storage and oil storage so physical development can begin as these early commitments provide sufficient demand to move forward.

"Most of the clients are foreign, although Malaysian companies are welcome to take part."

He said storage will be one of the largest components of the freeport, while refinery facilities are also incorporated.

"One advantage for refinery operators is that locating the plant on the reclaimed island avoids the environmental and human-impact constraints typically faced on the mainland.

"The refinery has already been pre-approved because the island has no surrounding population and it is designated for heavy industry."

While the port and storage

Land reclamation for Maharani Freeport in progress

➤ Project timeline is investor-driven, completing 500 acres will take less than two years, says CEO of developer

facilities are still under development, ship-to-ship transfers will continue.

Muaazam highlighted that most of the cargo passing through the area comes from the Middle East and is destined for North Asian markets such as China, Vietnam, Japan and South Korea.

"But many Asean waters are too shallow for such large vessels, they need a deepwater transfer point before moving on to their final destinations."

He said one of Maharani's key strengths is its naturally deep water, which means the port can handle large vessels without needing dredging.

"Very large crude carriers (VLCC) often carry up to two million barrels of oil for multiple buyers in different countries. When a VLCC needs to split its cargo, it may come to Maharani's waters, where smaller ships pick up their respective portions. This turns Maharani into a transshipment hub."

Furthermore, Muaazam said, China is rapidly advancing in green fuels such as green methanol.

With the European Union requiring vessels entering Europe to use a certain share of green fuel, Maharani could

serve as a bunkering point for container ships travelling from Singapore to Europe or the United States.

"Chinese producers of green methanol can store or supply their fuel from Maharani's location."

The project includes plans for a ship maintenance and repair (MRO) facility to allow vessels to store cargo, refuel and undergo repairs.

"The region lacks large MRO facilities and Singapore's waiting period is long. Some shipowners even send vessels to China for repairs, which is far unless the ship has cargo to deliver. Maharani offers a convenient stop along the main shipping route," Muaazam said.

A retail island will be developed next to the shipping area to save operators time and cost, he added.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said that through Maharani Freeport, Malaysia aims to expand maritime capacity, enhancing logistics competitiveness and deepening Malaysia's participation in global supply chains, as well as driving the nation closer to economic targets by creating high-value jobs, attracting billions of ringgit of foreign direct investment and encouraging the



An artist impression of Maharani Freeport Islands.

growth of industries that thrive on connectivity and innovation.

"The Maharani Freeport will serve as a critical node in this network, a logistics and investment gateway that connects East and West through the Strait of Malacca while improving supply reliability and reducing logistics costs," he said at the launch on Nov 29.

Anwar said the country's first duty-exempted energy freeport designed to be the nation's energy and maritime services hub will support greater supply chain resilience, encourage cross-border collaboration and make Malaysia an essential part of the new economic architecture taking shape across the Asia-Pacific.

"Recognising the Maharani Freeport's potential as a catalytic force for local economic development, the Government has approved a suite of tax incentives to spur significant investments in the district of Muar."

Through the Ministry of Finance, the prime minister said, incentives are extended to the master developer and to companies undertaking integrated energy hub activities, deep-sea port operations and trade-related services.

"In addition, tailored tax incentive packages are provided for supporting sectors, including data centres, infrastructure and utilities, green technology, medical tourism and hospitality."

Deciem uses M'sia as launchpad to set up The Ordinary stores in SE Asia

BY **DEEPALAKSHMI MANICKAM**
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KUALA LUMPUR: Deciem, the Canadian beauty powerhouse behind cult-favourite skincare brand The Ordinary, has chosen Malaysia as the launchpad for its first standalone stores in Southeast Asia.

In an exclusive interview with *SunBiz*, co-founder and CEO Nicola Kilner shared the strategic reasoning behind this move and how the brand is reshaping the global beauty landscape through innovation, transparency and purpose-driven retail.

"Malaysia has an incredibly engaged beauty community that values education and transparency, which aligns perfectly with our brand," Kilner said. "It's also a strategic gateway into Southeast Asia, where we see growing demand for science-led, accessible skincare."

While The Ordinary is known for its direct-to-consumer (DTC) digital-first approach, Kilner emphasised that physical retail remains crucial.

"E-commerce will always be core to us, but physical spaces allow people to connect with our products and philosophy in a deeper way. Retail is



Kilner says Malaysian consumers exhibit a distinct curiosity and eagerness to experiment.

not just about sales, it's about education, trust and creating community experiences that online alone can't replicate," she explained.

This customer-centric philosophy appears to resonate strongly with Malaysian consumers. According to Kilner, the Malaysian market exhibits a distinct curiosity and eagerness to experiment.

"Malaysian consumers are highly informed and eager to explore routines that blend global science with

local traditions. There's a strong appetite for ingredient knowledge in Southeast Asia," she noted.

The Ordinary disrupted the beauty industry by combining ingredient transparency with affordable pricing, challenging larger players to follow suit.

When asked how Deciem stays ahead despite competitors copying its approach, Kilner said, "Being imitated shows we're doing something right. What matters is staying consistent, our focus on transparency, fair pricing and

science-backed formulae is part of who we are, not just a marketing strategy."

Looking ahead, Deciem's growth strategy for Asia is focused on consolidation and community building.

"In the short term, we're deepening our presence in Southeast Asia and strengthening our community. When considering a new market, one of the key factors we look for is consumer appetite for The Ordinary. Social media requests often help us identify where there's a clear desire for the brand," Kilner explained.

Balancing affordability with quality amid global inflation is another challenge Deciem addresses through operational efficiency.

"We've built our business model around efficiency: streamlined packaging, in-house innovation, and production, which helps to keep costs down. For example, as demand for our Niacinamide 10% + Zinc 1% grew, we were able to source raw materials more efficiently and pass those savings directly on to our customers," Kilner said.

She highlighted how Deciem's "no-fluff" philosophy extends beyond products to its corporate culture.

"There isn't a corporate culture at Deciem. Instead, we have a collaborative team passionate about our vision for The Ordinary. Our applied research team focuses on identifying ingredients we can democratise and delivering true innovation at honest prices," she said.

As the beauty industry continues to evolve, Kilner anticipates significant changes in the next five years.

"Consumers will demand even greater transparency, personalisation and sustainability. The Ordinary is preparing by investing in education, responsible innovation, and ensuring we remain accessible to everyone," she said.

By strategically combining science-backed innovation with community engagement and transparent pricing, The Ordinary is not just entering the Southeast Asian market, but is also setting a new benchmark for beauty brands aiming to disrupt the industry with purpose.

Kilner remains optimistic about The Ordinary's future in the region. "Our goal is to make science-backed skincare accessible to everyone, and Malaysia is a key part of that journey," she said.



Petronas saves over US\$33m after using Aveva's predictive analytics system

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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PETALING JAYA: Petrolia Nasional Bhd (Petronas) has saved more than US\$33 million (RM135.5 million) after deploying British software provider Aveva Group plc's predictive analytics system.

This saving comes at an opportune time when Malaysia's state energy firm aligns with national goals to build a more digital and low-carbon economy.

Aveva SEA market leader Thomas Phang (pic) said the technology acts as an early warning platform that helps Petronas detect equipment failures ahead of time and improve operational resilience.

"Our shared intent is to transform successful implementations into repeatable, commercial solutions that can be scaled across industries. These solutions will be tested in Malaysia but built for global relevance," he told *SunBiz*.

With Petronas contributing technical know-how and delivery capabilities and Aveva providing cutting-edge digital engineering tools, these solutions will be tested in Malaysia but built for global relevance, he said.

Furthermore, both organisations are committed to joint sales and marketing initiatives to promote these innovations

globally. "This means Malaysia will not only benefit from advanced digital deployments locally but can also position itself as a regional leader in decarbonisation and digital transformation across multiple sectors."

At its core, Phang said, the partnership centres on three key pillars – joint solution development, commercialisation and global scaling.

"By combining Petronas' deep domain expertise and operational experience with Aveva's industry-leading software and SaaS capabilities, we will co-develop solutions that address real-world challenges, optimising plant performance, enhancing energy efficiency, and embedding sustainability into daily operations."

The collaboration follows a memorandum of understanding signed during Aveva World San Francisco 2023, to jointly develop and commercialise new digital and sustainability solutions across multiple industries.

Under the agreement, both organisations will collaborate on joint product innovation, knowledge-sharing, and global marketing initiatives to accelerate digital transformation across multiple sectors including energy,

manufacturing, chemicals, and infrastructure.

The partnership builds on a relationship that began in 1991 with the implementation of the Aveva PI System, followed by the deployment of Aveva Predictive Analytics.

Going forward, Phang said, Aveva is committed to deepening its presence in Malaysia by supporting local industries in their transition toward a more sustainable and digitally enabled future. "This vision aligns closely with Malaysia's New Industrial Master Plan, which focuses on developing high-value, technology-driven sectors and advancing the nation's pathway toward net-zero operations."

He said Aveva's growth strategy is built on three core pillars: enabling industrial intelligence, strengthening local ecosystems and expanding talent capabilities.

In Malaysia, he said, Aveva's focus spans key sectors such as energy, chemicals and manufacturing – industries facing increasing pressure to decarbonise, optimise costs and enhance agility. "These sectors also represent the greatest opportunity for integrated digital infrastructure that can connect data, systems, and people to drive system-wide efficiency."



Taxpayers' dilemma in stamp duty self-assessment

ALL taxpayers should be aware by now that the stamp duty regime is being migrated from the official assessment system to the self-assessment system starting Jan 1, 2026. This is a big change.

Until now, the general understanding of the public is written agreements which in stamp duty terms referred to as "instruments" are only required to be stamped where there is a possibility that the documents may be brought to court as evidence or the documents need to be compulsorily stamped as a precursor for any transfer required by other government authorities such as the Land Office, Companies Commission of Malaysia or exemptions under the Section 15 and 15A of the Stamp Act 1949.

There are many challenges that will be faced by the taxpayers in participating in the self-assessment system. Questions that will puzzle the taxpayers will be: whether to stamp a document or not; when to stamp it; how to classify the instruments which will have consequential effect on the rate of duty; how to use the stamps portal; who should send it for stamping – which party is responsible for stamping.

How to deal with the past?

Numerous announcements around stamp duty concerning employment contract may have

given the wrong impression to taxpayers that the Inland Revenue Board (IRB) may be providing the same concession given to the employment to all the documents that should have been stamped in the past.

On employment contracts, the IRB has provided a concession stating that all such contracts executed before Dec 31, 2024, will be eligible for waiver from stamp duty and late payment penalty. For the year ending 2025, the IRB will waive the penalty, but the duty for the stamp duty will be payable. This is confined to employment contracts and there is no general announcement of any concessions for the other taxable instruments.

The question here is – can the IRB raise assessments and collect stamp duty on instruments that were executed prior to the introduction of the self-assessment system? The current direction of the IRB is that it has the right to collect the tax.

There are two categories of instruments.

One category is where the taxpayer has in the past sent it in for adjudication and stamped it at a rate which the IRB is subsequently of the view that it should be higher and this is premised on a unique provision, Section 50A. This was introduced with effect from 2009 where it allows the IRB to collect the understated tax due to its failure to assess the correct amount of tax.

The second category which will pose a problem to taxpayers is where the documents have not been stamped.

Is there a time limit for the IRB to exercise its right to collect the past taxes? This is unclear and debateable. However, with the introduction of the self-assessment system in 2026, it is now explicitly mentioned that there is a time limit of five years.

The five-year limit will be lifted if there is any fraud, wilful default or negligence. Although the five-year limit kicked in only on Jan 1, 2025, introducing such a provision signifies that for the past issues the IRB does not have unfettered right to raise an assessment on an open-ended basis without any limitation of time. Generally, there is the doctrine of legitimate expectation that if the IRB has not challenged the taxpayers within a reasonable timeframe the past assessment done under the official system is final, otherwise all assessments that have been issued in the past are "in limbo land".

The expectation of the public is that the IRB will interpret the law fairly and where there are uncertainties it will give the taxpayer the benefit of the doubt and apply the law on a forward basis rather than enforce it for the back years.

There are many more issues taxpayers should be taking stock of in relation to the past and dealing with the future.

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TAX MATTERS
BY S. M. THANNEERMALAI

New e-invoicing threshold will exempt 200,000 more SMEs, says Samenta

PETALING JAYA: Small and Medium Enterprises Association of Malaysia (Samenta) yesterday welcomed the announcement by the prime minister that SMEs with annual revenue under RM1 million will be exempted from e-invoicing starting 2026.

National president Datuk William Ng said this is a timely and compassionate decision that reflects the government's genuine understanding of the pressures faced by micro and small enterprises.

"Based on our estimates, this expanded exemption will exempt an additional 200,000 SMEs, many of whom operate at very thin margins and lack the digital infrastructure required to comply with e-invoicing in the immediate term. For these businesses, the announcement offers much-needed breathing space at a time when they are already grappling with rising costs, tariff uncertainties, growing competition from foreign online sellers, and other unforeseen compliance burdens," he added in a statement.

Ng said this decision will allow the smallest enterprises in Malaysia to focus on stabilising their operations, improving productivity, and upgrading their internal processes without the fear of abrupt disruption.

"It also preserves the broader national digitalisation agenda by ensuring that adoption happens at a pace that is practical, sustainable, and sensitive to the realities on the ground."

Ng urged their SMEs not to view this exemption as a reason to delay automation and digitalisation. Instead, SMEs must use this window to strengthen their accounting practices, organise their financial records, and gradually transition to digital systems where possible.

Samenta thanked the prime minister and the Ministry of Finance for listening closely to the concerns of the SME community.

Sunway Healthcare receives SC approval for Bursa Main Market listing

KUALA LUMPUR: The Securities Commission Malaysia (SC) has approved the proposed listing of Sunway Healthcare Holdings Bhd on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities.

Currently, Sunway Healthcare is a direct 84%-owned joint venture company of Sunway City Sdn Bhd (SunCity), which in turn is a wholly owned unit of Sunway Bhd (Sunway). The remaining 16% stake

in Sunway Healthcare is held by Singapore-based Greenwood Capital Pte Ltd.

As part of the exercise, Sunway Healthcare will carry out a pre-initial public offering (IPO) share split from 1.2 billion shares to 10.9 billion without affecting its issued share capital.

After the proposed share split, SunCity will distribute the distribution shares to Sunway by

way of dividend-in-specie.

The proposed IPO will involve up to 1.97 billion Sunway Healthcare shares, comprising an offer for sale of up to 1.39 billion existing shares, representing 12.1% of the enlarged number of issued shares, and a public issue of 575 million new shares, representing 5% of the enlarged number of issued shares, to retail and institutional investors.

In a filing to Bursa Malaysia, Sunway said the SC has also approved the proposed listing of Sunway Healthcare under the Bumiputera equity requirement for publicly listed companies. Sunway Healthcare is to make available at least 50% of the Sunway Healthcare shares offered to Malaysian public investors via balloting to Bumiputera public investors pursuant to the proposed retail offering. – Bernama

Six predictions on securing New AI Economy for 2026

➤ It will be the 'Year of the Defender' – in which autonomous defence is only way to combat identity attacks, data poisoning and quantum risks

KUALA LUMPUR: Palo Alto Networks, a global leader in cybersecurity, has released Six Predictions for the AI Economy: 2026's New Rules of Cybersecurity, forecasting a transformative leap to the artificial intelligence economy.

This new AI-native global economic model, where AI drives productivity and operations, also introduces a seismic shift in risk.

In 2026, autonomous AI agents will fundamentally redefine enterprise operations, setting the stage for major changes in identity, security operations centre, quantum computing, data security and browser.

Palo Alto Networks forecast 2025 as the Year of Disruption based on the rise in mega breaches that take entire enterprise networks offline – driven by supply chain vulnerabilities and attackers reaching new levels of speed and sophistication. This has since been proven true, as 84% of the major cyber incidents that Unit 42 investigated this year have resulted in operational downtime, reputational damage or financial loss.

In 2026, it will be the Year of the Defender, where AI-driven defences tip the scale in the defence's favour, driving down response times, reducing complexity and increasing visibility to quickly respond to cyberattacks.

Palo Alto Networks chief security intelligence officer Wendi Whitmore said: "AI adoption is redefining cybersecurity risk, yet the ultimate opportunity is for defenders. While attackers utilise AI to scale and accelerate threats across a hybrid workforce, where autonomous agents outnumber humans by 82:1, defenders must counter that speed with intelligent defence. This necessitates a fundamental shift from a reactive blocker to a proactive enabler that actively manages AI-driven risk while fuelling enterprise innovation."

From the anticipated surge in AI-driven identity attacks to the new wave of executive liability for rogue AI, these predictions for

2026 serve as essential guidelines for organisations to shape their cybersecurity strategies and confidently navigate the new autonomous economy.

➤ **The New Age of Deception – The Threat of AI Identity:** In 2026, identity will become the primary battleground as flawless, real-time AI deepfakes – or CEO doppelgängers – make forgery indistinguishable from reality. This threat is magnified by autonomous agents and a staggering 82:1 machine-to-human identity ratio, creating a crisis of authenticity where a single forged command triggers a cascade of automated actions. As trust breaks down, identity security must transform from a reactive safeguard into a proactive enabler for the enterprise, securing every human, machine and AI agent.

➤ **The New Insider Threat – Securing the AI Agent:** Enterprise adoption of autonomous AI agents will finally provide the force multiplier needed to solve the 4.8-million-person cyber skills gap and end alert fatigue. This is also an inherent risk, creating a potent new insider threat. These always-on, implicitly trusted agents are given privileged access and the keys to the kingdom, instantly becoming the most valuable target. Adversaries will no longer make humans their primary target; they will look to compromise these powerful agents, turning them into an "autonomous insider." This forces a shift to autonomy with control, requiring AI firewall governance tools at runtime to stop machine-speed attacks and ensure the AI workforce isn't turned against its owners.

➤ **The New Opportunity – Solving the Data Trust Problem:** Next year, the new frontier of attack will be data poisoning – invisibly corrupting AI training data at its source. This attack exploits a critical organisational silo between data scientists and security teams to create hidden backdoors and untrustworthy models, igniting a fundamental "crisis of data trust".

As traditional perimeters become irre-



levant, the solution must be a unified platform that closes this blind spot, using data security posture management and AI security posture management for observability and runtime agents for firewall as code to secure the entire AI data pipeline.

➤ **The New Gavel – AI Risk and Executive Accountability:** The enterprise race for an AI advantage will collide with a new wall of legal reality. By 2026, the massive gap between rapid adoption and mature AI security (with only 6% of organisations having an advanced strategy) will lead to the first major lawsuits holding executives personally liable for rogue AI actions.

This "New Gavel" elevates AI from an IT issue to a critical liability issue for the board. The CIO's role must evolve to that of a strategic enabler – or partner with a new chief AI risk officer – using a unified platform to provide verifiable governance that enables innovation safely.

➤ **The New Countdown – The Quantum Imperative:** The "harvest now, decrypt later" threat, accelerated by AI, creates a crisis of retroactive insecurity, as data stolen today becomes a future liability. With the quantum timeline shrinking from a ten-year problem to a three-year one, governments' mandates will soon force a massive, complex migration to post-quantum cryptography. This immense operational challenge requires organisations to shift from a one-time upgrade to building long-term crypto agility – the ability to adapt cryptographic standards as a new, non-negotiable security foundation.

➤ **The New Connection – The Browser as the Novel Workspace:** As the browser evolves from a tool for information synthesis into an agentic platform that executes tasks, it is becoming the new OS for the enterprise. This trend creates the single largest, unsecured attack surface – an AI front door operating with a unique visibility gap. With GenAI traffic up over 890%, organisations will be forced to adopt a unified, cloud-native security model capable of enforcing consistent zero trust security and data protection at the last possible millisecond – inside the browser itself.

Haily bags RM42.8m contract to build terrace houses in Johor

PETALING JAYA: Haily Group Bhd, through wholly owned subsidiary Haily Construction Sdn Bhd, has secured a RM42.85 million contract from DC Architects Sdn Bhd.

