



Maritime enforcement officer killed in high-speed chase

Three others hurt as patrol boat hits concrete wall while intercepting migrant vessel off Kuala Perlis.

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New code to protect young gamers

Gaming safeguards being drawn up to shield children from online predators and financial exploitation: MCMC

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MCA stays for Malacca polls

Zahid quells speculation following seat allocation dispute, confirms talks have yielded positive results.

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IMPROVED CLARITY...

High-rise buildings across the Kuala Lumpur skyline emerge under bright skies over Titiwangsa Lake Park following a shift in weather conditions. After consecutive days of rain, the transboundary haze that choked the Asean region is starting to dissipate, bringing clearer skies back to the Malaysian capital. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Clean bill

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PM assures Parliament there are no major breaches found in GLCs and GLICs, vows new legislation to strictly bar political interference in investment priorities.

No major GLC, GLIC breaches detected, says Anwar

► PM shields investment timeline and bars political interference in public assets

■ BY HARITH KAMAL
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KUALA LUMPUR: The government has so far detected no governance breaches in government-linked companies (GLCs) and government-linked investment companies (GLICs) comparable to past scandals involving 1MDB, Tabung Haji and Felda, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim told Parliament.

He said the government was working towards introducing legislation to tighten oversight of government-owned entities, with stricter corporate governance requirements, clearer limits on authority and greater accountability among those entrusted with managing public assets.

"I can give an assurance that, so far, we have not identified any breaches similar to those we inherited previously in the companies I mentioned earlier," he said during PM's Question Time yesterday.

Anwar was responding to Bangi MP Syahredzan Johan, who raised concerns over the political exploitation of GLCs and past financial scandals.

Acknowledging the scale of previous governance failures involving 1MDB and Tabung Haji, Anwar said stronger legal safeguards were necessary to prevent similar abuses.

"The limits of authority and those appointed must be more accountable and must not treat these entities as their personal or family property."

AT THE
DEWAN
RAKYAT

However, he acknowledged that tightening corporate governance remained challenging, particularly when influential political and business figures resisted restrictions on established practices.

He said meaningful reforms required political will to overcome entrenched interests and ensure those managing public assets were held accountable.

Separately, Anwar defended the government's RM120 billion domestic investment drive under the GEAR-uP (Government-linked Enterprises

Activation and Reform) programme, insisting it remained on track despite concerns over slow fund deployment and past investment losses.

He said investments under the programme, which runs from 2024 to 2028, were expected to accelerate towards the end of this year and throughout 2027.

"From the latest developments and reports, it appears to be still on schedule."

Anwar was responding to Muar MP Syed Saddiq Abdul Rahman, who questioned why only RM26 billion had reportedly been deployed against the RM120 billion target, arguing that the programme was falling behind schedule.

Syed Saddiq also cited Permodalan Nasional Bhd's RM2.68 billion investment in Sapura as an example of the risks associated with

using public funds to rescue struggling corporations.

Anwar acknowledged that past investment failures had prompted GLICs to exercise greater caution, with more emphasis on assessments and due diligence before committing funds.

He also defended Retirement Fund Incorporated, saying it had recorded RM8 billion in profits despite losses linked to Indonesian aquaculture technology company eFishery.

Anwar stressed that individual investment setbacks should be assessed against a fund's overall performance rather than viewed in isolation.

He also reiterated that investment decisions must remain in the hands of qualified professionals, free from political interference.

Development funds go straight to projects, not MPs: PM

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has rejected claims that opposition-held constituencies are being sidelined, stressing that development funds are channelled directly to projects rather than handed to MPs.

"People and constituencies are not being sidelined in the implementation of development projects, as alleged," he said during Prime Minister's Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat.

"Even in constituencies represented by government parties, allocations are not given directly to MPs, whose role is merely to verify the projects concerned."

Anwar was responding to Besut MP Che Mohamad Zulkifly Jusoh, who questioned why opposition MPs were not receiving constituency development allocations on equal terms with government lawmakers, despite Pakatan Harapan's manifesto pledge.

Che Mohamad Zulkifly asked whether the government intended to introduce legislation guaranteeing equal allocations before the next general election.

Anwar explained that project allocations were determined according to national development priorities, consultations with ministries and government agencies, input from state governments and district offices as well as the government's financial capacity and local needs.

He cited Besut as an example, noting that RM123 million had been approved for 197 development projects covering infrastructure, healthcare, housing, agriculture, education and flood mitigation.

On allocations channelled through opposition MPs, Anwar said the government remained prepared to proceed under a framework similar to that adopted during his tenure as opposition leader, adding that Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof had been tasked with negotiations.