Haily Construction has been appointed to build and complete 187 units of double-storey terrace houses across two phases, together with one Tenaga Nasional Bhd double chamber substation, at Bandar Putra in Kulai, Johor.

Haily Group founder and executive director See Tin Hai said: "We are pleased to secure this latest win from DC Architects Sdn Bhd. The award reflects our consistent execution strength in landed residential construction and our ability to meet the expectations of reputable developers across Johor. We will continue to uphold high standards of quality, safety, and timely delivery for every project entrusted to us."

With the new award, Haily Group's outstanding order book has increased to about RM1.27 billion, strengthening its earnings visibility through financial years 2026 and 2027.

The contract also deepens Haily Group's presence in Johor's landed housing market – a core demand segment driven by population growth, industrial expansion in Kulai and Johor Bahru, and improved regional connectivity including the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System and the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone.

The contract is expected to contribute positively to the group's financial performance for FY2026 and FY2027.

Rubber market seen trading mixed this week

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian rubber market is expected to show mixed performance amid ongoing natural rubber (NR) supply concerns due to heavy rains in major producing regions, said the Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association (Margma).

The association said heavy rains and flooding in rubber-producing countries across Southeast Asia continue to disrupt tapping activities, tightening NR supply. It said rubber prices would also be influenced by movements in regional rubber futures markets, the ringgit's performance against the US dollar, and fluctuations in benchmark crude oil prices.

"Asia's manufacturing sector experienced a downturn in November. Orders did not rebound significantly despite progress in United States trade negotiations, indicating persistent sluggish global demand," Margma told Bernama.

A trader concurred with Margma's view that the Malaysian rubber market would likely be affected by movements in regional rubber futures markets this week.

HSI-CWK8 and HSI-PWLG steal the limelight

WARRANTS WATCH

THE Malaysian structured warrants market saw softer trading activity last week, with a total of RM1.37 billion traded compared to RM1.99 billion in the previous week. The decline was in line with the 22.3% drop in the turnover seen in broader Malaysian market.

However, warrants over the Hang Seng Index (HSI) continued to dominate the warrant space with 73% of the total turnover, followed by warrants over Malaysian stocks and Hong Kong stocks which saw over RM192.9 million and RM149.7 million traded, respectively.

The HSI started December strongly on Monday, closing above the 26,000 level and opened even higher on Tuesday before closing in the red. Hong Kong's major stocks index then plunged more than 300 points on

Wednesday following soft Chinese services activity data that underscored persistent economic sluggishness (Bloomberg, Dec 3). However, the HSI manage to recoup the losses in the next two trading days to close at 26,085.09 points on Friday, representing a 0.9% week-on-week (w-o-w) increase. Investor sentiments were more downside biased as there were 3 put warrants among the top five most popular HSI warrants.

Put warrant HSI-PWLG topped the list with over 1.64 billion units changing hands, while the top call warrant HSI-CWK8 saw 1.04 billion units traded.

Among the top traded warrants, there were three warrants with a longer tenure, which are HSI-CWK8, HSI-PWL4 and HSI-PWLO with January 2026 expiries. With all factors held constant, a longer-dated warrant generally will experience slower time

Top stock warrants by volume traded:

Warrant name	Volume (mil)	Issuer	Exercise level	Expiry date
HSI-PWLG	1,644.8	Kenanga	24,000	30 Dec 2025
HSI-CWK8	1,041.2	Macquarie	31,000	29 Jan 2026
HSI-CWKH	938.4	Kenanga	28,000	30 Dec 2025
HSI-PWL4	937.4	Macquarie	23,000	29 Jan 2026
HSI-PWLO	789.6	Kenanga	22,000	29 Jan 2026

decay compared to shorter-dated warrants. Hence, the expiry date is an important factor for investors to consider when selecting warrants, depending on their holding period.

Moving to the US market, the S&P500 closed the week 0.3% higher, marking its second consecutive week of gains. Investors who were keen to gain leveraged exposure to the US market without leaving Bursa Malaysia traded warrants over the S&P500. These warrants saw an uptick

in trading activity last week, with turnover up by 87.7% w-o-w. The top traded S&P500 warrant was put warrant SP500-H59 with an exercise price of 5,900.

On the local front, turnover of warrants over Malaysian stocks fell 20.6% w-o-w, with Zetrix AI and Farm Fresh Bhd (FFB) warrants being the most popular. Call warrants Zetrix-CAL and Zetrix-CAM traded over 50 million units each as shares of the e-government services provider ended

the week 1.2% lower at RM0.815. Meanwhile, Malaysia's largest dairy producer Fresh Farm saw its share price trading at a record high last week, jumping 7% w-o-w to close at RM2.90. Call warrant FFB-C19 saw the highest trading activity among its peer with over 9.8 million units changing hands.

To view the full list of structured warrants available on Bursa Malaysia, visit malaysiawarrants.com.my.

Provided for Malaysian residents' information only. This commentary has not been reviewed by the Securities Commission Malaysia. It is not an offer or recommendation to trade and is not research material. Past performance is not indicative of future performance. You should make your own assessment and seek professional advice.

The warrants will not be offered to any US persons.



Regulator warns IndiGo of regulatory action

➤ New Delhi acts to limit surge in airfares caused by flight cancellations crisis

MUMBAI: India's aviation watchdog on Saturday warned airline IndiGo of regulatory action after it cancelled thousands of flights over the last week, stranding passengers and forcing government action to limit a surge in airfares caused by the crisis.

The country's biggest airline, IndiGo cancelled the flights because of a shortage of pilots after it failed to plan adequately for new rules limiting how many hours they work.

The civil aviation watchdog sent the notice to IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers, giving him 24 hours to respond and say why regulatory action - which can include penalties and suspension of officials - should not be taken against the airline.

As the CEO "you have failed in your duty to ensure timely arrangements for conduct of reliable operations", said the notice, signed by Directorate General of Civil Aviation official Ravinder Singh Jamwal.

The notice is confidential but was reviewed by Reuters. IndiGo did not respond to a request for comment on the warning.

Earlier in the day, India capped airfares, which have been driven higher by the increase in demand for flights operated by other carriers. IndiGo cancelled another 385 flights on Saturday, the fifth day of the crisis.

The government on Friday announced exemptions from the new rules for the carrier and laid on additional trains to help clear the backlog.

Delhi airport posted on X on Saturday that flight operations were steadily resuming. Cancellations however continued at many airports.

The Civil Aviation Ministry said it would "continue to closely monitor fare levels through real-time data and active coordination with airlines".

Fares were last capped during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020.

The Indian government said a one-way fare for a journey up to 500km cannot be more than 7,500 rupees (RM341), whereas for journeys between 1,000km and 1,500km - such as the New Delhi-Mumbai route - should be capped at 15,000 rupees.

That was well under the 20,419 rupee price advertised by Air India on its website for a Delhi-Mumbai flight on Saturday.

The flight cancellations are the biggest



Stranded passengers wait near the IndiGo airlines ticketing desk at the Lal Bahadur Shastri International Airport in the Indian city of Varanasi. - AFP/IC

crisis in IndiGo's 20 years of operation.

The airline has a more than 60% market share in the world's most-populous country and has prided itself on on-time performance and affordable fares.

IndiGo has said it failed to plan adequately for the November 1 deadline to implement the stricter rules on night flying and weekly rest for pilots.

It only suffered a roster crisis this week as December is the peak time for holidays and weddings in India.

On Friday, more than 1,000 IndiGo flights were cancelled.

After the government announced the exemptions to the rules for IndiGo, the airline said it could return to normal operations between Dec 10 and 15.

On Saturday, IndiGo cancelled 124 flights in Bengaluru, 109 in Mumbai, 86 in New Delhi and 66 in Hyderabad, airport sources told Reuters.

Hundreds of passengers gathered outside Bengaluru and Mumbai airports on Saturday, some unaware of the cancellations, according to Reuters witnesses.

Satish Konde had to catch a connecting flight from Mumbai to the western city of

Nagpur and had checked in before being told it was cancelled.

"I am waiting for my luggage to be returned."

The new pilot rest and duty rules capped the number of night landings to two from six and restricted the maximum number of hours a pilot can fly in the night to 10 hours.

For now, IndiGo has been exempted from both measures until Feb 10.

The new rules also said that if a pilot takes personal leave, that cannot be counted in calculating his weekly rest period of 48 hours.

That restriction too has been put on hold for all airlines, given the IndiGo crisis.

That has upset pilot labour groups, who told the government that safety must not be compromised to make up for IndiGo's poor planning, the Federation of Indian Pilots head C.S. Randhaw told Reuters.

The Airline Pilots Association of India objected on Friday, calling the relief for IndiGo "selective dispensation".

The norms "exist solely to safeguard human life", the association said in a letter to the government.

Other major Indian airlines, including Air India and Akasa, have not had to cancel flights due to the new rules. - Reuters

Talks for Advent to take Whirlpool India stake said to have collapsed

MUMBAI: Global private equity firm Advent International's talks to acquire US giant Whirlpool's India unit for up to US\$1 billion have collapsed due to disagreements over valuation, four people familiar with the matter told Reuters.

Advent had emerged as the frontrunner to acquire a 31% stake in Whirlpool of India from its Michigan-based parent, Whirlpool Corp, which would have triggered a mandatory open offer to acquire a majority stake, the sources said.

In January, the US-listed home appliance maker said it had a 51% stake in its India unit and wanted to pare that to about 20% to pay off a major chunk of its debt amid a major rejig of its global assets.

At the time, it had said it could get net cash proceeds of US\$550 million to US\$600 million from the sale.

If Advent had acquired the 31% stake, it would have triggered a mandatory open offer for an additional 26% under Indian regulations, giving it a controlling 57% stake.

That, the sources say, would have translated into a total deal value of US\$1 billion for Advent.

Part of the disagreement that scuttled the deal was that Advent wanted lower pricing since Whirlpool faces short-term headwinds in India, including stricter regulations on product standards and energy efficiency norms, said a source close to the negotiations.

Whirlpool parent's "sole objective was to raise cash here to pay off debt, and the value they wanted was more", said another person familiar with the negotiations.

Reuters could not immediately determine how much Whirlpool was asking for and what Advent's counteroffer was.

Whirlpool has been a household name in India for decades, its "Whirlpool, Whirlpool" jingle resonating across generations.

Whirlpool of India's revenue from operations rose 16% in the financial year through March to US\$880.53 million, but competition from players such as LG Electronics India and Samsung Electronics has hit sales.

Advent's interest in Whirlpool signalled a strategic push into the lucrative Indian market, complementing its existing investments in the country's consumer durables sector, including Eureka Forbes. - Reuters

Vietnam's trade surplus with US hits record as exports surge

HANOI: Vietnam's trade surplus with the United States, its main market, rose to US\$121.6 billion in the first 11 months of the year, official data showed on Saturday, as exports surged despite US import tariffs imposed in August on Vietnamese goods.

The Southeast Asian nation is still in talks on a trade deal with Washington but has so far largely shrugged off US duties of 20% imposed on its goods by Donald Trump's administration to cut Vietnam's huge trade advantage.

Exports to the United States rose year-on-year by 22.5% in November, outpacing shipments to the rest of the world, which increased by 15.1%, according to Vietnam's statistics agency.

The surge in exports to the US translated into a record trade surplus, which in the January-November period already far exceeds the reading for all of 2024, when it hit US\$104.5 billion, according to Vietnamese data that is usually more conservative than US figures.

The latest US customs data is for August.

Month-on-month, however, Vietnam's November exports fell 7.1% to about US\$39 billion, and shipments to the United States went down by 7.3% after a decline of 2.2% in October.

November was the fourth consecutive month that month-on-month exports to the US have fallen.

Growth in Vietnam's trade surplus with the

United States also slowed to US\$10.6 billion in November from US\$11.8 billion in October.

In a sign of how dependent the country is on its exports to the United States, its overall trade surplus was US\$1.09 billion in November, down from US\$2.6 billion in October.

Vietnam said last month it was working to sign a trade agreement with the US soon, after the two countries in October said they had agreed to a framework for the deal.

For the first 11 months of this year, Vietnam recorded a total trade surplus of US\$20.53 billion - mostly on a positive balance with the United States, the European Union and Japan - which more than offset deficits with China and South Korea.

The trade deficit with China in the January-November period rose 38.1% year-on-year to US\$104.3 billion.

Finance Minister Nguyen Van Thang on Saturday said foreign investment inflows in the January-November period rose 8.9% from a year earlier to US\$23.6 billion, while pledges were up 7.4%.

However, he noted the country was facing increasing economic challenges, including from US tariffs and the impact of widespread flooding in recent months.

Separately, consumer prices in November rose 3.58% from a year earlier, data from the statistics agency showed, while industrial production climbed 10.8%. - Reuters

Fresh data show American consumers still strained by inflation

NEW YORK: US consumer pricing and sentiment reports released last week pointed to lingering questions about affordability as the calendar moves towards the peak of the festive season.

The personal consumption expenditures (PCE) price index, the Federal Reserve's preferred data point for measuring inflation, rose to 2.8 percent on an annual basis in September from 2.7% in August.

When food and energy prices were excluded, prices also rose by 2.8% in September.

However, that was below the 2.9% reading in August for the same benchmark.

The mixed report, delayed due to the US federal government shutdown, is the last major inflation reading before the Fed's rate decision next week.

The figures were largely in line with expectations, but included notable increases in some categories that have strained consumers.

Durable goods like automobiles, appliances and furniture rose 1.4% from a year ago.

A separate report showed consumer sentiment rose in December to 53.3 from 51.0 in November, according to the University of Michigan.

However, consumers today have a

diminished outlook for their expected personal income compared with early in 2025 and labour market expectations "remained relatively dismal", said survey director Joanne Hsu.

"Consumers see modest improvements from November on a few dimensions, but the overall tenor of views is broadly somber, as consumers continue to cite the burden of high prices," she said.

The data did not significantly move the US stock market on Friday.

Stocks are up modestly for the week, due partly to expectations the Fed will cut interest rates this week.

The Fed has cut interest rates at

its last two meetings following indications of a slowdown in the US employment market.

But the Fed has also kept an eye on inflation due to the risk that President Donald Trump's tariffs could reignite a major increase in prices.

EY-Parthenon chief economist Gregory Daco predicted the US central bank would cut rates as expected next week, but could face multiple dissents.

Fed chairman Jerome Powell will "persuade several hesitant policymakers to support a third consecutive 'risk management' rate cut, while signaling firmly that

additional easing is unlikely before next spring absent a material weakening in economic conditions", Daco said in a note.

Friday's pricing data revealed a "gradual and uneven" tariff pass-through on goods, "exacerbating the affordability crisis", Daco said.

"While many businesses have absorbed cost pressures using pre-tariff inventories and narrower margins, these buffers are slowly eroding," said Daco.

The economist expects rising inflation in late 2025 and early 2026, "further complicating the consumer outlook amid softening labour-market dynamics" - AFP



The iconic WB water tower is seen from outside Gate 4 at Warner Bros. Studios in Burbank, California. - AFP/IC

US waives US\$11m fine imposed on Southwest Airlines over 2022 holiday meltdown

WASHINGTON: Donald Trump's administration said on Saturday it will waive an US\$11 million (RM45 million) fine imposed on Southwest Airlines as part of a US\$140 million settlement over the carrier's meltdown in December 2022 during a busy holiday travel period.

Southwest in December 2023 agreed to pay a US\$35 million cash fine and provide US\$90 million over three years in travel vouchers of US\$75 or more to passengers delayed at least three hours getting to final destinations because of an airline-caused issue or cancellation over the airline's handling of the meltdown that stranded more than two million passengers.

The US Transportation Department in a written order cited Southwest's decision to invest over US\$1 billion in its operations since the 2022 meltdown in its decision to waive the remaining US\$11 million of the fine imposed by the administration of President Joe Biden that was due by the end of January.

USDOT said this approach was in the public interest "as it incentivises airlines to invest in improving their operations and resiliency, which benefits consumers directly".

Southwest praised the decision, saying over last two years, it successfully completed an operational turnaround that resulted in "industry leading on-time performance and percentage of completed flights without cancellations".

Under Trump, USDOT has been moving to roll back some aviation consumer protection initiatives announced by the Biden administration.

In December 2024 under Biden, USDOT sought public comment on writing rules to require airlines to pay cash compensation to passengers when flight disruptions are caused by carriers - a move the department has since said it would abandon.

In May, USDOT dropped a lawsuit filed by the Biden administration in its final days that accused Southwest of illegally operating chronically delayed flights.

Southwest had rejected those claims, saying the flights occurred years earlier when the industry faced unprecedented challenges from the Covid-19 pandemic and were often delayed due to issues outside Southwest's control. - Reuters

Netflix's Warner Bros acquisition sparks backlash

Group of prominent producers lobbying Congress to oppose deal

WASHINGTON: Netflix faced fierce criticism last week over its blockbuster deal to acquire Warner Bros., the storied Hollywood studio.

The streaming giant is already viewed as an outcast in some Hollywood circles, largely due to its reluctance to release content in theaters and its disruption of traditional industry practices.

As Netflix emerged as the likely winning bidder for Warner Bros. - the studio behind *Casablanca*, the *Harry Potter* movies and *Friends* - Hollywood's elite launched an aggressive campaign against the acquisition.

Titani director James Cameron called the buyout a "disaster", while a group of prominent producers are lobbying Congress to oppose the deal, according to trade magazine Variety.

In a letter to lawmakers, the anonymous filmmakers warned that Netflix would "effectively hold

a noose around the theatrical marketplace", further damaging a Hollywood ecosystem already strained by audiences' shift from theaters and TV to streaming.

"I could not think of a more effective way to reduce competition in Hollywood than selling WBD to Netflix," Warner's former CEO Jason Kilar wrote on X.

At the center of Hollywood's ire is Netflix co-CEO Ted Sarandos, who has declared that the era of moviegoers flocking to theaters is over.

During an analyst call on Friday, Sarandos acknowledged surprise over the acquisition but pledged to maintain Warner Bros' theatrical releases and preserve the HBO Max brand.

Many industry veterans consider theatrical releases essential to cinema's appeal and prestige - a stark contrast to streaming content consumed on

home sofas or on mobile devices.

Variety captured the industry's alarm with a front-page headline asking: "Is Netflix Trying to Buy Warner Bros. or Kill It?"

Michael O'Leary, CEO of Cinema United, the world's largest exhibition trade association, warned: "Netflix's success is television, not movies on the big screen. Theaters will close, communities will suffer, jobs will be lost."

The backlash extended beyond Hollywood.

Netflix shares plunged more than 3% following the announcement, while *The Information*, influential among tech industry readers, branded the deal an "\$82.7 Billion Blunder" by a management team that "has rarely put a foot wrong".

Antitrust concerns loom large, with Netflix poised to control an even greater share of an entertainment industry it already dominates.

Bipartisan opposition has emerged in Washington.

US Senator Elizabeth Warren, a Democrat, warned the deal "could force you into higher prices, fewer

choices over what and how you watch, and may put American workers at risk".

Before the deal was announced, Republican Senator Mike Lee said Netflix's acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery's streaming assets "should send alarms to antitrust enforcers around the world".

The deal's biggest loser may be Warner Bros. competitor Paramount Skydance, the Hollywood studio owned by Larry Ellison, one of the world's richest people and a close ally of US President Donald Trump.

Ellison's son David runs Paramount and may lobby the White House directly to block the Netflix-Warner Bros. merger.

Unlike Netflix's targeted acquisition, Paramount had sought to buy Warner Bros. in its entirety, including cable networks CNN, TNT, and TBS, which are being spun off separately.

In a letter to Warner's board on Thursday, presumably after it surmised the game was lost, Paramount accused Warner Bros. Discovery of running an unfair process that favoured Netflix. - AFP

Meta partners with news outlets to expand AI content

➤ Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp users to get real-time information

WASHINGTON: Meta announced last week it will integrate content from major news organisations into its artificial intelligence assistant to provide Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp users with real-time information.

The social media giant said Meta AI will offer breaking news, entertainment and lifestyle stories when users ask news-related questions, drawing from partnerships with outlets including CNN, Fox News, *Le Monde*, *People* and *USA Today*.

The feature will allow users to access “more diverse content sources” and receive links to partner websites to dive deeper into stories, Meta said in a blog post.

Meta said the expansion aims to make its AI assistant “more responsive, accurate, and balanced” by incorporating diverse viewpoints, acknowledging that “real-time events can be challenging for current AI systems to keep up with.”

The initial partnerships span mainstream and conservative-leaning publications, including *The Daily Caller* and *The Washington Examiner*.

The company said it plans to continue adding partnerships and develop new features as competition intensifies among technology firms to enhance the capabilities of their AI assistants.

Meta AI is available across the company's platforms, serving billions of users globally.

The announcement comes as artificial intelligence companies, including OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google's Gemini, increasingly move to incorporate live web content and news feeds.

OpenAI has deals with News Corp, *Le Monde*, *The Washington Post* and Axel Springer, while *The New York Times* has partnered with Amazon and Google has partnered with The Associated Press.

Europe's Mistral has partnered with Agence France-Presse.

At the end of August, the startup Perplexity unveiled a subscription package called Comet Plus, named after its AI-infused internet browser, Comet, which gives access to partnered media content for US\$5 per month.

Perplexity has committed to redistributing 80 percent of the revenue generated by Comet Plus to news publishers.

Despite these collaborations, several lawsuits brought by media outlets against AI companies are ongoing, notably that of *The New York Times* against OpenAI, which the newspaper accuses of using its articles

without authorisation and without compensation.

In recent days, *The New York Times* and the *Chicago Tribune* joined *The Wall Street Journal* and *The New York Post* with their own lawsuits against Perplexity.

Meta has had a sometimes turbulent relationship with the news media over the years.

The company founded by Mark Zuckerberg declared in 2024 that news was a very small share of user engagement on the company's platforms and began shutting down the Facebook News tab in markets including the United States, Britain and France.

This also saw the end of multi-million-dollar deals with leading news organisations.

Zuckerberg also made the surprise decision in January to end Meta's US fact-checking programme, as he more closely aligned with the Donald Trump administration's antipathy toward establishment news.

That programme had employed third-party fact-checkers, many from news media organisations such as AFP, to identify misinformation disseminated on the platform.

The AI news came a day after Meta's share price rose sharply on a report that the company is significantly cutting back on virtual reality investments as it pivots toward artificial intelligence. – AFP

EU hits X with €120m fine, sparking US ire

BRUSSELS: The European Union hit Elon Musk's X with a €120 million (RM575 million) fine last week for breaking its digital rules, sparking an angry reaction from Washington.

The high-profile probe into the social media platform was seen as a test of the EU's resolve to police Big Tech.

Even before the penalty was made public, US Vice-President JD Vance warned against “attacking” US firms through “censorship”.

Hours after Brussels announced the fine, US Secretary of State Marco Rubio joined the attack.

“The European Commission's US\$140 million fine isn't just an attack on X, it's an attack on all American tech platforms and the American people by foreign governments,” Rubio posted on X.

“The days of censoring Americans online are over.”

This was the first fine imposed by the European Commission under its Digital Services Act (DSA) on content.

X was guilty of breaching the DSA's transparency obligation, said a Commission statement.

The breaches include the deceptive design of its “blue checkmark” for supposedly verified accounts, and its failure to provide access to public data for researchers, it added.

“This decision is about the transparency of X” and “nothing to do with censorship,” the bloc's technology commissioner Henna Virkkunen told reporters – pushing back against Washington's line of attack.

Posting on X on Thursday, Vance had told the EU it “should be supporting free speech not attacking American companies over garbage” – to which Musk replied “much appreciated”.

Musk's platform – targeted by the EU's first formal DSA investigation in December 2023 – was found to have breached its rules on several counts in July 2024.

The EU found that changes made to the platform's checkmark system after Musk took over in 2022 meant that “anyone can pay” to obtain a badge of authenticity – without X “meaningfully verifying who is behind the account”.

“This deception exposes users to scams, including impersonation frauds, as well as other forms of manipulation by malicious actors,” said the Commission statement.

X had also failed to be sufficiently transparent about its advertising and to give researchers access to public data in line with DSA rules, it added.

X remains under investigation over tackling the spread of illegal content and information manipulation.

The first part of the X probe had appeared to stall since last year – with no movement on imposing a fine.

Weighing on the EU's mind was the picture in the United States – starkly different from 2023 – after Trump returned as president this year with Musk by his side.

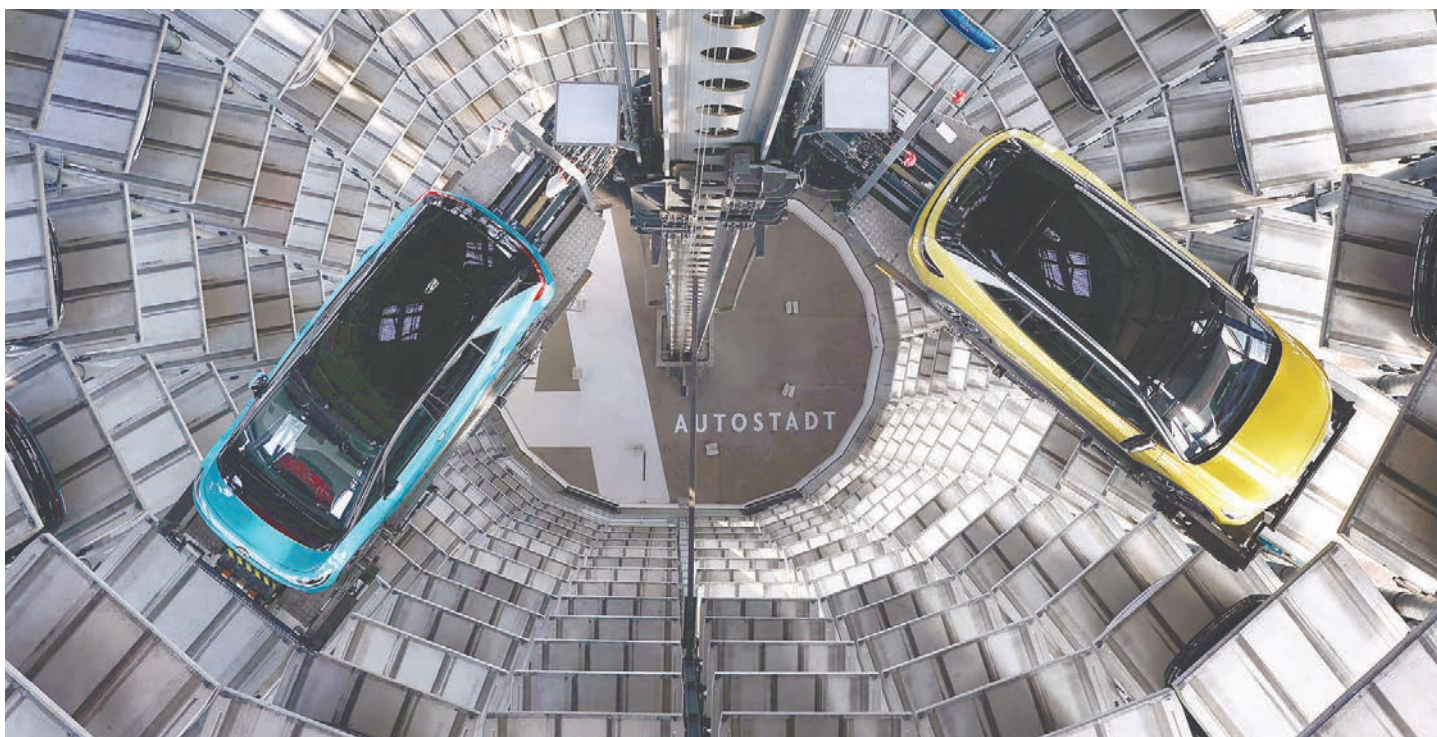
While the pair later fell out, the tycoon has since reappeared in White House circles, and Brussels has had to contend with the prospect that any fine on X would fan tensions with Trump.

The DSA gives the EU power to fine companies as much as 6% of their global annual revenue – and in the case of X the bloc could have based itself on Musk's entire business empire, including Tesla.

Brussels settled on what is arguably a moderate sum relative to X's clout – but Virkkunen told reporters it was “proportionate” to the violations at stake.

“We are not here to impose the highest fines,” said the tech chief.

“We are here to make sure that our digital legislation is enforced.” – AFP



(FILES) New Volkswagen electric cars are on display at a storage facility auto tower in Wolfsburg, northern Germany. – AFP/IC

Volkswagen to invest €160 billion through 2030, CEO says

FRANKFURT: Volkswagen Group plans to invest €160 billion (RM764 billion) through 2030, its CEO Oliver Blume said, reflecting belt-tightening as Europe's top automaker faces a major crisis in its two key markets, China and the United States.

Total spending, updated annually as part of Volkswagen's rolling five-year investment plan, compares with €165 billion for the 2025-2029 period and €180 billion for 2024-2028, with 2024 marking a peak.

Since then, Volkswagen, which includes the Porsche and Audi brands, has been squeezed by tariffs on US imports and fierce competition in China.

This has hurt profits most notably at Porsche, which sells around half its cars in just these two markets and unveiled a major roll-back on its electric vehicle strategy.

Blume told the weekly *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* that the focus in the latest spending plan was “on Germany and Europe,” including in products, technology and infrastructure.

He said talks about an extended savings programme at Porsche would run into 2026.

Blume, who will step down as Porsche chief executive in January to focus on the Volkswagen CEO role, said considerations around a potential US plant for Audi depended on possible

substantial financial support by Washington.

While Porsche was not expected to grow in China, he said, localising production in the wider Volkswagen group was possible and a tailor-made Porsche model for China could make sense one day.

Blume said a recent contract extension as Volkswagen CEO until 2030 was a clear signal of support by the shareholding Porsche and Piech families, as well as the German state of Lower Saxony, Volkswagen's two biggest investors.

“But it is true, of course, that shareholders have suffered losses since Porsche went public three years ago. I, too, must face up to this criticism.” – Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: DEC 5

5-Dec-2025 **Bursa Malaysia**

Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million): Participation

Retail	41.53	17.59%
Institutions	130.76	39.34%
Foreign	-172.29	43.07%

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

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

Bursa Indices

INDEX	CHANGE
FBMEMAS	11,962.23 -28.96
FBMKLCI	1,616.52 -4.55
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	526.23 -5.71
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	165.78 -0.51
CONSTRUCTION	309.96 +3.19
FINANCIAL SERVICES	19,011.33 -36.69
ENERGY	758.54 +0.48
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	474.17 -4.61
HEALTH CARE	1,528.92 +1.21
TRANSPORTATION	1,002.51 +2.68
PROPERTY	1,068.00 +3.45
PLANTATION	8,096.25 -15.07
FBMSHA	11,797.05 -34.63
FBMACE	4,816.14 -10.49
TECHNOLOGY	56.73 -0.56

TURNOVER: 3.171 bil **VALUE: RM2.240 bil**

External factors likely to dictate trading on Bursa

BURSA Malaysia is expected to be in a data-dependent mode this week as markets position ahead of the US Federal Open Market Committee meeting tomorrow and Wednesday, said IPPFA Sdn Bhd director of investment strategy and country economist Mohd Sedek Jantan.

He said that although markets have priced in an 87% probability of a 25-basis-point cut, attention is shifting towards the increasing uncertainty surrounding the US Federal Reserve (Fed) policy path in early 2026.

"This uncertainty stems from the widening divide between hawkish and dovish members within the committee – a divergence that now carries meaningful implications for market expectations," he told Bernama on Saturday.

However, Mohd Sedek said overall sentiment is likely to remain sensitive to external catalysts, including US macro data and any shift in the Fed's forward guidance.

"In sum, the outlook for next (this) week points to a more tactical, rotation-driven environment for Bursa Malaysia.

"With global policy signals and currency dynamics continuing to influence investor behaviour, market participants are likely to stay selective while maintaining a tilt toward sectors offering defensive strength, currency-supported fundamentals, or clearer earnings momentum into year-end," he added.

Last week, on a Friday-to-Friday basis, the FBM KLCI rose 12.05 points to 1,616.52 from 1,604.47.

Weekly turnover declined to 18.86 billion units worth RM13.4 billion. Main Market volume weakened to 7.01 billion units worth RM11.41 billion and ACE Market volume shrank to 1.78 billion units valued at RM602.06 million.

Top 20 Actives

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
HSI-PWLG	0.110	-0.020	-15.39	2,216,819
HSI-CWK8	0.085	+0.005	+6.25	1,458,485
HSI-PWL4	0.105	-0.020	-16.00	1,101,084
HSI-CWKH	0.160	+0.010	+6.67	1,040,714
BAIDU-C4	0.205	+0.045	+28.13	886,486
HSI-CWK3	0.165	+0.015	+10.00	848,200
VELESTO	0.250	+0.005	+2.04	677,565
HSI-CWKO	0.215	+0.015	+7.50	647,289
VS	0.470	+0.010	+2.17	631,307
HSI-PWLO	0.085	-0.010	-10.53	556,427
TANCO	1.170	+0.020	+1.74	542,674
ZETRIX	0.815	-0.020	-2.40	538,739
ALIBABA-C49	0.120	-	-	410,230
ZETRIX-C90	0.060	+0.025	+71.43	380,000
HSTECH-C46	0.195	-0.075	-27.78	321,261
HSTECH-H43	0.180	-0.020	-10.00	316,290
HSI-CWMQ	0.290	+0.030	+11.54	312,536
TENCENT-C48	0.140	-	-	299,814
ALAM-WB	0.055	+0.010	+22.22	285,263
EKOVEST-C79	0.035	-0.115	-76.67	282,575



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('000)
FFB-C22	0.655	+0.285	1
TENAGA	12.640	+0.140	173,084
CHINTEK	10.980	+0.120	2
AJI	13.900	+0.100	83
MCEMENT	6.890	+0.100	4,461
SAB	3.100	+0.100	43
SUNCON	6.020	+0.100	25,383
99SMART-C14	0.275	+0.090	2,688
GAMUDA	5.240	+0.090	51,749
IHH	8.400	+0.090	69,205
MSNIAGA	1.300	+0.080	70
SBAGAN	5.750	+0.080	194
TIMECOM	5.570	+0.080	23,876
KIMHIN	0.835	+0.075	52
SUNCON-C54	0.225	+0.075	7,859
AAX	1.650	+0.070	27,257
UMCCA	5.930	+0.070	458
CSCSTEL	1.450	+0.060	10,164
EG	1.170	+0.060	41,321
HSI-CWM9	0.760	+0.060	4,100

Top 20 Gainers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
AIM-WA	0.010	+100.00	10,040
BORNOIL	0.010	+100.00	97,547
INGENIEU-WB	0.010	+100.00	221
PARLO-WA	0.010	+100.00	43
PETGAS-C8	0.010	+100.00	11,124
SNTORIA	0.020	+100.00	60,536
FFB-C22	0.655	+77.03	1
ZETRIX-C90	0.060	+71.43	380,000
AHB-WC	0.015	+50.00	7,512
EVD-PA	0.015	+50.00	5,004
GDEX-WC	0.015	+50.00	98
HIBISCS-C85	0.030	+50.00	700
INARI-C31	0.030	+50.00	1,811
PERMAJU	0.015	+50.00	1
SUNCON-C54	0.225	+50.00	7,859
99SMART-C14	0.275	+48.65	2,688
CTOS-C22	0.040	+33.33	40
D&O-C19	0.020	+33.33	100
DNEX-C40	0.020	+33.33	4,280
FBMKLCI-HEE	0.020	+33.33	2

World Stocks/Commodities

INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA [US]	47,954.99	104.05	0.22
S&P 500 [US]	6,870.40	13.28	0.19
NASDAQ [US]	23,578.13	72.99	0.31
NYSE [US]	21,810.07	-25.72	-0.12
EURO STOXX 50 [EUR]	5,723.93	5.85	0.1
FTSE 100 [UK]	9,667.01	-43.86	-0.45
DAX [GER]	24,028.14	146.11	0.61
NIKKEI 225 [JPN]	50,491.87	-536.55	-1.05
TOPIX [JPN]	3,362.56	-35.65	-1.05
HANG SENG INDEX [HK]	26,085.08	149.18	0.58
CSI 300 [CHN]	4,584.54	37.97	0.84
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	225.69	0.19	0.08
SH SE COM [CHN]	3,902.81	27.02	0.7
KOSPI INDEX [SK]	4,100.05	71.54	1.78
SENSEX INDEX [IND]	85,712.37	447.05	0.52
ASX 200 [AUS]	8,634.58	16.14	0.19
ALL ORDINARIES INDX [AUS]	8,926.13	19.46	0.22
FBM KLCI	1,616.52	-4.55	-0.28
STRAITS TIMES INDEX [S'PORE]	4,531.36	-3.78	-0.08
WTI [US\$/BBL.]	60.08	0.41	0.69
BRENT [US\$/BBL.]	63.75	0.49	0.77
GOLD [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	4,243.00	0	0
SILVER [COMEX] [US\$/T OZ]	59.05	1.56	2.77
PLATINUM [US\$/T OZ]	1,643.61	-2.52	-0.15
COPPER [COMEX] [US CENTS/LB.]	546.2	8.85	1.65
COPPER 3MO [LME] [US\$/MT]	11,620.50	170.5	1.49
CORN [US CENTS/BU.]	444.75	-2.5	-0.56
WHEAT [US CENTS/BU.]	535.75	-4.5	-0.83
SOYBEAN OIL [CBOT] [US CENTS/LB.]	51.69	-0.1	-0.19
COCOA [ICE] [US\$/MT]	5,696.00	210	3.83
RUBBER [S'PORE] [US CENTS/KG]	170.4	0.7	0.41

As at 6pm, Dec 5

Top 20 Losers (By RM)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('000)
NESTLE	112.000	-3.700	765
ALLIANZ-PA	19.720	-0.680	27
F&N	35.100	-0.500	1,062
ALLIANZ	19.520	-0.460	573
PETDAG	19.400	-0.420	3,371
DLADY	31.720	-0.380	640
KLCC	8.460	-0.330	3,495
CARLSBG	16.700	-0.200	1,800
SWKPLNT	2.960	-0.200	1,139
MPI	31.900	-0.180	474
AXIATA	2.520	-0.160	53,889
ARMADA-C1K	0.020	-0.130	5,010
HLIND	16.220	-0.120	411
KAREX-C17	0.030	-0.120	640
EKOVEST-C79	0.035	-0.115	282,575
KGB	5.090	-0.110	11,222
TM	7.790	-0.110	74,152
PPB	10.160	-0.100	22,411
MRDIY-C54	0.055	-0.095	10,274
IOICORP-C73	0.060	-0.090	300

Top 20 Losers (By %)

STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
ARMADA-C1K	0.020	-86.67	5,010
KAREX-C17	0.030	-80.00	640
ZETRIX-C8L	0.010	-77.78	18
EKOVEST-C79	0.035	-76.67	282,575
XIAOMI-C38	0.010	-75.00	500
WCT-C40	0.015	-66.67	1,000
MRDIY-C54	0.055	-63.33	10,274
GAMUDA-C3N	0.010	-60.00	1,130
IOICORP-C73	0.060	-60.00	300
YTL-C2G	0.070	-53.33	21,919
ARMADA-C1I	0.010	-50.00	60
BCMALL	0.005	-50.00	3,173
HONGSENG	0.005	-50.00	8,791
INARI-C3P	0.005	-50.00	910
MRDIY-C47	0.005	-50.00	32,000
PETDAG-C14	0.010	-50.00	1,100
YTLPOWR-C98	0.010	-50.00	10
MAHSING-C87	0.080	-46.67	100
ZETRIX-C9J	0.035	-46.15	18,000
ECOSHOP-CB	0.020	-42.86	8,002

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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CPO futures seen trading in 'yo-yo' pattern this week

KUALA LUMPUR: The crude palm oil (CPO) futures market is expected to trade in a volatile "yo-yo" pattern this week, as year-end holidays lead to reduced participation from international traders, a trader said.