"If they sign today, it will be approved tomorrow. If they do not want to negotiate, that is not my problem," he said.

Anwar also cited Terengganu, saying its overall allocation had increased from RM6 billion under the previous administration to RM8.2 billion for 2027.

"What discrimination is this? We increased it by RM2.2 billion," he said.

However, Che Mohamad Zulkifly disputed the comparison, interjecting that the earlier allocation was RM2.1 billion.

Anwar maintained that allocations had increased, reiterating that no constituency was excluded. — BY HARITH KAMAL



Anwar said stronger legal safeguards were necessary to prevent abuses similar to those involving 1MDB and Tabung Haji. — SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN/THE SUN

'Initial Battersea Power Station investment too high'

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has acknowledged that Malaysia's initial investment in London's Battersea Power Station redevelopment was excessively high and had incurred losses, although efforts are now underway to recover the investment.

Anwar said Battersea was among several overseas investments undertaken in the past that warranted greater scrutiny.

"Although efforts are now being made to recover it, the initial investment was too high and had suffered losses," he told the Dewan Rakyat during Prime Minister's

Question Time.

He was responding to Pasir Gudang MP Hassan Abdul Karim, who questioned how many billions of ringgit government-linked investment companies (GLICs) had poured into the Battersea redevelopment over the past 15 years and what economic benefits the project had delivered to Malaysia.

"Why were we somewhat too hasty to invest overseas?" Anwar said, acknowledging that Hassan's concerns over the country's overseas investment priorities were valid.

Anwar said the government had since introduced an initial

requirement for GLICs to allocate at least 20% of their investments domestically, with the proportion to be increased according to their financial capacity and readiness.

However, he stressed that overseas investments should not be dismissed entirely, as many had generated substantial returns despite losses in certain ventures.

He said the government was adopting a more cautious approach to major investment decisions to avoid repeating past mistakes, while recognising the need for institutional investors to diversify their portfolios.

Anwar did not disclose the total

amount invested in Battersea during the exchange but said he would furnish the relevant details later.

The Battersea site was acquired in 2012 by a Malaysian consortium comprising S P Setia, Sime Darby and the Employees Provident Fund, before the restored power station opened to the public in October 2022.

In 2019, Permodalan Nasional Bhd and EPF acquired the power station's commercial assets.

The redevelopment has faced scrutiny over its financial performance, although the project's total realised losses have not been publicly established. — BY HARITH KAMAL

Over 70% of major hospitals cut emergency wait times

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
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KUALA LUMPUR: More than seven in 10 major government hospitals have brought average emergency department waiting times for ward admission below eight hours, an improvement from last year, although overcrowding remains a challenge.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad told the Dewan Rakyat that 28 of 39 major hospitals nationwide, or 71.8%, recorded average waiting times of less than eight hours as of June.

He said the hospitals included state and major specialist hospitals handling high patient volumes and referrals from district hospitals.

This was an improvement from 2025, when 55.26% of the hospitals involved recorded average waiting times for beds of less than eight hours.

Meanwhile, 94 of 103 hospitals, including minor specialist hospitals and hospitals without specialists, recorded average bed waiting times of less than four hours.

This represented 91.3% of the hospitals in the category, he added.

Responding to Port Dickson MP Datuk Seri Aminuddin Harun, who raised concerns about persistent emergency department overcrowding, Dzulkefly acknowledged the problem and said the Health Ministry continued efforts to strengthen healthcare delivery

and improve patients' experience.

Dzulkefly also said the proposed Health Services Commission may not fully deliver on expectations, as it will not have the power to create new healthcare positions or set more competitive salaries, with those powers remaining under the Public Service Department and Finance Ministry.

BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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Move to shield children from harmful video game content

➤ Proposed industry code seeks to address safety risks hidden behind child-friendly titles

CYBERJAYA: A landmark industry code is being drawn up in Malaysia to shield children from online predators, financial exploitation and inappropriate content embedded in video games without resorting to blanket bans on popular titles.

The proposed Gaming Sub-Code aims to enforce strict security defaults across digital platforms, introducing mandatory age verification, stringent controls on in-game spending, safer chat channels and streamlined reporting mechanisms for parents and young players alike.

Developed by the Communications and Multimedia Content Forum (CMCF) following recommendations from the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC), the regulatory framework seeks to address growing safety risks hidden behind child-friendly titles and gaming environments.

CMCF executive director Mediha Mahmood highlighted that video games have transformed radically over the past decade, evolving into expansive online social networks in which children regularly interact with strangers, far exceeding the scope of traditional age ratings.

"Everybody goes through the same doorway," Mediha told *theSun* during an exclusive interview at CMCF's headquarters in MCMC Tower 2.