Interband Group of Companies senior palm oil trader Jim Teh noted that most global market participants typically take annual leave in December, resulting in thinner liquidity and wider price fluctuations.

"A yo-yo market provides a good opportunity for physical buyers, especially given the current high stock position," he told Bernama.

He added that Malaysia's palm oil stock data for November, to be released by the Malaysian Palm Oil Board on Dec 10, will be closely watched by the market.

On the other hand, palm oil trader David Ng expects the CPO market to trade with a bullish bias, given the recent strength in the soybean oil market and expectation of declining production in the coming weeks.

"We expect prices to trade between RM4,080 per tonne and RM4,250 per tonne next (this) week," he said.

Last Friday, trading on Bursa Malaysia's derivatives market was halted due to a Globex system outage.

For the period from last Thursday to this Friday, the spot-month December 2025 contract added RM50 to RM4,095 per tonne, January 2026 contract gained RM54 to RM4,135 per tonne, and February 2026 contract increased RM62 to RM4,152 per tonne.

Meanwhile, March 2026 and April 2026 contracts edged up RM65 to RM4,168 per tonne and RM4,171 per tonne respectively, and May 2026 contract climbed RM67 to RM4,168 per tonne.

Ringgit tipped to remain steady at 4.10-4.12 to dollar

THE ringgit is expected to remain steady and trade within the 4.10-4.12 range against the US dollar this week, supported by market expectations of an interest rate cut by the US Federal Reserve at its upcoming Federal Open Market Committee (FOMC) meeting.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said most traders and investors anticipate the Fed will deliver a 25-basis-point cut at the meeting scheduled for tomorrow and Wednesday.

"The focus will be on the FOMC meeting and, more importantly, the policy guidance, especially their latest quarterly projections on macroeconomic variables, particularly the federal funds rate and inflation forecast," he told Bernama.

Earlier last week, the local note was flat on Monday before strengthening from Tuesday through Friday. It also touched the 4.11 level – its strongest level in four years and five months – on Thursday.

On a weekly basis, the ringgit strengthened against the greenback, closing higher at 4.1105/1140 compared with 4.1300/1350 in the previous week.

The local note weakened against the yen to 2.6536/6561 from 2.6420/6456, slid versus the euro to 4.7912/7953 from 4.7768/7825, and slipped vis-a-vis the British pound to 5.4859/4905 from 5.4528/4594 at last week's close.

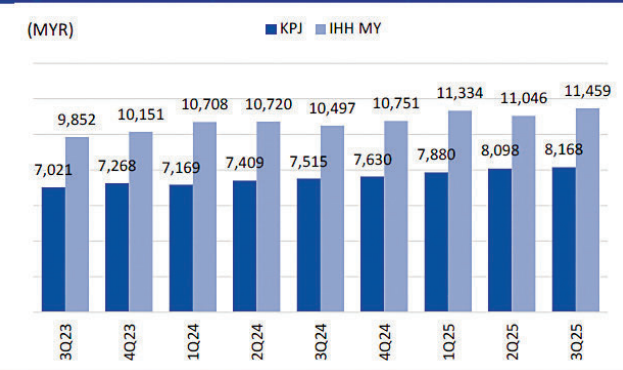
The ringgit appreciated versus the Indonesian rupiah to 246.8/247.2 from 247.6/248.0 last week, increased against the Singapore dollar to 3.1741/1773 from 3.1813/1857 previously, and was higher against the Philippine peso at 6.97/6.98 from 7.04/7.06.

Exchange Rates			
FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.1880	4.0420	4.0320
1 Australian Dollar	2.7770	2.6640	2.6480
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2250	3.1240	3.1160
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9930	2.9090	2.8970
1 Euro	4.8730	4.7150	4.6950
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.4160	2.3270	2.3110
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2250	3.1240	3.1160
1 Sterling Pound	5.5750	5.3970	5.3770
1 Swiss Franc	5.2350	5.0120	4.9970
100 UAE Dirham	115.0900	109.1000	108.9000
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4920	3.2380	3.0380
100 Chinese Renminbi	59.4700	56.9500	N/A
100 Danish Krone	66.8800	61.5300	61.3300
100 Hongkong Dollar	54.2500	51.5400	51.3400
100 Indian Rupee	4.7500	4.4100	4.2100
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0263	0.0232	0.0182
100 Japanese Yen	2.7170	2.5920	2.5820
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	42.4000	39.0000	38.8000
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5500	1.3700	1.1700
100 Philippine Peso	7.1800	6.7500	6.5500
100 Qatar Riyal	115.9000	110.0300	109.8300
100 Saudi Riyal	112.5400	106.8400	106.6400
100 South Africa Rand	25.4800	23.0100	22.8100
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.4200	1.2400	1.0400
100 Swedish Krona	45.7400	41.6500	41.4500
100 Thai Baht	13.6400	12.0800	11.6800

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Healthcare Facilities & Services Overweight

Figure 9: IHH's Malaysia revenue intensity vs KPJ's



Source: Company data, RHB Research

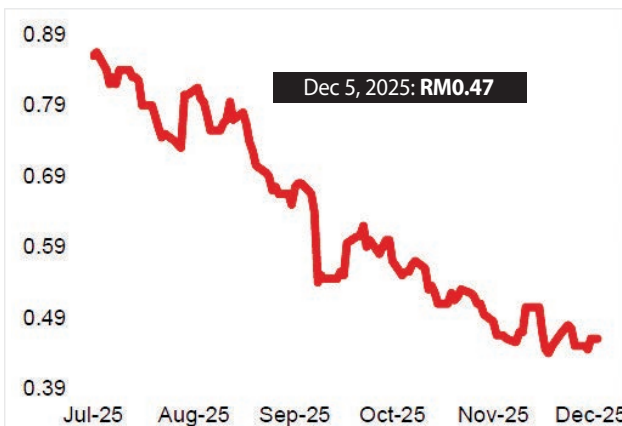
SECTOR results for Sep 2025 were broadly in line. Effects of payer pressure are visible, with a clear shift towards day-care models that are weighing on inpatient volumes. Still, 3Q25 revenue intensity continued to rise, while EBITDA margins benefitted from higher bed occupancy and operational efficiencies. With the current iteration of payer pressure largely concluded, managements' forward guidance was generally optimistic, hinging on sustained uplift in revenue intensity, selective bed expansions at high-occupancy hospitals, and holistic cost management.

Sector domestic inpatient admissions in 3Q25 slowed to +1.7% YoY (2Q25: +2.2% YoY) amid payer pressure that is driving a structural shift in the case mix towards day care, with KPJ appearing to be the most impacted (-0.1% YoY). Nevertheless, revenue intensity continues to trend upwards on a favourable mix of higher-value cases, efficiency gains, and a steady pick-up in medical tourists.

KPJ Healthcare still our preferred pick; Keep BUY on IHH Healthcare and Duopharma Biotech (DBB). We still favour KPJ for its superior margins and ROE, rising revenue intensity, and growing contribution from maturing hospitals, providing better visibility on near-term earnings and margin expansion. We also maintain BUY on IHH for its consistent execution, premium regional footprint, and affluent-patient focus that underpins its earnings resilience. Meanwhile, we like DBB for its solid earnings visibility and resilient pharmaceutical demand, which is set to ride on margin tailwinds into 2026.

Still Overweight on sector. – RHB Research, Dec 5

VS Industry Bhd Trading buy. Target price: RM0.59



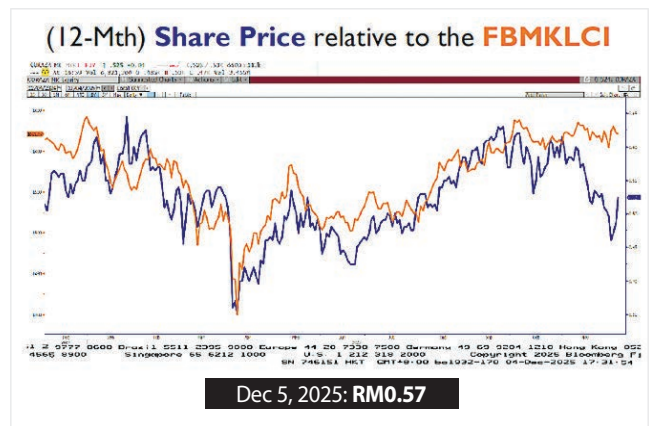
Source: PublicInvest Research

VS Industry Bhd recorded a 2.8% YoY increase in 1QFY26 core net profit to RM33.7m, supported by higher order volumes and the absence of one-off impairments. Cumulative 1QFY26 earnings were in-line with both our and market expectations, representing 30% and 26% of full-year estimates, respectively. With Malaysia's reciprocal tariff rate now fixed at 19%, visibility on order flows should gradually improve. The recent interest rate cut in the US also offers some relief and may support a gradual improvement in demand. However, given VS's high customer concentration in the US, we believe earnings recovery may take time, especially against the backdrop of a softer US economy.

1QFY26 revenue declined 2.9% YoY to RM1.08bn, primarily due to weaker contribution from the Indonesian operations, which fell 30.7% YoY to RM77m. However, this was more than offset by stronger contribution from the Malaysian operations, which increased by 25% YoY to RM1bn. Notably, the Singapore and Philippines operations are reported under the Malaysian segment, as they primarily support customers served by the Malaysian unit. 1QFY26 core net profit rose 2.8% YoY to RM33.7m, mainly supported by a RM9m YoY increase in PBT from the Malaysian operations (+25% YoY), which more than offset the RM3.9m decline in PBT from the Indonesian operations (-69.4% YoY). On a QoQ basis, the group swung from a core net loss of RM30.1m to a core net profit, backed by higher customer orders as well as the reversal of impairment losses on trade receivables and plant and equipment.

We upgrade our rating from Neutral to Trading Buy with an unchanged TP of RM0.59. – PublicInvest Research, Dec 5

Coraza Integrated Technology Bhd Buy. Target price: RM0.70



Source: Bloomberg, TA Research

FOLLOWING an analyst briefing, we remain optimistic about CORAZA's outlook, supported by a strong order book of approximately RM90.0mn. Management indicated that the group is aiming for record high revenue in FY25. Meanwhile, management also highlighted that the aerospace business is gaining traction, with the potential to deliver more meaningful contributions next year. Separately, the new P3 plant has been completed, and management is currently in discussions with two new multinational customers from the semiconductor segment to take up the new capacity.

Management indicated that the outlook for the final quarter is positive, and the group is aiming for a record high revenue in FY25, supported by a strong order book of approximately RM90.0mn. For context, the group previously achieved a record revenue of RM143.3mn in FY22. In 3QFY25, the sheet metal fabrication segment remained the main revenue contributor, accounting for 89.3% of total revenue. Management also guided that the utilisation rate for this segment is currently operating at around 50 to 60%.

In terms of revenue contribution by industry in 3QFY25, the semiconductor segment remained the largest contributor at 81% (-2pp QoQ), followed by instrumentation (13%, unchanged QoQ) and life sciences and medical devices (6%, +1pp QoQ). Management highlighted that the aerospace business is gaining traction, although its revenue contribution remains insignificant at this stage. The group is currently working with an aerospace customer on the final qualification for one of the parts, and there is potential for one or two products to enter mass production next year.

Maintain our Buy call with RM0.70 TP. – TA Research, Dec 5



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

- 123RFPIC

Back to *future*

Right tech at your fingertips for 2026 – P22



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Rubini Sambanthan makes space for Tamil diversity



BY MARK MATHEN VICTOR

DURING year-end holiday and festive sales, tech stores around the world are known to push certain categories harder than the rest.

Shoppers often see steep discounts on items such as smartphones, laptops, TVs, gaming consoles, small smart-home gadgets and headphones.

Retailers know these are high-demand items, especially among a growing base of tech-savvy shoppers, gift buyers, teens and young adults.

Tech that sells most

➔ Smartphones

New or last-year models get heavy discounts as makers make room for new releases. Many buyers use holiday deals to upgrade especially younger adults who treat phones as essential for communications, streaming, everyday tasks and social media. Retailers spotlight “money-off” phone bundles, trade-in discounts or include freebies, which are a particularly strong draw for budget-conscious buyers and the typical deal-seeking Malaysian.

➔ Laptops and tablets

As students finish semesters or plan holidays, discounted laptops and tablets become hot sellers. Entry-level and mid-range machines often see notable price drops, making them attractive to students, freelancers or anybody needing a bang-for-buck upgrade.

➔ Televisions and streaming gear
Big-screen TVs and media-streaming devices, useful for holiday movie nights or family gatherings, often perform well. Stores promote these heavily, often



Smartphones often get the biggest holiday price cuts. – PICS FROM FREEPIK

Year-end tech push

➔ What gadget outlets promote most during festive sales, items worth buying for next year

➔ Smart-home gadgets and accessories.

Items such as smart speakers, smart lights, wearables, portable chargers and Bluetooth devices often get marked down. Their lower price points and gift appeal make them attractive for first-time tech buyers or as Christmas gifts.

Tech appeal, best deals

Retailers push these categories because they preserve margin by combining room for discounting, high demand and gift appeal. TVs, gaming kits, headphones and smart-home gadgets appeal to younger buyers and families wanting gifts or to upgrade existing gear affordably, while smartphones and laptops remain staples in everyday life.

The sale timing also plays a role: many tech manufacturers release new models near year-end or early

next year. This creates pressure to clear older stock, leading to discounts that are steeper than usual. For consumers, this means old but capable gear becomes affordable at holiday prices.

Retailers often spotlight bundles or value-adds, making holiday offers more compelling than regular deals.

Here are some tips to get the best deals this holiday and festive season:

➔ Compare older models and current ones to check if the discount justifies buying now or waiting.

➔ Assess your actual needs. If you only browse the web or study, a budget laptop might do better than a high-end one.

➔ For gifts, headphones, smart-home gadgets or accessories often deliver good value for money.

➔ Read the fine print, as sometimes free “bundles” involve subscriptions or conditions that change value or even lock you into a certain plan.

➔ Get rid of the “buying because it is cheap” mentality. Only buy if you really need or will use the gadget.



PC hardware and laptops are popular during end-year holiday sales.

bundling with streaming-service subscriptions or accessories, making them appealing gifts.

➔ Gaming consoles and accessories

Consoles, gaming headsets, controllers and recent games spike in popularity around holidays. The younger crowd often see this period as ideal to grab gaming gear at discounted prices.

➔ Headphones and earbuds

Due to the widespread demand for affordable and premium headphones among students, commuters and remote workers alike, retailers highlight deals on noise-cancelling, wireless or budget-friendly models.

SLEEK CAMERAS

Fujifilm Instax Mini LiPlay+
Price: RM938

First selfie camera in the instax lineup and functions as both an instant camera and a Bluetooth smartphone printer. Users can preview shots on the LCD, record short voice clips that print as QR codes and try simple creative tools like layered photo mode and the sound album. It also launches with the new soft glitter mini film for a subtle gold-accent look.

Fujifilm X-T30III
Price: RM4,248

The camera updates the compact mirrorless series with faster processing, AI subject detection autofocus and support for high-resolution video up to 6.2K/30P. It maintains a lightweight 378g body and adds a film simulation dial with 20 film looks, including Reala Ace and Nostalgic Neg. Other core features include a tilting LCD, pop-up flash and wireless connectivity to instax Link printers for quick printing.

DJI Osmo Action 6
Price: RM2,079

An action camera built around a new 1/1.1-inch square CMOS sensor with up to 13.5 stops of dynamic range and a variable aperture from f/2.0 to f/4.0, DJI's first in this category. It records up to 4K/120fps, supports 10-bit D-Log M and introduces 4K Custom Mode for flexible reframing. Low-light performance improves with fused 2.4 μm pixels, SuperNight mode and better noise handling. The camera is waterproof to 20m, operates at -20°C and includes 50GB internal storage.

Canon EOS R6 Mark III
Price: RM10,999

A full-frame mirrorless camera built for higher resolution, faster shooting and better subject tracking. Its 32.5MP sensor captures finer detail, while continuous shooting reaches up to 40fps with the electronic shutter. A pre-continuous capture mode records frames before the shutter is fully pressed, helping freeze decisive moments. Autofocus improvements offer stronger subject detection, including priority tracking for registered people. For video, the camera records up to 7k Raw internally, supports 3:2 open gate, Canon Log 2 and Log 3, and includes monitoring tools such as waveform, zebras and false colour.

THE Asean Live Creators for Change Programme, supported by TikTok Live and delivered by the Asean Foundation, brought together young creators from across Southeast Asia to be empowered and explore one shared question: what happens when purpose meets platform?

This year's top three creators, including two Malaysians Jhonatan Yuditya Pratama and Mohd Firdaus Ruslan, each championed a different missions yet equally meaningful, delivering a powerful impact on their community. Through their lenses, they show how TikTok Live can serve as a classroom, a cultural bridge and a space where identity is celebrated once more.

Jhonatan: Carrying Dayak culture into digital spotlight

As the first-place winner, Jhonatan shines a spotlight on his Dayak heritage from Borneo, Kalimantan – not as a distant tradition, but as values that shape daily life. This sentiment strongly echoes across East Malaysian communities, where culture is lived and not staged.

M'sia celebrates big wins at Asean Live Creators for Change

➤ How TikTok Live continues to be central to creators who educate, inspire, honour culture

His sincerity paid off. During his Gawai Dayak live session, over 16,000 viewers tuned in to watch parades and exhibitions showcasing traditional Dayak dances while actively engaging in the comment section. He calls it a moment of collective pride, which is not only for himself, but for his community.

What makes him distinct is the way he frames culture not as an artefact, but as a lived rhythm. His viewers learn the meaning behind traditions, not just the visuals. "I want people to feel the culture,

not just see it," he said.

The programme strengthened his belief that digital platforms can help preserve heritage while empowering communities and MSMEs.

"The programme has been such a powerful reminder that creativity is not just entertainment, but empowerment," he emphasised.

His mission is clear: bridge Dayak culture with modern storytelling tools, while keeping originality and authenticity at the centre.

Sir Pedot: Making education digitally accessible for Malaysians

Third-place winner Firdaus, better known online as Sir Pedot or #YourTikTokLecturer, began content creation with a simple intention: to make knowledge more digitally accessible for students. As a lecturer, he saw gaps that traditional syllabuses often miss, such as scholarships, digital literacy, public speaking, academic preparation, and even cultural understanding across Asean.

He scaled across thousands, by bringing these conversations into TikTok Live with an approach that feels like a personalised mentoring session. One quiet moment confirmed the value of what he was doing: a student messaged saying they finally understood a concept after watching his live. For Firdaus, this became proof that educational content is not just "possible" on TikTok where it can shift confidence, direction and opportunity.

Through the programme, he learned to structure sessions more intentionally, read audience insights, and stay consistent even when numbers fluctuate.

"Going live takes courage. The training made me more focused. Now I create with clarity," he said.

His mission: build a generation that adapts, learns and steps forward with confidence and resilience. Through this, he also recognises the broader impact of digital communities and cross-regional collaboration, as he mentioned in the interview: "The programme provides a meaningful opportunity not only for creators, but also for audiences across Southeast Asia to access quality educational content."

Creators, missions — One shared momentum

These creators show how TikTok Live can be a practical space for sharing culture, knowledge and community.

"The programme inspires creativity and brings joy. We are heartened to see these creators harness TikTok Live as a powerful and authentic space for spreading knowledge, preserving cultures and keeping local languages alive. Digital storytelling on TikTok Live offers us a window to the world, and is a powerful tool to spotlight and celebrate the rich diversity of Southeast Asia," said Chanida Klyphun, director of public policy for TikTok, Southeast Asia.

The Asean Live Creators for Change Programme, initiated from October 2024 until August 2025, is an Asean Foundation and TikTok initiative that equipped 18 creators across Southeast Asia with mentorship, funding and tools to host impactful TikTok live sessions on Asean sociocultural issues and awareness.

Through the programme, participants gained practical skills from improving technical setups to planning consistent content and understanding their audiences more deeply. These foundations help them carry their missions forward with greater confidence and impact, curating responsible digital influence and strengthening youth-led storytelling in an increasingly connected Asean community.

"Through our partnership with TikTok Live, Asean Foundation continues to nurture young creators who use digital platforms for positive impact including fostering learning, inclusivity and cultural appreciation across the region," said Dr Piti Srisangnam, executive director of Asean Foundation.



Jhonatan (second from left) and Firdaus (fifth from left) celebrate their achievements alongside representatives from Asean Foundation during the awarding ceremony held at Asean SEDP 4.0 Regional Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand.

Non-cash payment methods become predominant choice among locals

NON-CASH payments continue to rise, with nearly three out of five Malaysians using digital payments in 2025, led by e-wallet usage (+14 percentage point from last year) and followed by online bank transfer (+12 percentage point), according to an Ipsos study: "Non-Cash Economy & The Role of E-wallets".

This shift reflects growing trust in digital payment platforms and a stronger preference for faster, more rewarding payment options.

E-wallets are particularly favoured by younger individuals, catering to their need for speed and convenience.

In contrast, the 35–44 age group shows a notable shift toward online bank transfers, with a significant 11% increase in use of digital platforms. This trend highlights a broader evolution in consumer payment preferences, driven by varying lifestyle requirements across generations.

E-wallet use in food and beverage outlets shows the fastest growth, reflecting a strong shift toward cashless everyday dining.

Retail, tolls and parking also record steady gains, while food delivery,

online shopping, bill payments and transfers keep rising thanks to convenience and digital habits.

Overall, e-wallets evolve beyond convenience and become a trusted part of daily spending – online and offline.

E-wallets remain part of Malaysians' daily routines, though usage dips slightly as new users build habits and some payments shift to transfer via online bank.

Despite more providers in the market, most people rely on just one or two e-wallets. Experienced users stick to their preferred options, using them for trusted and rewarding transactions.

Generally, the market matures as consumers become more selective in how they go cashless.

Touch 'n Go retains its dominant position as the most widely used e-wallet, while MAE remains second despite the past three months show a decrease in usage.

People across different demographics show increase usage of MAE, notably those aged 35–44 years old and living in the northern regions.

In 2025, convenience remains a

key factor driving user satisfaction in online payments, even though the use of e-wallets declines from the previous year.

Malaysia's digital payment landscape continues to expand in step with the nation's broader push toward digital economy. The total value of e-money transactions reached RM21.5 billion in May 2025, up 70% year-on-year, driven by Bank Negara Malaysia's (BNM) cashless initiatives and the wider rollout of DuitNow QR among merchants. This growth underscores how digital payments have become a key part of everyday financial life.

"The latest survey shows that e-wallet usage remains strong, with over half of Malaysians opting for digital payments. While daily and weekly use has eased slightly, monthly and occasional usage have increased, showing a reliance that is steady. About 54% of users continue to use e-wallets for daily transactions across dining, retail, tolls and parking, while online purchases, bill payments and money transfers reflect growing trust in digital convenience. Touch 'n Go continues to lead the e-wallet



Transactions are more accessible now, at everyone's fingertips. – 123RF/PC

market by a significant margin," said Ipsos Malaysia country manager Arun Menon.

MAE has consolidated its role as a leading competitor, retaining second position and appealing to close to half of all users.

Overall reliance on e-wallets remains steady, reflecting

Malaysians' growing trust in digital payments and the country's shift toward a cashless economy. As usage expands, strong safeguards around security, data protection and system reliability remain essential. BNM regulatory role will be key to keeping the ecosystem safe, inclusive and resilient.

GEN Z may be easy prey for cybercriminals, due to their more active usage of privacy tools compared to any other generation. Between October 2024 and September 2025, Kaspersky detected more than 15 million attempted attacks disguised as VPN applications.

Instead of protecting users, these fake or cracked VPNs often deliver malware and potentially unwanted software – from downloaders and adware to trojans capable of stealing data and granting attackers remote access.

According to research findings, Gen Z uses VPNs, encryption tools, anonymous browsers and other privacy-enhancing technologies twice as often as older age groups. Growing up in the era of data leaks, algorithmic tracking and hyper-connected social platforms has made them far more aware of how fragile online privacy can be. VPNs and anonymous browsers have become essential for shielding personal data, securing public Wi-Fi use and protecting online identities.

But this shift comes with an unexpected danger: in their pursuit of safety, many young users may turn to free, cracked or counterfeit VPN applications – tools that look protective on the surface but actually expose them to risk that is significantly greater. Between October 2024 and September 2025, Kaspersky experts detected more than 15 million attempted attacks disguised as various VPN applications.

In the observed period, the most common threats targeting users were dominated by three categories of malware and potentially unwanted software. AdWare led the list with 284,261 cases, continuing to disrupt users through intrusive ads, unwanted redirects and aggressive tracking. Trojans followed closely with 234,283 detections, posing a serious danger due to their ability to steal data and enable full remote control of compromised systems.

Downloader-type threats ranked third with 197,707 detected cases, reflecting their role as a key entry point for installing additional malicious payloads on victims' devices.

Kaspersky researchers also identified phishing pages that imitate login portals for well-known VPN

15m attempted cybercrime attacks masquerading as VPNs

Hidden risk behind Gen Z's privacy pursuit

services. These sites trick users into entering their credentials, putting them at risk of losing access to their VPN accounts – and potentially to many others, if the same password is reused across platforms. What is

particularly notable is how similar these phishing pages look to one another, suggesting they were generated using phishing kits that allow attackers to mass-produce convincing, ready-made fraudulent

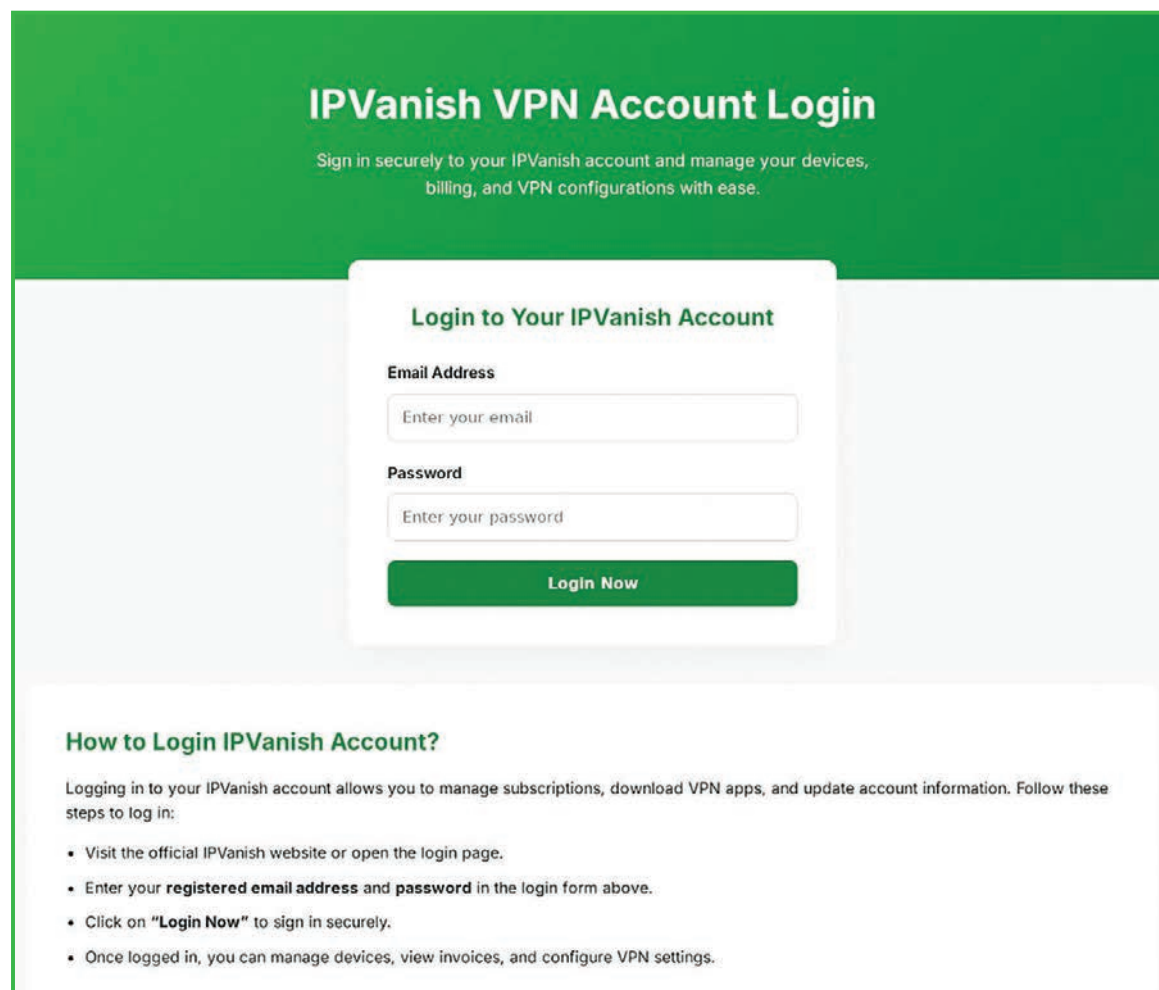
pages with minimal effort.

“Gen Z may be privacy-aware, but they are also pragmatic and often driven by convenience. This behaviour is easily exploited by cybercriminals as it creates an opening for entry. Attackers may deliberately push pirated versions of ‘premium’ VPN services and create apps that mimic the names and

designs of well-known privacy brands. As a result, young users who genuinely believe they are strengthening their privacy may, in reality, be handing over access to their devices and personal information directly to attackers,” said Kaspersky security expert Evgeny Kuskov.

Take the following steps:

- ➔ Download VPNs only from official stores or trusted developers. Official marketplaces apply security checks that significantly reduce the risk of encountering malicious or modified apps. Third-party websites, on the other hand, often distribute counterfeit versions that can infect devices or steal data.
- ➔ Avoid “cracked” or modified apps. Even if they promise premium features for free, malware is majorly sourced from these versions. Attackers frequently embed spyware, keyloggers or backdoors into cracked VPNs, turning a tool of privacy into a tool of surveillance.
- ➔ When selecting a VPN, check independent reviews. For example, in AV-Test’s 2025 evaluation, Kaspersky VPN Secure Connection ranked highest with a score of 94/100 – confirming its performance and reliable protection.
- ➔ Check permissions before installing. Unusual permissions – such as access to contacts, microphone or geolocation – are a warning sign for any privacy-focused app. There are indicators that denote that the app is not legitimate, such as low download numbers or suspiciously repetitive reviews.
- ➔ Use a reliable security solution that contains a VPN function, protecting your devices against malware in real time by blocking malicious sites, phishing emails, infected ads and credit card skimmers created by hackers to steal your data.



Example of a phishing page disguised as popular VPN.

‘Rage bait’ wins Oxford’s word of 2025

“RAGE BAIT”, the slang term describing online content designed to elicit anger and drive internet traffic, has been crowned 2025’s word of the year, Oxford University Press (OUP) announced recently.

It said the word – chosen through a combination of public voting, sentiment and analysis of OUP’s “lexical data” – had “captured our emotions” this year.

Casper Grathwohl, president of OUP’s languages division, said the growing use of such words “reveal how digital platforms are reshaping our thinking and behaviour”.

“It feels like the natural progression in an ongoing conversation about what it means to be human in a tech-driven world – and the extremes of online culture,” he added in a statement.

Oxford defines “rage bait” as “online content deliberately designed to elicit anger or outrage by being frustrating, provocative or offensive,

typically posted” in order to increase web traffic or engagement.

It beat out fellow shortlisted contenders “aura farming” and “biohack”.

The former was described as “the cultivation of an impressive, attractive or charismatic persona or public image by behaving or presenting oneself in a way intended subtly to convey an air of confidence, coolness or mystique”.

Meanwhile biohacking is an attempt “to improve or optimise one’s physical or mental performance, health, longevity or wellbeing by altering one’s diet, exercise routine or lifestyle, or by using other means such as drugs, supplements or technological devices”.

More than 30,000 people worldwide voted over three days for their preferred winner, according to OUP.

Its final choice was also supported by evidence of “real language usage”,

after its experts tracked the use of the shortlisted words throughout the year via “a 30-billion-word corpus of international language data”.

It is the fourth consecutive year that the public have played a part in picking Oxford’s word of the year, after an inaugural public vote in 2022 saw “goblin mode” prevail.

In that instance, the public were given the chance to choose the overall winner, opting for the term describing “unapologetically self-indulgent, lazy, slovenly or greedy” behaviour.

Voting has played only a part in the choices, which have included 2023’s “rizz” – a colloquial term defined as “style, charm or attractiveness” – and last year’s “brain rot”, in subsequent years.

Previous words of the year chosen solely by Oxford lexicographers include “vax” (2021), “climate emergency” (2019) and “selfie” (2013). – AFP



The winning word is chosen through a combination of public voting, sentiment and an analysis of OUP’s lexical data. – 123RFPIIC

Rubini opens acting space to diverse Tamil speakers

➤ *Blues* brings poetry, realism to Malaysian film noir, adding substance to flair



Emerging as a powerful voice in Malaysian Tamil cinema, Rubini (right) challenges long held ideas of what a Malaysian Indian actress should sound like.



Rubini (left) and Karnan Gcrack in a scene from *Blues*, released last week.
– PICS FROM INSTAGRAM @SKYZEN STUDIOS



The third installation in Shanjay's filmverse, *Blues* is anticipated to mark an important shift in Malaysian Tamil filmmaking.

RUBINI SAMBANTHAN is emerging as a powerful new voice in Malaysian Tamil cinema, not only for her performances but for challenging long held ideas of what a Malaysian Indian actress should sound like.

The actress and former beauty queen, who gained attention through Astro Vinmeen's *Aadhira*, will next appear as Peggy in *Blues*, the sequel to the acclaimed film *Jagat*. The role, she said, became deeply personal because of her concerns about language.

"I really thought I would not get the role. But when the offer came, I felt awakened. Someone like me who speaks Tamil differently also deserves space on screen," she told Bernama.

Rubini said the opportunity reflects the lived reality of many Malaysian Indians.

"There are a lot of us out there and we deserve to be seen and taken seriously. Speaking differently does not make us any less Indian."

She described Peggy as "a beautiful chaos, flawed, honest and deeply human" and said the character allowed her to bring her own experiences into the performance.

"People like me exist and our stories should be represented," she said.

Rubini, who began acting in the Malay film and television industry in 2019, made her Tamil industry debut in *Aadhira*, directed by R Azizan. The series deals with domestic abuse and she said the role required intense mental preparation.

"For me, the mental preparation was the most crucial part. Some scenes cut very deep, so I constantly reminded myself that this is a role and not my reality," she said.

Filming the first physical abuse scene, she said, was the most overwhelming. "I felt the weight of every woman who's been through that kind of pain, so I couldn't stop shaking or crying."

She added that the director and crew helped her remain grounded.

Working with *Jagat's* director Shanjhey Kumar Perumal on *Blues* was another milestone for her. "His passion is contagious. He touches reality but keeps it poetic," she said.

Rubini believes the shared universe of *Jagat*, *Macai* and *Blues* marks an important shift in Malaysian Tamil filmmaking.

"It proves our voices are not small. Our stories deserve their own universe," she said.

Despite holding a degree in Finance and Accounting, Rubini said her creative path grew through modelling and pageantry. She represented Malaysia at Miss International 2014, placed first runner up at Miss Tourism Sri Lanka 2016 and was a finalist on *Asia's Next Top Model* (Season 6).

Born in Kajang, Selangor, she is the second of three siblings. "I started working at 15, selling ice cream in a supermarket. If a small town girl like me can do it, others can too," she said.

Blues, released last Thursday, carries strong emotional weight for her. "It mirrors lives that often go unnoticed. If people walk away feeling something, then we have done our job. *Blues* will always stay close to my heart," she said.

Lokaloko 2026 set to unite Indonesia, Malaysia through KL concert

PRIMED to start the new year with new music, Lokaloko 2026 is set to kick off on Jan 24, 2026 at Zepp Kuala Lumpur by bringing together the vibrant sounds of Malaysia and Indonesia on one stage.

More than just a concert, it is set to be a shared musical experience that brings people together. The concert will run in two sessions, each with its own energy and character.

Lokaloko 2026's first segment begins at 3pm and will feature Butterfingers, the grunge-driven band that needs no introduction, now returning to rock the stage once again. Known for tracks such as *The Chemistry (Between Us)* and *Faculties of the Mind*, the band remains a symbol of the golden era of Malaysia's 90s alternative music scene.

The concert will showcase a special performance by the talented singer-songwriter Amir Jahari, a Kuching-born artiste known for his soulful voice and emotionally driven songs, such as *Hasrat* and *Tanpamu (Re-Imagine feat Nana SHEME)*.

This fusion of two generations is expected to deliver an extraordinary musical experience, where the rock spirit of Butterfingers blends with the acoustic soul of Amir to take the audience on



Butterfingers from Malaysia will be taking the stage during the first half of Lokaloko concert.

a journey filled with nostalgia and emotion.

From 8pm onwards, the evening will bring a fresh, upbeat vibe with Indonesia's retro-pop sensation The Lantis. Captivating listeners with viral hits such as *Lampu Merah* and *Bunga Maaf*, the band is known for its infusion of the 70s to 80s

into modern pop.

Sharing the stage with the band is Malaysia's own Fugo. Known for its nu-vintage identity and artistic creativity, the band's music, such as *Pentas Sandiwara* and *99*, have showcased its international sound and musical direction.



Indonesia's The Lantis is set to rock the stage during the second half of Lokaloko.

Lokaloko aims to be more than a concert. Positioning itself as one of 2026's earliest concerts, it seeks to be a platform where established musicians and rising talents can come together to create new memories for an audience of all ages.

Tickets are priced from RM148.

A cancer diagnosis can be overwhelming, but there is more reason for hope than ever before. Advances in medical science have transformed what was once a devastating illness into one where survival and recovery are increasingly possible.

At the heart of this progress is technology that not only delivers new treatments but also help doctors make the right diagnosis from the very start.

Malaysia faces an escalating cancer burden that is significant. The lifetime risk has risen to one in eight, projecting that one person in every eight may be diagnosed with cancer by the age of 75. This increase is mirrored in the overall caseload, which has more than doubled between 2006 (21,773 cases) and 2025 (56,932 cases). Crucially, the latest reports indicate that the majority of cases are still caught too late, with 65.1% now detected at Stage 3 or 4 (an increase from 63.7% previously).

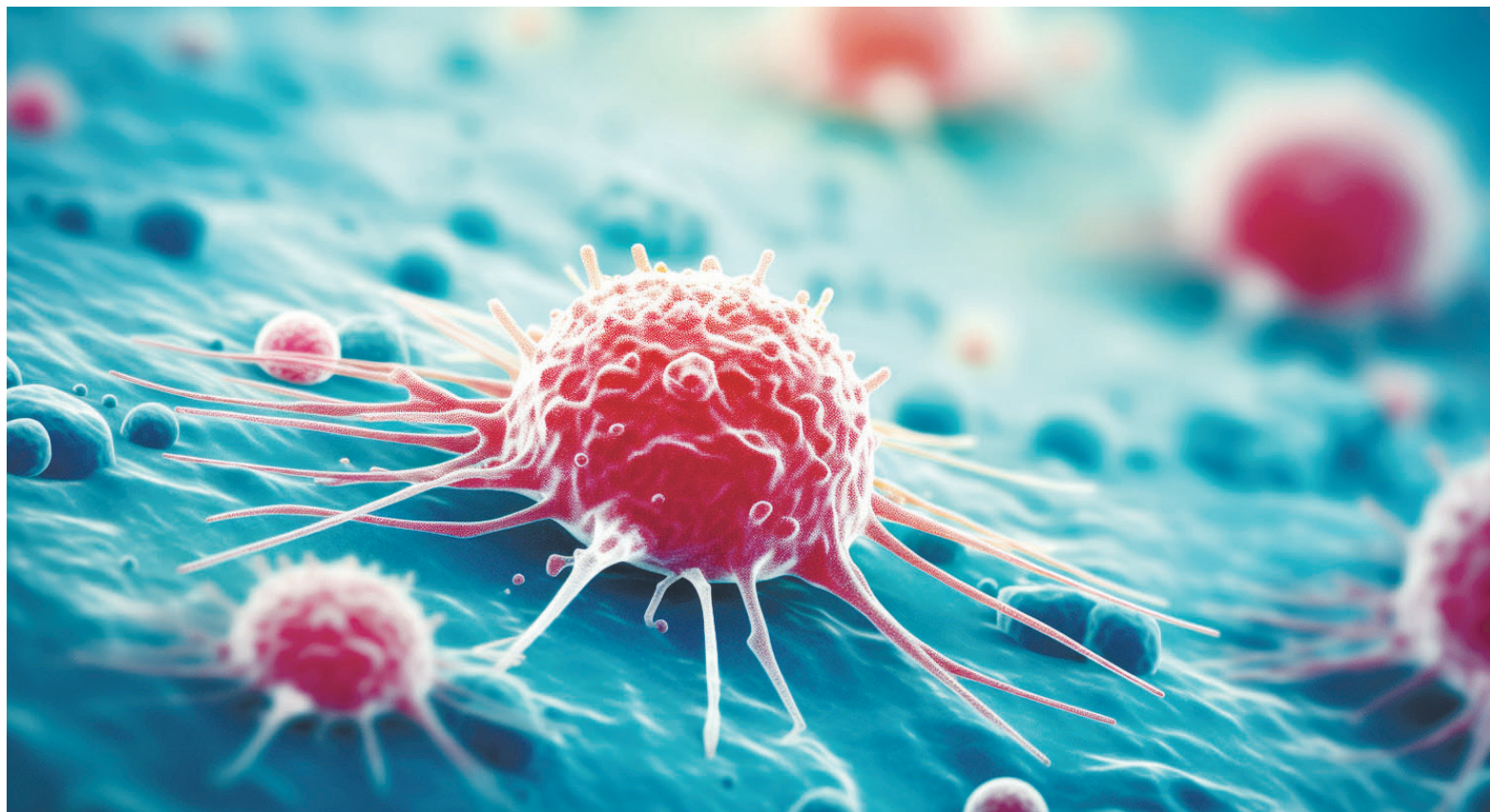
The first step in treating cancer is often the most critical. When a patient is suspected of having blood cancer, doctors must determine the type and severity of the disease, precisely. The difference between one subtype and another can completely change the course of treatment. A correct diagnosis at the start ensures the patient receives the most effective therapy, while a wrong or delayed diagnosis could cost valuable time.

Getting it right the first time is crucial. The tools that medical centres have today allow them to see deeper into the disease than ever before, so they can choose treatments that are best suited for each individual.

While traditional methods like blood tests and microscopic examination remain important, modern technology offers far greater precision. In earlier decades, doctors relied mainly on these basic checks and today, they are complemented by molecular tools that are sophisticated.

For instance, techniques can now identify whether cancer cells are of B-cell or T-cell origin. More critically, cytogenetic testing and next-generation sequencing (NGS) allow doctors to detect specific gene mutations and chromosomal abnormalities, which not only confirm the malignancy type but also provide critical prognostic information and target treatment.

Imaging modalities such as PET-CT and MRI scans as well as specific tumour markers further refined by enabling precise identification of disease subtypes such as diffuse large B-cell lymphoma, mantle cell



Macro view of a cancerous tumour cell that is attacking the body. – 123RF/PIC

Transforming cancer care

➤ Why right diagnosis matters most

lymphoma or FLT3-mutated acute myeloid leukaemia. This level of diagnostic precision ensures that patients receive more accurate risk stratification and individualised management plans.

Precision medicine in action

In the case of a 29-year-old man who first came in complaining of lower back pain, his initial blood work looked nearly normal, but it hinted at an underlying issue. A follow-up blood smear revealed the presence of abnormal, immature cells, leading to a bone marrow biopsy that strongly suggested Acute Myeloid Leukaemia (AML).

Since traditional genetic tests did not reveal any major chromosomal clues, he turned to NGS. This step confirmed the AML diagnosis but also identified a key genetic flaw, the FLT3-ITD mutation. This vital information did more than just finalise the diagnosis, it provided clear, personalised targets for his treatment.

At tertiary hospitals with a one-

stop cancer centre, NGS testing is supported by a team of pathologists and laboratory specialists who work closely with haematologists, oncologists, surgeons and other cancer specialists in multidisciplinary tumour boards.

This team-based approach ensures every patient benefits from comprehensive, state-of-the-art diagnostics and a tailored management plan. Most importantly, it provides timely access to accurate diagnosis and precision medicine that targets cancer mutations, leading to better outcomes and fewer side effects.

Beyond adult cancers: lifeline for children

These advances are transforming outcomes for children as well. Technologies like NGS have enabled doctors to diagnose childhood cancers with greater accuracy and intervene much earlier.

Cancer remains a formidable challenge, but with innovations, it is no longer the hopeless fight it once

was. Today, childhood cancer is highly treatable, and with the right care, many children go on to live full and healthy lives.

In the 1990s, survival rates had risen above 80% and today, cure rates for all have reached more than 90%.

With treatment options available at high cure rates, early and accurate intervention is crucial and can make all the difference. Parents are encouraged to seek timely medical care and ensure children receive the full support they need. Every child's case is unique, which is why treatment plans are tailored to their individual needs. Depending on the diagnosis, this may include a combination of chemotherapy, surgery, radiation therapy or transplantation.

Future of cancer care

Cancer care is moving from a "one-size-fits-all" approach to a highly personalised, precision-based model designed for each patient's unique disease specifically. Though chemotherapy continues to be used, there has been a shift towards targeted and immune-based

therapies.

The rise of targeted therapy, immunotherapy, CAR T-cell therapy and stem cell transplantation offers targeted alternatives. These innovations bring real hope to patients, families and their success depends on an accurate diagnosis from the very start.

Looking ahead, innovations such as AI-assisted diagnostics, digital pathology and broader access to genetic testing are expected to further transform cancer care in Malaysia.

Cancer remains one of Malaysia's greatest health challenges, but the landscape is shifting. Breakthroughs in medicine and early, accurate detection are transforming cancer care, ensuring the right treatment at the right time, paving the way for more patients to not only survive but truly thrive.

This article is contributed by Subang Jaya Medical Centre consultant haematologist Dr Tan Sen Mui and consultant paediatrician & paediatric haematologist-oncologist Dr Chan Lee Lee.

M'sia registers first genetic pathology specialists in key healthcare reform

MALAYSIA has registered its first Genetic Pathology specialists, marking a significant milestone in the healthcare reforms set out by the amended Medical Act 1971, announced Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

In a statement recently, Dzulkefly explained that the registration in November followed the formal recognition and inclusion of Universiti Sains Malaysia's Master of Pathology (Medical Genetics) programme in the Fourth Schedule of the amended Act.

This development, he said, resolves a long-standing legal ambiguity and finally provides

clarity for graduates, universities and the healthcare system.

Dzulkefly noted that since taking office in late 2023, a key priority has been to resolve inconsistencies in specialist recognition and to strengthen the governance of specialist training programmes.

"The amendments to the Medical Act, passed by Parliament in July 2024 and enforced through the Medical Regulations signed in July 2025, represent the fastest legislative reform ever undertaken by Health Ministry.

"These reforms have created a strong legal foundation to ensure that every specialist, whether

trained through the ministry's Parallel Pathway programmes or through Master's programmes at local universities, can be recognised fairly and transparently," he said.

He said this latest development demonstrates how the amendments benefit not only trainees in the Parallel Pathway but also bolster recognition for graduates of local Master's programmes.

He also welcomed the formal acknowledgement of Health Ministry as an official training provider under the Medical (Amendment) Act 2024 (Act A1729).

He said this legal regularisation ensures that both the Parallel

Pathway Specialist Training Programmes and Master's programmes conducted within Health Ministry's hospitals are fully compliant and in order.

Previous milestones this year included the registration of cardiothoracic surgeons from the Parallel Pathway, who hold the Fellowship of the Royal College of Surgeons of Edinburgh, in August.

The ministry also introduced the Pre-Gazette Specialist Incentive Payment, a monthly allowance of up to RM2,800 for medical officers gaining supervised work experience.

Furthermore, Dzulkefly added

that the ministry has established a formal comparability evaluation mechanism, enabling Malaysian doctors trained abroad, whose qualifications are not listed in the Fourth Schedule, to be properly assessed and registered by the Malaysian Medical Council.

"These reforms are fully aligned with the Malaysia Health White Paper. By regularising specialist registration and enhancing processes related to specialist recognition and training, we are delivering on the paper's vision of a transparent, accountable, and future-ready healthcare system," he said. – Bernama



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- Responsible for Finance audit and tax matters.
- Oversee the recruitment and selection process to attract, recruit and retain talents.
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MS. Anne Lim
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322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR
COMPANIES WINDING UP
NO. WA-28NCC-1163-11/2025

In the matter of the Companies Act 2016
AND
In the matter of Section 465(1)(e) and Section 466 of the Companies Act 2016

AND
In the matter of Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

AND
In the matter of TF PARKING SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201901036289 [1345619-M])

BETWEEN
ABSEC VENTURES SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201801029645 [1291671-D])

...PETITIONER
AND
TF PARKING SDN. BHD. (Company No. 201901036289 [1345619-M])

...RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a petition for Winding-Up of the above-named Company by the High Court was, on 4th day of November 2025, presented by Absec Ventures Sdn. Bhd. (Company No. 201801029645 [1291671-D]) and that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the court sitting at Kuala Lumpur High Court at 9.00 o'clock in the morning, on the 20th day of January 2026; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at Absec Ventures Sdn. Bhd. of 2-2-23J (2nd Floor), Wisma Rampai, Jalan 34/26, Taman Sri Rampai, 53300 Setapak, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur.

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs. Hisham, Chong & Co. of D-9-8, 8th Floor, Block D, Megan Avenue 1, 189, Jalan Tun Razak, 50400 Kuala Lumpur.

Dated this 3rd December 2025

-sgd-

MESSRS. HISHAM, CHONG & CO.

Solicitors for the Petitioner

Note- Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or sent by post to the abovementioned Petitioner's Solicitors, Messrs. Hisham, Chong & Co. notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or her solicitor (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovementioned not later than 12.00 o'clock noon of the 19th day of January 2026 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition).

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT SHAH ALAM
IN THE STATE OF SELANGOR DARUL EHSAN, MALAYSIA
(COMMERCIAL DIVISION)
COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) PETITION
NO.: BA-28NCC-783-11/2025

In the Matter of Section 465(1)(e) and Section 466(1)(a) of the Companies Act, 2016

And
In the matter of OCR PROPERTIES (KUANTAN) SDN BHD (Company No. 1226161-P)

And
In the Matter of Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

BETWEEN
FOONG LI TRADING SDN BHD (Company No. 565071-A)

... PETITIONER
AND
OCR PROPERTIES (KUANTAN) SDN BHD (Company No. 1226161-P)

... RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a petition for the winding-up of the abovementioned Company by the High Court at Shah Alam was, on the 13th November 2025 presented to the said Court by Foong Li Trading Sdn Bhd of 20-2, Jalan Temenggung 13/9, Sek. 9, Bandar Mahkota Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

And that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at the High Court of Malaya at Shah Alam at 9.30 o'clock in the forenoon on the 13th February 2026; and any creditor or contributory of the said Company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself for his Counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at 20-2, Jalan Temenggung 13/9, Sek. 9, Bandar Mahkota Cheras, 43000 Kajang, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

The Petitioner's Solicitors are Messrs Liaw & Partners of E-07-01, Block E, Plaza Mont Kiara, No. 2, Jalan Kiara, Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur.

Dated this 3rd December 2025.

t.t.

Messrs Liaw & Partners

Solicitors for the Petitioner abovementioned

NOTE: Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said petition must serve on or send by post to the abovementioned Messrs Liaw & Partners of E-07-01, Block E, Plaza Mont Kiara, No. 2, Jalan Kiara, Mont Kiara, 50480 Kuala Lumpur, a notice in writing of his intention to do so. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or her Solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovementioned not later than twelve o'clock noon on 12th February 2026.

[REF:LPJIT.033.24(H)]

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT KUALA LUMPUR
IN THE FEDERAL TERRITORY OF KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA
COMPANIES WINDING UP NO.:
WA-28NCC-1267-12/2025

In the matter of Section 465 (1) (e) of the Companies Act 2016, the provisions of the Companies Act 2016 and the Companies (Winding-up) Rules 1972

AND
In the matter of Milligen Sdn. Bhd. (Company No.: 201501041768 [1167089-D])

BETWEEN
PERBADANAN USAHAWAN NASIONAL BERHAD (COMPANY NO.: 199101010745 [221057-V])

PETITIONER
AND
MILLIGEN SDN. BHD. (formerly known as "MILLENNIAL GEN SDN. BHD.") (COMPANY NO.: 201501041768 [1167089-D])

... RESPONDENT

ADVERTISEMENT OF PETITION

NOTICE is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of the abovementioned Company by the High Court at Kuala Lumpur was on the 1st of December 2025 presented to the said Court by Perbadanan Usahawan Nasional Berhad. And that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the High Court of Insolvency sitting at Kuala Lumpur on Thursday the 5th day of February 2026 at 9.00 o'clock in the forenoon and any creditor or contributory of the said company desirous to support or oppose the making of an order on the said Petition may appear at the time of hearing by himself or his Counsel for that purpose and a copy of the Petition will be furnished to any Creditor or contributory of the said Company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at 7th Floor, Block 1B, Plaza Sentral, Jalan Stesen Sentral 5, Kuala Lumpur Sentral, 50470 Kuala Lumpur.

The Petitioner's Solicitor is Messrs. Kama & Wan, whose address is at 1-1-1, Jalan Medan PB 1A, Seksyen 9, 43650 Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan.

Messrs. Kama & Wan
Solicitor for the Petitioner

NOTE: Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or send by post to the abovementioned Messrs. Kama & Wan, notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm and must be signed by the person or firm or his or her Solicitors (if any) and must be served, or if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovementioned not later than 12:00 o'clock in the noon of the 4th of February 2026.

This Advertisement is filed by Messrs. Kama & Wan, Advocate & Solicitor on behalf of Petitioner of No. 1-1-1, Jalan Medan PB 1A, Seksyen 9, 43650 Bandar Baru Bangi, Selangor Darul Ehsan. (Tel: 03 89221485) (E-mail: wankamawan@gmail.com) (Ref. No.: LP/IZZ/PUNB/MGSB/24629(FZ))

322 Notices

Pickles Auctions

Bank Repossessed bikes and cars for sale by auction. Auctions are conducted via eBidding on **Wednesday - 10 December** from 9.05am onwards. All are invited to join our **PUBLIC AUCTION**. Viewing inspection on **Tuesday - 9 December** at 9.30am - 5.30pm. All unsold bank repossessed vehicles will be re-auctioned on the following Wednesday until the vehicles are sold. Download Pickles Auctions app to view all auction listings or visit www.pickles.my

Reg no	Make/Model	Reserve	Reg no	Make/Model	Reserve	Reg no	Make/Model	Reserve
JNX6028	2012 PROTON PERSONA 1.6L (A)	10000	DEQ9782	2023 YAMAHA Y15ZR	5000	VKY5247	2023 PROTON X50 1.5 FLAGSHIP	41000
AJF9630	2013 PERODUA PREVUE 1.6L CVT	10000	JVL6553	2022 HONDA CBR150R ABS	5000	DCR118	2010 TOYOTA VELLFIRE	45000
VEN4937	2010 HONDA CITY 1.5L I-VTEC	17500	MDC 9802	2018 YAMAHA EGO AVANTIZ	1500	VEF 1514	2019 AUDI Q2 1.4 TFSI	70000
CEK5669	2021 MITSUBISHI TRITON 2.4L VGT (M)	56000	PMR5526	2016 PROTON SAGA FL 1.3	6000	Y1003	2018 MINI COOPER S COUNTRYMAN	75000
DCX2907	2016 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5 E (A)	10000	W825P	2014 PERODUA MYVI 1.3 SXI (M)	7000	VLD3847	2019 MERCEDES-BENZ A180	100000
VW4660	2017 PERODUA PERSONA 1.6L CVT	13500	VKR4166	2014 PROTON IRIZ 1.6L CVT	7000	VA828	2016 TOYOTA ALPHARD 2.5SC	110000
VAW6912	2017 PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 X (A)	23500	WY2705	2013 NISSAN ALMERA 1.5E (A)	9000	VXL3975	2022 TOYOTA ALPHARD 2.5 SC	175000
SWM7632	2025 YAMAHA Y15ZR	6500	JQS1507	2015 PERODUA AXIA 1.0 AV	13000	VGB6564	2021 ISUZU NPR70	65000
SD673X	2024 YAMAHA 135LC	5500	BMP3398	2014 PERODUA MYVI 1.3 EZI (A)	14000	VFT8204	PERODUA MYVI	TBA
MDW593	2024 YAMAHA Y15ZR	6000	JSS8406	2018 PERODUA AXIA 1.0 G (A)	15000	VKE1695	DAIHATSU GRAN MAX	TBA
JYV8063	2022 YAMAHA 135LC	4000	BND 1113	2015 NISSAN TEANA 2.0XE CVT	15000	VKE1606	PERODUA MYVI	TBA
VMM2189	2024 YAMAHA Y15ZR	5500	WXE8724	2012 HONDA CIVIC 1.8S	15000	VMC9253	2024 MERCEDES-BENZ GLC300	314400
NDY6804	2023 HONDA VARIO 125	3500	JRP9573	2016 PERODUA MYVI 1.5 SE	16000	JJM68	2022 MERCEDES-BENZ E200	202400
SMQ2533	2025 YAMAHA NVX	10000	NDJ2658	2018 PERODUA MYVI 1.3 X (A)	18000	VJW2791	2022 MERCEDES-BENZ GLA 200	166500
JXQ2470	2024 YAMAHA NVX STANDARD -155CC	9000	JSP1967	2018 PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 X (A)	20000	AMN94	2022 MERCEDES-BENZ EQS 450+	210000
JVW6397	2022 YAMAHA 135LC FI STANDARD	4000	BPA5514	2016 PERODUA MYVI 1.5 SE (A)	21000	BRD3268	2022 MERCEDES-BENZ EQC 400	145000
BRG4312	2023 HONDA BEAT	3000	JSL9902	2017 PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 X (A)	21500	JUV60	2021 MERCEDES-BENZ E300	189000
BQD4710	2020 YAMAHA YZF-R15 (YZF155)	3000	VCM4620	2018 PERODUA BEZZA 1.3 X (A)	21500	TCP1899	2022 MERCEDES-BENZ AMG GLA 35	170000
JWG2676	2023 YAMAHA Y15ZR	5000	VL3046	2016 HONDA CITY	22000	VHS7961	2022 CMC DAYTONA CAFE RACER 300	5500
MDP4542	2022 HONDA VARIO 150	3500	JQY2553	2015 TOYOTA VIOS 1.5E	26000	VES 6955	2020 BENELLI 302R	5000
KGA3076	2025 YAMAHA NVX	10000	BQU4750	2022 PROTON PERSONA	17820	BQM6053	2021 PROTON SAGA 1.3	14000
BRD3860	2022 HONDA RS150R	3500	VBA5749	2017 VOLKSWAGEN PASSAT 1.8TSI C LINE	18000	VAU6644	2017 HONDA ACCORD 2.0L VTI-L	43000
CEY9434	2024 YAMAHA NVX	10000	VDX5149	2019 PERODUA BEZZA 1.3X (A)	19000	VFT4507	2020 HONDA CITY 1.5L E	35000
QPC9025	2024 YAMAHA Y16ZR	7500	VEU3392	2020 PROTON EXORA 1.6	22000	VKR1082	2022 NISSAN PKC37	95000
JWC7708	2023 YAMAHA Y15ZR	6000	VNU2767	2025 PROTON SAGA 1.3 (A) PREMIUM SX	27000	KED7457	2014 BMW 4	TBA
JUW7019	2021 HONDA DASH 125	2000	VCY6366	2019 PROTON X70 PREMIUM 2WD	30780	QMC2385R	2025 PROTON SAGA 1.3	TBA
VKJ5193	2023 YAMAHA Y15ZR	5000	VFX3213	2021 PERODUA ALZA	31000	SYH1008	2017 BMW X5 XDRIVE40E	TBA
			VQA489	2012 BMW 520I	35000	VHA8343	2021 PERODUA ARUZ	TBA
			AKR8308	2017 TOYOTA COROLLA ALTIS 1.8	40000	VJC3261	2022 TOYOTA VIOS 1.5G	TBA

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322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016 AND IN THE MATTER OF PW NUTRIFARM VENTURE SDN. BHD.
Company No.: 199001016967 (208636-P)
(In Members' Voluntary Winding Up)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT pursuant to Section 459(2) of the Companies Act 2016, a Final Meeting of the Company will be held at Suite 12-A, Level 12 Menara Northam, No. 55 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 George Town, Penang on 12th January 2026 at 10.00 a.m. for the following purposes :-

- To receive the Liquidator's Statement of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding up of the Company has been conducted and to receive any explanations thereon.
- To resolve under Section 518(3)(b) of the Companies Act 2016, that the books, accounts and documents of the Company and the Liquidator be destroyed one (1) month after the Company has been dissolved.

Ch'ng Lay Hoon
Liquidator
Penang

Dated : 8th December 2025

Note:
A member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his stead and such proxy need not be a member of the Company. The instrument appointing a proxy must be deposited at the Liquidator's Office, Suite 12-A, Level 12 Menara Northam, No. 55 Jalan Sultan Ahmad Shah, 10050 George Town, Penang not less than 48 hours before the time for holding the meeting.

Jaiswal hits ton as India thrash Proteas



India's Virat Kohli (left) and Yashasvi Jaiswal celebrate after winning the third ODI match against South Africa yesterday. - AFPIC

OPENER Yashasvi Jaiswal hit his maiden one-day international century as India clinched the three-match series 2-1 with a crushing nine-wicket win over South Africa yesterday.

Chasing 271 for victory, India rode on Jaiswal's unbeaten 116 and his opening stand of 155 with Rohit Sharma, who hit 75, to achieve the target with 10.1 overs to spare in Visakhapatnam.

The left-handed Jaiswal reached his hundred in 111 balls as he jumped in joy and raised the bat to soak in the applause in just his fourth ODI since his debut earlier this year.

"I really enjoyed and I'm really grateful and blessed," said player of the match Jaiswal.

"(The) Last two games I couldn't convert and I was thinking how I can balance the innings. Sometimes I was thinking of attacking, then run the singles. I have to control my thoughts on what shots I can play."

Virat Kohli, who struck back-to-back hundreds in the previous two matches, hit the winning boundary to finish 65 not out from 45 balls.

The bowlers set up victory after left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and fast bowler Prasidh Krishna took four wickets each to bowl out South Africa for 270 in 47.5 overs. - AFP

Contenders plot path to glory ... as Fifa reveals tournament schedule

THE path to glory at the 2026 World Cup has now been laid out with Fifa yesterday confirming the full match schedule for the first 48-team tournament, a day after the star-studded draw ceremony in Washington dominated by Donald Trump.

Saturday's event hosted by Fifa president Gianni Infantino revealed that Lionel Messi's Argentina, the reigning champions, will begin their defence of the trophy against Algeria in Group J in Kansas City on June 16. They will then face Austria and Jordan in Dallas.

European champions Spain will play their first two Group H fixtures, against debutants Cape Verde and Saudi Arabia, in the covered and air-conditioned Atlanta stadium. They will then head to Mexico to take on

Uruguay in Guadalajara.

England will open their bid against Croatia in the covered Dallas stadium on June 17, before shifting to the northeastern United States for their remaining Group L fixtures.

The 1966 winners will take on Ghana in Boston on June 23 and then face Panama at the MetLife Stadium just outside New York City on June 27. If they top their group they must then go to Atlanta for a last-32 tie on July 1.

France, winners in 2018 and runners-up in 2022, will play all three Group I matches in the northeastern US, facing Senegal at the MetLife Stadium and Norway in Boston, either side of a fixture in Philadelphia against an intercontinental playoff winner.

Meanwhile Brazil, who won the

last World Cup staged in the United States in 1994, will meet Morocco at the MetLife Stadium in their first Group C encounter on June 13.

Carlo Ancelotti's team then take on Haiti in Philadelphia on June 19 before a clash with Scotland in Miami on June 24 - it will be the fifth time the countries have faced off at a World Cup.

For the first time, the draw was done in such a way as to ensure the four highest-ranked nations were kept apart.

Spain, Argentina, France and England cannot meet before the semifinals, if all top their groups.

However, the path to that stage - with an extra knockout round now following the group phase - looks perilous.

If the top seeds all win their

groups, England could find themselves playing co-hosts Mexico in Mexico City in the last 16 and then Brazil in the quarterfinals, before a semi against Argentina.

Other possible match-ups include France and Germany being on a last-16 collision course and a potential meeting between Messi's Argentina and Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in the quarterfinals.

The tournament will be held across the USA, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19, with 16 more teams added to the global showpiece, up from the 32 nations involved in 2022.

While the US will host most matches, including the final at the MetLife Stadium, three of the 16 venues will be in Mexico and two in Canada.

The opening game sees Mexico play South Africa in a repeat of the 2010 inaugural match at the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City.

The host nations have experienced turbulent relations since Trump came to power but he brushed that aside on Friday.

Germany's opponents in Group E will be Ivory Coast, Ecuador and Caribbean minnows Curacao - they play the latter in their first game in Houston - while Portugal face Uzbekistan, Colombia and a playoff winner.

The United States got a manageable draw, with Paraguay, Australia and a European play-off winner in Group D.

The top two teams in each group advance to the last 32, joined by the eight best third-placed teams. - AFP

Barca extend Liga lead as Atletico slip

FERRAN TORRES netted a first-half hattrick to help Barcelona thrash Real Betis 5-3 and move four points clear at the top of La Liga yesterday.

Lamine Yamal and Roony Bardghji scored the other goals as the champions racked up what was mostly a comfortable victory in Seville, until they conceded two late goals.

Fourth-place Atletico Madrid fell to a second defeat in a week with a 1-0 loss at Athletic Bilbao.

Villarreal, third, kept the pressure on La Liga's top two with a 2-0 win over 10-man Getafe.

After some shaky performances Barca beat Diego Simeone's Atletico in midweek and then built on it with another triumph at Betis.

"We are fighting and (my players) were exhausted, so at the end not everyone was 100 percent, and this is normal," Flick told reporters.

"Today is positive. Really positive and compliments for my players."

Flick opted to make some rotations, with a key Champions League clash against Eintracht Frankfurt on Wednesday in mind.

The German coach started Bardghji on the right wing and Torres up front in place of Robert Lewandowski, as well as moving teenage star Yamal into a central attacking midfield role, where he impressed.

Former Manchester United forward Antony opened the scoring for Betis, fifth, at their temporary La Cartuja home, blasting home after Jules Kounde played him onside.

The French defender made amends to help Barca get back level five minutes later, with Torres polishing off his cross at the end of a sharp team move.

Torres struck again in the 13th minute in similar fashion from Bardghji's cross to put Barca in front, and they never looked back.

Bardghji scored the third himself after



Ferran Torres (right) scores Barcelona's second goal against Betis in La Liga yesterday. - REUTERS/PIC

good work by Pedri to bring the ball forward, the Swedish winger finishing with aplomb.

Torres completed his hattrick before half-time with a stroke of luck, as his shot deflected home past Alvaro Valles.

It was his 11th league goal, making him the second top scorer in La Liga behind Madrid's Kylian Mbappe.

"I already knew I could do this," Torres told Movistar.

"That's what you have to do at Barca, and I'm aiming for many more (goals)."

Yamal netted Barca's fifth from the penalty

spot before the hour mark, after former Blaugrana defender Marc Bartra was harshly penalised for handball.

Marcus Rashford's shot was blocked by Bartra but the ball flew up and struck his hand.

Yamal and Rashford missed big chances before Betis nabbed two late goals, with Diego Llorente turning home at the back post from a corner that Barca defended badly.

Kounde clumsily felled another former Barca player in Ez Abde and Cucho Hernandez rolled home from the spot. - AFP

Inter top Serie A ahead of Liverpool visit

INTER MILAN moved top of Serie A yesterday after hammering high-flying Como 4-0 at the San Siro, ahead of the visit of struggling Liverpool in the Champions League.

Strike partnership Lautaro Martinez and Marcus Thuram scored in each half before Hakan Calhanoglu and Carlos Augusto netted late as Inter eased to a victory which pushed them two points ahead of AC Milan and Napoli who are both yet to play.

"Today we showed how good we are against a really good side in Como," said Martinez.

"We showed just how hungry we are to get as many points as we can... it's a really good win for us."

Yesterday's win was the perfect warm-up for Wednesday's clash with Liverpool, which could be key to whether Cristian Chivu's team secure direct qualification for the last 16 of the Champions League.

Cesc Fabregas' Como drop down a place to sixth, six points behind Inter after falling to their first defeat since August.

"It's hard to analyse when you've been beaten 4-0. It's a heavy defeat... but honestly I didn't see a huge difference between the two teams tonight," insisted Fabregas.

"A result like today's helps you develop... A heavy defeat is when you grow the most and when you learn the most."

Fiorentina plunged deeper into crisis with a 3-1 defeat at promoted Sassuolo which left them bottom of the division without a single win this season.

Once the home of players like Gabriel Batistuta and Rui Costa and sixth-placed finishers last season, Fiorentina have collected just six points from 14 matches.

Raffaele Palladino's good start as Atalanta coach took a hit with a 3-1 loss at Verona, their first win of the season, in the day's late fixture. - AFP

SHORTS

Kane cameo sinks Stuttgart

HARRY KANE came off the bench to score a hattrick as Bayern Munich thrashed Stuttgart 5-0 on a day of late drama in the Bundesliga yesterday.

Kane struck three times in the second half to crush spirited resistance from Stuttgart, while St. Pauli and Heidenheim both grabbed injury-time goals.

"I always prefer to play the full game, but my job today was to help from the bench and as long as I can help the team, that's the most important thing," said Kane.

"When you're going through a season like we are and playing so many games, the boss is

experienced enough to know it's not always possible to play the same starting eleven," he added.

"The most important thing is that when you do change it, the level doesn't drop. It didn't today."

Bayern remain eight points clear at the top of the table after second-place RB Leipzig cruised to a 6-0 win over Frankfurt in yesterday's late game.

Elsewhere, Christian Eriksen helped Wolfsburg to their first home win in almost a year with a 3-1 victory against Union Berlin.

Wolfsburg's win was not the only surprise of the day, as Augsburg snatched a shock 2-0 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in their first game since sacking coach Sandro Wagner, thanks to first-half goals from Dimitris Giannoulis and

Anton Kade.

Elsewhere, St. Pauli avoided a tenth defeat in a row with a 1-1 draw at Cologne, while Heidenheim came from behind for the second week in a row as they beat Freiburg 2-1.

PSG thump Rennes but Lens stay top

SURPRISE package Lens will emerge from the weekend as French Ligue 1 leaders after a 2-1 win at Nantes yesterday but Paris Saint-Germain thumped Rennes in the late game to loom just one point behind them.

French and European Champions PSG travel to Athletic Bilbao in the Champions League midweek and on Saturday fielded a weakened side that routed Rennes 5-0, having slipped up

1-0 at Monaco the previous weekend.

Kvaratskhelia scored twice with youngster Senny Mayulu, Ibrahim Mbaye and Gonçalo Ramos completing the romp in injury time.

The modest northern club Lens with a large regional support base climbed top for the first time in 21 years the previous weekend, and were to remain top regardless of Paris Saint-Germain's result.

Lens sit top with 34 points, PSG have 33, and Marseille and Lille both have 29 after Lille edged OM 1-0 on Friday.

Former Marseille and Newcastle attacking-midfielder Florian Thauvin set Lens on their way to this fifth straight league win on 34 minutes and Wesley Saïd scored the winner on 81 after Nantes had levelled on 38 through Youssef El-Arabi.

SHORTS

Frank happy for Simons after win over Brentford

TOTTENHAM BOSS Thomas Frank hailed Xavi Simons after he inspired a much-needed 2-0 home win over Brentford but urged him to make sure this "good step" is just the start.

It took Xavi only 25 minutes to set up Richarlison's opener before the £52 million (RM300m) playmaker got off the mark in his 19th appearance with a fine solo goal in the 43rd minute to clinch Spurs only a fourth home League win in 2025.

"Happy for him. He has been working very hard, he is a top pro, he is so determined and wants it so badly.

"Every player needs that extra bit of confidence and that comes from his performance, the team's performance and that assist and goal gave him that extra bit of lightness in his step and his touches."

This was an important fixture for Frank even if the noise around his position felt more external rather than internal, with Spurs on a poor run of one win in eight before the visit of his old club.

Another defeat at home – after the previous Saturday's shock 2-1 loss to Fulham – would have sparked more debate, but Tottenham should have won by a greater margin with Djed Spence, Wilson Odobert and Pape Sarr denied in the second half.

"Very happy with the win. I think that's the most important thing," Frank insisted. What I would say, I was just extremely happy with the offensive performance. It just looked more right."

Moyes want Barry to keep the goals coming

EVERTON MANAGER David Moyes has warned Thierno Barry not to rest on his laurels after scoring his first goal for the club as it will not guarantee him his place in the team.

The 23-year-old's breakthrough, on his 17th appearance, on the stroke of half-time came between Nikola Milenkovic's second-minute own goal and Kiernan Dewsbury-Hall's third in four games 10 minutes from the end in a 3-0 win over Nottingham Forest.

After interchanging with Beto at the start of the season Moyes has started Barry in the last six games and although the goal validated that decision it does not safeguard his position.

"He will not be able to play another six games and only score one goal. He has been given the opportunity but I have to say Beto is beginning to show more. Barry will have to keep playing well," said Moyes.

"In the opening games of the season we were happy to change them around after 60 minutes because we were needing one of them to score and none of them scoring at the time.

"The choice was to give Thierno a run in the team to get used to the Premier League but we are really hoping Beto comes back into form as well as we need the goals from both of them."

Guardiola hails 'exceptional' Cherki

BY ANDY HAMPSON

PEP GUARDIOLA felt Rayan Cherki outdid Lionel Messi but tempered his praise of the Frenchman after Manchester City's comfortable victory over Sunderland.

Cherki produced one of his best performances since joining City in the summer to help them to a 3-0 victory yesterday that cut Arsenal's Premier League lead to two points.

Cherki capped an influential display with a sublime rabona cross for Phil Foden to head home City's third, but Guardiola was impressed more by the 22-year-old's all-round effort than isolated moments of magic.

The City manager said: "Rayan is an exceptional player. He is so young, he has a huge personality. He is not scared and has self-confidence.

"In the final third he had something special but what I admire the most about Rayan is not the skills.

"I never saw Messi play a cross like he has done. Messi is the best player to play the game but I never saw these kind of crosses.

"Crosses are fine, right or left foot it doesn't matter. If it is effective it is fine... but I like simplicity.

"Messi never made a mistake with the simple things. The simple things he does perfectly, then he dribbles past four or five players.

"I want players to do the simple things well and, after that, if you have special talent he can do whatever he wants.

"But if it doesn't work it will be a problem, he will be in trouble.

"In his career I have the feeling he has done whatever he wants. Here, he has to do what he

has to do for the team. When he is able to do it, he will play a lot of minutes for many years at this club."

City took control of the game with a first-half double from centrebacks Ruben Dias and Josko Gvardiol before Cherki and Foden combined to kill off any prospect of a Sunderland fightback.

The result puts them firmly on Arsenal's tail in the title race but Guardiola is not thinking about that yet.

He said: "Yes it is better to be closer than further to the top of the league but, from my experience of winning the Premier League and titles, it is about the consistency.

"Consistency comes from the way you play, not from the results or being two points in front or four in front.

"Today has been one of the best performances of the year during 95 minutes." – The Independent

Gunners will return fire: Arteta

Spaniard confident Arsenal will respond after first League defeat since August at Villa

BY JONATHAN VEAL

ARSENAL BOSS Mikel Arteta expects his side to bounce back after their title ambitions stuttered with a dramatic defeat at Aston Villa.

Emiliano Buendia scored with the last kick of the match to end the Gunners' 11-game unbeaten run in the league after Leandro Trossard had earlier cancelled out Matty Cash's opener.

The Gunners have a nervous

disposition when it comes to sticking around in title races due to recent history, but Arteta is expecting a strong response.

"That is the League, you go to Old Trafford, you go to St. James' Park, you go to Chelsea, you come here, we have been in a lot of difficult grounds," he said.

"The result could have been different, the reality is not. We went 18 games unbeaten (in all competitions) and still we are there, close to each other.

"That is the level of the League, we know that. That is the opportunity that we have ahead of us and that's it.

"Now it is time to bounce back, they have given me all the right reasons to think we are going to perform at the same level. We move on. We will learn from today and it will make us a better team.

"It's five months into the competition and so far we have coped. We are going to have to prove we can cope again, again, again for

another six months.

"That is the level. People who think at this moment we are going to be 10 points clear live in a different world."

The Gunners were dealt a further blow, with Arteta revealing Cristhian Mosquera's ankle injury is worse than first feared.

"He is going to be out for weeks, unfortunately," the boss added. "It is much more than we were expecting, so he is going to be out for weeks."

Villa boss Unai Emery is not accepting it, but his side are also contenders to win the League after a brilliant turnaround in form.

They did not win in the opening five games and were in the relegation zone but have since gone on to win nine of the next 10 and are a match for anyone.

"I am not thinking (about the title), I know 38 matches is going to be very difficult, we are not contenders," the Spaniard said.

"If we were in game 35 like we are now, maybe I could speak different. Three points is giving us a lot of confidence.

"In the table, of course, now we are feeling better than two months ago. Arsenal are favourites to win this title, of course, we must get balance, because we got balance when we were in the bottom.

"Now we must get balance and try to play each match, game by game." – The Independent



Aston Villa's Emiliano Buendia (right) celebrates after scoring the winning goal against Arsenal in the EPL yesterday. – AFP/PICTURE

Howe unhappy with uncomfortable win over Burnley

BY DAMIAN SPELLMAN

HEAD COACH Eddie Howe was not a happy man after watching Newcastle almost throw away Premier League victory for the second time in a week when beating Burnley 2-1 at St. James' Park.

Having seen the Magpies surrender their lead to Tottenham on Wednesday, Howe looked on as Burnley substitute Zian Flemming headed wide at the end to leave him relieved.

Asked if his team had made hard work of it, Howe said: "Very much so. That was an uncomfortable ending for us.

"There's certainly a lot to learn and we're learning with a victory behind us rather than a negative result.

"We have to improve our management of games at the latter stages and today that nearly

cost us.

"We have to be very honest and say that wasn't a good period for us, although it was a tough game today.

"I always thought it was going to be in the sense that Burnley are very well organised and made it difficult for us. It wasn't our finest performance, a long way short of that.

"But we got the job done, 10 points out of 12, we navigated a game where we didn't play well and won. We have to be positive."

The Magpies looked to be cruising to victory when Bruno Guimaraes scored direct from a corner and Anthony Gordon converted a penalty in first-half stoppage time either side of Lucas Pires' red card for a trip on Anthony Elanga.

However, they failed to build upon their advantage and substitute Flemming's spot-kick in

added time at the end of the game sparked a late flurry in which the same man headed wastefully wide, although a foul during the build-up may have cut short his joy in any case.

Clarets boss Scott Parker was left to reflect upon what might have been, but his overriding emotion was one of pride.

Parker said: "I've sat here a few times this year after a result where we've not won a game and I've probably sat here with the words of 'We're a little bit frustrated', 'We're a little bit disappointed' in certain moments.

"It's the polar opposite today, to be honest. I'm proud. I just thought generally the way we played, we were every bit the team we need to be and I wanted us to be. It was a just a top, top, top performance, to be honest with you." – The Independent

IPSWICH stunned Championship leaders Coventry with a 3-0 victory at Portman Road that ended their five-match winning run yesterday.

Goals from Sindre Walle Egeli, George Hirst and Ivan Azon lifted Ipswich to fourth place as Coventry suffered only their second away defeat of the season.

Frank Lampard's side are still seven points clear of second-placed Middlesbrough, who won 4-1 at Hull on Friday.

"We were winning everything in the first half, the second balls were dropping to us, we were the team who had the real personality," Lampard told *BBC Radio CWR*.

"Great organisation, work ethic off the ball, everything was great and we restricted them. And they get a goal from a bit of a mess at a corner.

Ipswich upset leaders Coventry

"Then you've got a difficult job, but I still thought the players kept going... 3-0, I don't like it, of course. I'm a bad loser, I hate defeats and I'll analyse them and maybe react to the players.

"In terms of the game I thought anyone who was here and saw that first half will realise this isn't Coventry from the first half of last season, this is a team that wants to try and go and do something. Today we didn't but it can happen."

Mihailo Ivanovic's second-half strike gave third-placed Millwall a stormy 1-0 victory at playoff rivals Bristol City.

Ivanovic netted in the 59th minute when City goalkeeper Radek Vitek made a double save from Femi Azeez, only for the Serbian striker to fire home from eight yards.

City had a last-gasp equaliser controversially disallowed for offside before the final whistle was followed by a mass brawl featuring staff and players from both clubs.

Leicester powered to a 3-1 win at east Midlands rivals Derby thanks to goals from Bobby De Cordova-Reid, Oliver Skipp and Jordan James.

Derby pulled one back through Sondre

Langas but Leicester held on to ease the pressure on manager Marti Cifuentes.

A Charlton fan died after being taken ill during an abandoned match against Portsmouth at The Valley.

The game was halted in the 13th minute with the score at 0-0 due to a supporter requiring medical assistance.

Paramedics attended to the supporter before the match was later abandoned.

"The club are devastated to report that a Charlton Athletic supporter has died following a medical emergency during today's game at The Valley against Portsmouth," a statement read.

Blackburn were leading 1-0 against Sheffield Wednesday when the match was abandoned after an hour due to a waterlogged pitch at Ewood Park. AFP/Agencies

Heavy toll on Reds

Repeated setbacks 'hard to take' for players: Slot



Liverpool's Virgil van Dijk (front) in action with Leeds' Dominic Calvert-Lewin during yesterday's Premier League match. - REUTERS/SPIC

BY MARK WALKER

LIVERPOOL BOSS Arne Slot believes his side are "improving" but admitted poor results are taking a toll on his players after they were held to a 3-3 draw at Leeds.

The reigning champions have won only one of their last five League games after Ao Tanaka's stoppage-time equaliser at Elland Road saw them held to a draw for the second time in four days and lose further ground on the top four.

Hugo Ekitike's quickfire double early in the second half put Liverpool in control before Leeds fought back through Dominic Calvert-Lewin's penalty and Anton Stach.

Dominik Szoboszlai appeared to have won it for the visitors with a late third, but substitute Tanaka snatched a point for Leeds in the sixth minute of added time.

Slot said: "I think we're improving. Individuals are improving, performances are improving, but it's hard to take for these players as well.

"They're putting so much effort in and fighting so hard and not to get the result so many times, one after the other, I think we can understand that does do something to an individual and to a team."

Liverpool had lost seven of their previous 11 away League games before heading to Elland Road - where they had not lost in over 25 years - but while they left with a point, this will feel like another defeat and heaps further pressure on their head coach.

"It's not about me, it's what the players feel, what the fans feel, what everyone who

loves this football club feels," Slot said.

"I think we all feel the same at this moment. But I also hope that everyone sees that these players are fighting really, really hard.

"And combine that with good football. Again today, we hardly conceded a chance and conceded three goals.

"I see us doing many things well this season without the results. I can take a lot of positives from this game.

"If we had won it 2-0 or 3-2 - a controlled performance, dominant, against a very difficult team to play against because Chelsea experienced it, (Manchester) City experienced it second half, because they've changed their playing style to long ball."

Leeds followed up their midweek 3-1 home win over Chelsea with another battling display to climb three points clear of the relegation zone.

Boss Daniel Farke described a thrilling second half as "crazy" and hailed his players for their fighting spirit and also Leeds fans for creating an electric atmosphere.

"Crazy, it's another magical night," he said. "It's Elland Road. The ground was again rocking like no other ground probably in world football.

"Once this place is on it, it can be second to none. It was a crazy game."

Farke added: "Sadly, it had been two mistakes where we more or less assisted their two goals, but my boys have this attitude.

"No one's ever beaten and they always try whatever is thrown at them in terms of difficulties or adversity." - The Independent

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 6058/2025 DATE: 07/12/2025 (SUN)
STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.
196901000090 (8420-D)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
4726	2165	5549

Special	Consolation
5754 8036	2205 8571
3991 1426	4268 6373
8276 7009	2251 8148
3962 7392	9630 9773
3966 1886	3138 8477

4D JACKPOT
Jackpot 1 **RM 6,976,818.47**

4726	2165	2165	4726
4726	5549	5549	4726
2165	5549	5549	2165

Jackpot 2 **RM 314,660.50**
Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Fireball 2

4D Zodiac

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize	4th Prize	5th Prize	6th Prize
4726	2165	5549	Special Prize	Consolation Prize	Any 4D drawn number

TIGER

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D

1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH
2 3 3 0 2	7 9 9 4 1	3 8 8 9 1	3 3 0 2	3 0 2	0 2

6D

1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH
1 2 2 3 0 9	1 2 2 3 0	1 2 2 3	1 2 2	1 2

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SUPREME 6/58 4 15 16 17 30 31
Jackpot **RM 27,085,889.08**

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Jackpot **RM 5,106,655.33**

STAR 6/50 3 13 20 22 39 41 + 49
Jackpot 1 **RM 11,911,663.88**

Jackpot 2 **RM 219,047.16**

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WINNING NUMBERS

PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL **da ma cai**

Draw Date: 07/12/25 (Sun) Draw No: 6005/25 Venue: WISMA GENTING, KL

1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	2802
2nd Prize	4649
3rd Prize	1884

Starters	Consolation
2881 3535	0585 6598
4166 5238	8103 0818
3462 4441	5173 8090
9894 7673	6735 8104
9563 6396	4924 3821

1-3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM13,734,003.50**

2802 + 4649	4649 + 2802
2802 + 1884	1884 + 2802
4649 + 1884	1884 + 4649

Jackpot 2 **RM364,458.70**
Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3-3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
542 802 +	SNAKE	RM181,388.80
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
084 649 +	RAT	RM650,000.00
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
111 884 +	SNAKE	RM753,339.00

Starters	Consolation
832 881 513 535	970 585 256 598
084 166 655 238	728 103 370 818
143 462 334 441	675 173 068 090
419 894 977 673	496 735 928 104
029 563 876 396	614 924 833 821

3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
802	649	884

3D Jackpot

Jackpot **RM743,581.90**

802 + 649 + 884	649 + 884 + 802
802 + 884 + 649	884 + 802 + 649
649 + 802 + 884	884 + 649 + 802

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

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RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE

Aston Villa 2 (Cash 36, Buendia 90+5)
Arsenal 1 (Trossard 52), **Bournemouth 0** **Chelsea 0**, **Everton 3** (Milenkovic 2-og, Barry 45+3, Dewsbury-Hall 81) **Nottingham Forest 0**, **Leeds 3** (Calvert-Lewin 73-pen, Stach 75, Tanaka 90+6) **Liverpool 3** (Ekitike 48, 50, Szoboszlai 80), **Manchester City 3** (Dias 31, Gvardiol 35, Foden 65) **Sunderland 0**, **Newcastle 2** (Guimaraes 31, Gordon 45+8-pen) **Burnley 1** (Fleming 90+4-pen), **Tottenham 2** (Richarlison 25, Simons 43) **Brentford 0**.

TOP 10	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Arsenal	15	10	3	2	28	9	33
Man City	15	10	1	4	35	16	31
Aston Villa	15	9	3	3	22	15	30
Chelsea	15	7	4	4	25	15	25
Everton	15	7	3	5	18	17	24
Crystal Palace	14	6	5	3	18	11	23
Sunderland	15	6	5	4	18	17	23
Liverpool	15	7	2	6	24	24	23
Tottenham	15	6	4	5	25	18	22
Brighton	14	6	4	4	24	20	22

CHAMPIONSHIP

Charlton Athletic 0 Portsmouth 0 (match abandoned), Derby County 1 Leicester 3, Watford 3 Norwich 2, Blackburn Rovers 1 Sheffield Wednesday 0 (match abandoned), Bristol City 0 Millwall 1, Ipswich 3 Coventry 0, Preston North End 1 Wrexham 1, Queens Park Rangers 3 West Bromwich Albion 1, Sheffield United 4 Stoke City 0, Southampton 3 Birmingham 1, Swansea 2 Oxford United 0.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Coventry	19	13	4	2	50	21	43
M'brough	19	10	6	3	28	20	36
Millwall	19	10	4	5	23	25	34
Ipswich	19	8	7	4	33	19	31
Preston	19	8	7	4	26	20	31
Stoke	19	9	3	7	26	18	30

LA LIGA

Villarreal 2 (Buchanan 45+5, Mikautadze 64) **Getafe 0**, **Alaves 1** (Boye 45+4-pen) **Real Sociedad 0**, **Real Betis 3** (Antony 6, Lorente 85, Hernandez 90) **Barcelona 5** (Torres 11, 13, 40, Bardghji 31, Yamal 59-pen), **Athletic Bilbao 1** (Berenguer 85) **Athletic Madrid 0**.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	16	13	1	2	47	20	40
Real Madrid	15	11	3	1	32	13	36
Villarreal	15	11	2	2	31	13	35
Athleti	16	9	4	3	28	15	31
Real Betis	15	6	6	3	25	19	24
Espanyol	14	7	3	4	18	16	24

SERIE A

Inter Milan 4 (Martinez 11, Thuram 59, Calhanoglu 80, Carlos Augusto 86) **Como 0**, **Sassuolo 3** (Volpato 14, Muharemovic 45+1, Kone 65) **Fiorentina 1** (Mandradora 9-pen), **Verona 3** (Belghali 28, Giovane 36, Bernede 71) **Atalanta 2** (Scamacca 81-pen).

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Milan	14	10	0	4	32	13	30
AC Milan	13	8	4	1	19	9	28
Napoli	13	9	1	3	20	11	28
Roma	13	9	0	4	15	7	27
Bologna	13	7	3	3	22	11	24
Como	14	6	6	2	19	9	24

BUNDESLIGA

Stuttgart 0 Bayern Munich 5, Wolfsburg 3 Union Berlin 1, Augsburg 2 Bayer Leverkusen 0, Heidenheim 2 Freiburg 1, Cologne 1 St. Pauli 1, Leipzig 6 Eintracht Frankfurt 0.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bayern	12	11	1	0	44	9	34
RB Leipzig	12	8	2	2	22	13	26
Dortmund	12	7	4	1	21	11	25
Leverkusen	12	7	2	3	28	17	23
Hoffenheim	12	7	2	3	25	17	23
Stuttgart	12	7	1	4	21	17	22

THE national men's junior hockey squad beat Switzerland 7-3 in the FIH's Men's Hockey Junior World Cup's 13th to 16th place classification match at Mayor Hockey Stadium, Chennai, on Saturday.

Malaysia went ahead with a 2-0 lead early, with goals scored from penalty corners by Muhammad Aqil Danial Mat Ruslee in the fifth minute and Muhammad Handzalah Abdul Hadi a minute later but Switzerland struck one in through Jens Fluck in the 13th minute.

Undeterred, the Malaysians struck repeatedly, first with Muhammad Harris Iskandar Osman through a penalty stroke in the 19th minute, then

Young Tigers maul Switzerland

a field goal by Rahul Fazrien Muhammad two minutes later to end the first half at a commanding 4-1.

Switzerland mounted a comeback of sorts in the second half, with a field goal by Leonard Kraxner in the 32nd minute, but Malaysia held their ground and scored yet again through Azimuddin Syakir Kamaruddin off a penalty corner in the 37th minute, and proceeded to slot in yet another two field goals – Muhammad Aqil Danial (43) and Muhammad Danish Aiman Khairul Anuar (46), and

Switzerland managed a final consolation goal at the end of the match through Jens Fluck.

"Today we played well like we planned before the game. Players got chances and managed to score goals," head coach Nor Saiful Zaini said in an audio message shared by the Malaysia Hockey Confederation (MHC).

"They played very well in the first and second quarter and managed to control the game in the third and fourth quarters to ensure a 7-3 win." – Bernama

Melaka finally taste victory

Relief for coach Devan as win lift team off bottom



Melaka FC's Michale Onyekachi Ozor (right) challenges Negeri Sembilan FC's Mio Tsuneyasu during the Super League match yesterday. – REUTERS/SPIC

MELAKA FC clinched their first win of the season with a 2-0 victory over Negeri Sembilan FC in a Super League clash at the Hang Jebat Stadium, lifting the team out of the bottom spot in the league standings.

Melaka FC head coach Datuk K. Devan said his squad started strongly in the first half, netting two early goals that boosted the players' confidence and allowed them to maintain control throughout the opening 45 minutes.

"In the first half, our game plan and tactics worked well, allowing us to compete effectively with Negeri Sembilan FC," he said when met after the match on Saturday night.

"In the second half, we were forced to defend for long periods, but the players displayed excellent teamwork, discipline and organisation.

"We were under constant pressure from the visitors, but the players showed great commitment to ensure we kept a clean sheet," he added.

In the match, Melaka FC's two goals were scored by Brazilian import striker Douglas de Silva, who struck as early as the 3rd minute

before adding his second in the 26th.

Devan said the victory was also boosted by the return of several key players, including Juan, who had previously been sidelined by injury and whose presence significantly improved the team's playing style.

Looking ahead, Devan said Melaka FC aims to maintain their momentum but acknowledges that the challenge will be tougher when they face Kuching City FC away on Dec 19. He added that the team will work hard to secure points from the encounter.

Meanwhile, Negeri Sembilan FC head coach Mohd Nidzam Jamil described the match as unpredictable, noting that his players committed several errors that led to the goals.

"In the first half, we did not play well and conceded because of simple mistakes. In the second half, we tried to fight back... but overall, tonight's performance was only average, and there are many areas we need to improve before the next match," he said.

The win also lifted Melaka FC into the top 10 of the league standings, with six points from nine matches, while Negeri Sembilan FC remain in sixth place with 13 points after 10 matches. – Bernama

Turtles looking for import boost

TERENGGANU FC (TFC) requires new import players to strengthen the squad as they prepare for the long remainder of the Malaysia League (M-League) season, which runs until next May.

Head coach Badrul Afzan Razali said he hopes the management will be able to bring in several new players during the second M-League transfer window in January, particularly to reinforce the attacking position.

Badrul Afzan, who is also a former Terengganu midfielder, said he will be meeting with the TFC technical department to review all necessary requirements before presenting them to the management.

"So far, there are no issues with our local players.

"I'm satisfied with their performances, and we have no long-term injury concerns.

"Right now, we need new import players to strengthen the squad and remain competitive in the league," he said when contacted yesterday.

Badrul Afzan, however, said the final decision would be left to the management as it involves financial considerations.

Meanwhile, he revealed that the team's top scorer, Yann Mabella, is unlikely to feature again this season due to a knee injury.

He said the French forward's recovery is taking longer than initially expected, which was estimated at around six weeks.

"Mabella's absence in several recent matches was deeply felt not only by the team but also by our supporters, and it has admittedly affected our planning to some extent," he said. – Bernama

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2465	4329
4402	2956
9439	0227
6601	5303
7913	6513
3777	6487
8354	1413
4409	2007

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Jackpot 1 **RM12,125,240.62**
PARTIALLY WON

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1522 + 4523	1522 + 4047
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Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1 2 3 2 2 4 7

GROUP 2 2 3 2 2 4 OR 3 2 2 4 7

GROUP 3 2 3 2 2 OR 2 2 4 7

GROUP 4 2 3 2 OR 2 4 7

GROUP 5 2 3 OR 4 7

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SCAN ME

Liverpool manager Arne Slot (right) shares a moment with Mohamed Salah after their recent Champions League match at Anfield.
— REUTERSPIC



Mo trouble for Slot

Angry Salah launches stunning tirade against manager, Liverpool hierarchy after draw against Leeds

BY RICHARD JOLLY

MOHAMED SALAH has claimed Liverpool have thrown him “under the bus” by saying he has been made a scapegoat.

The Egyptian, who has lost his place in the Liverpool team, said he doesn’t have a relationship with manager Arne Slot any more as he accused the club of breaking their promises to him.

And he has cast doubt on his future by saying he will wave goodbye to Liverpool fans against Brighton this weekend – and that he is not sure what will happen after the African Cup of Nations.

An angry Salah, who signed a lucrative two-year contract in April, felt Liverpool turned on him while saying he was not sure why he had been dropped in what he called an unacceptable situation for him.

“It seems like the club has thrown me under the bus,” said the Egyptian, after Liverpool’s 3-3 draw at Leeds, in which he was left on the bench throughout.

“That is how I am feeling. I think it is very

clear that someone wanted me to get all of the blame.

“I got a lot of promises in the summer and so far I am on the bench for three games so I can’t say they keep the promise.

“I said many times before that I had a good relationship with the manager and all of a sudden, we don’t have any relationship.

“I don’t know why, but it seems to me, how I see it, that someone doesn’t want me in the club.

“It is not acceptable for me. I don’t know why this is happening to me. I don’t get it. I think if this was somewhere else, every club would protect its player.”

Salah is the third highest scorer in Liverpool’s history with 250 goals, but was omitted after they lost six of their previous seven League games.

He added: “How I see it now is like you throw Mo under the bus because he is the problem in the team now. But I don’t think I am the problem. I have done so much for this club.

“The respect, I want to get. I don’t have to go every day fighting for my position because

I earned it.

“I am not bigger than anyone but I earned my position. It’s football. It is what it is. After what I have done for the club it really hurts. You can imagine, really.”

Salah had never previously been left out for two consecutive matches before sitting out the last three, and he was an unused substitute in two of them.

He equalled a Premier League record last season by contributing to 47 goals, scoring 29 and assisting 18, but lost his place in November.

He added that he could not believe: “That I’m sitting on the bench for 90 minutes! The third time on the bench, I think for the first time in my career.

“I’m very, very disappointed to be fair. I have done so much for this club down the years and especially last season.”

Salah had a meeting with Slot on Friday and said: “He knows my feeling. He knows my feeling.”

The 33-year-old has 18 months left on his new contract and was asked if he regretted signing it.

“Imagine how bad that I have to answer it, honestly. That hurts, even the question hurts. This club, signing for this club, I will never regret it.

“I thought I’m going to renew here and end my career here, but this is not according to the plan.”

Salah heads to Africa after this weekend and added: “I called my mum yesterday – you guys didn’t know if I would start (against Leeds) or not, but I knew.

“Yesterday I said to them, come to the Brighton game.

“I don’t know if I am going to play or not but I am going to enjoy it. In my heads, I’m going to enjoy that game because I don’t know what is going to happen now.

“I will be in Anfield to say goodbye to the fans and go the Africa Cup. I don’t know what is going to happen when I am there.”

Salah has had interest from Saudi Arabia in the past and declined to say if an offer was still on table, adding: “I don’t want to answer this question, because the club is going to take me to a different direction.” – The Independent