"We want the gaming industry to grow. We want to be able to allow children and teenagers to enjoy gaming, but we need to make the environment safer for them."

"Sometimes these things happen outside of the actual game. There are some things which are not harms within the game, but there are other harms that we need to look at."

"Gaming now is completely different than what it was 10 years ago. It has become a very social environment, and there are areas where there might not be thought or focus on keeping those environments safe for children."

Evolution of digital threats

Unlike conventional age ratings that focus strictly on media content, the proposed sub-code addresses systemic operational risks embedded within modern platforms.

These include unmoderated voice channels, live streaming interactions, user-generated content, and aggressive monetisation models such as loot boxes and gacha mechanics.

CMCF senior executive for legal and compliance and lead for the Gaming Sub-Code development project Abdullah Syamil Abdul Samad said a 33-member multi-stakeholder working group was established to draft the comprehensive safeguards.

He added that the committee brings together game developers, academic researchers, child safety experts, civil society organisations and key video game industry representatives.

He cautioned that bad actors increasingly exploit games featuring world-famous, child-friendly intellectual properties (IP) precisely because they attract millions of young, vulnerable users daily.

"(The) problem is right now, games that are targeted towards kids use the most popular IP (game franchises, brands and famous characters) that are supposedly kid-friendly, have social features, have gachas and loot boxes."

"Bad actors will focus on the games that are accessible and targeted towards kids because they also want to target kids," he told *theSun*.

Abdullah Syamil said to counter the vulnerabilities, the draft code proposes comprehensive obligations for gaming providers, including explicit content warnings, clear age guidance, safer social interaction defaults, transparent spending

information, simple reporting tools and enhanced platform accountability.

Protection without prohibition

He emphasised that despite the introducing of stricter oversight, the initiative is designed to protect users at entry point rather than restrict gaming freedom or undermine Malaysia's rapidly growing esports sector.

"The approach that the gaming sub-code, together with all the working group, is not to have split games with a kid version of every single game."

"It's not to ban games. The idea is to give parental control on things such as spending, high-risk features such as voice chat, monetisation, live streams inside games and user-generated content."

Instead of forcing developers to release watered-down alternative versions, the code focuses on safety-by-default mechanics while giving parents final control over high-risk features.

"The drafting of the sub-code is not just a document, but makes gaming safer from the moment that a child downloads the game."

Regulatory teeth and enforcement

Abdullah Syamil said the proposed safeguards are being established under MCMC's broader co-regulatory framework.

He added that under this system, CMCF engages directly with industry stakeholders and conducts public consultations before submitting the finalised document to MCMC for formal registration.

He said while compliance with the code is initially voluntary for industry players, registered codes carry formal legal standing under MCMC's statutory regulatory apparatus.

He also said in cases of non-compliance, CMCF could issue written reprimands, mandate the immediate removal or modification of harmful content or impose monetary sanctions.

"This is usually when it has been either a repeat offence or a really serious offence, where we (CMCF) have the ability to fine them or sanction them up to RM50,000."

"We've never gone to the max because what we've seen is the industry is very well-behaved. If they know that they shouldn't be doing something, and it's corrected that way, they will do it," Mediha said.

Furthermore, Abdullah Syamil said Sections 99 and 100 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 empower MCMC to legally direct industry players to abide by a registered code.

He added that failure to follow an official MCMC directive carries severe consequences, with statutory penalties escalating up to RM100,000 upon enforcement, although authorities hope industry self-regulation would render formal punishment unnecessary.

He said CMCF is currently finalising its review of public feedback and expects to submit the completed draft to MCMC for registration and public announcement by the end of the year.

Once registered, the code will be published in MCMC's official registry.



Mediha (right) and Abdullah Syamil discussing the proposal during the interview in Cyberjaya.
— ADIB RAWI RAHYA / THESUN



MCA not withdrawing from Malacca polls: BN chief

► Premature to describe outcome of talks between senior leaders as positive at this stage, says party president

■ BY THESUN TEAM
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MALACCA: MCA will not sit out the state election here, said Barisan Nasional (BN) chairman Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, but party president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong swiftly disputed his assessment of their seat allocation talks, saying an agreement remains out of reach.

Zahid had earlier dismissed speculation that MCA could withdraw from the Nov 14 contest, describing discussions involving senior BN and MCA leaders as positive following Saturday's walkout during the coalition's candidate announcement.

However, hours later Wee challenged that

assessment, saying it was premature to suggest that negotiations had made sufficient progress.

"As for Ahmad Zahid's description of the outcome as 'positive', I believe we are still some distance from achieving that objective," he stressed.

"It would be premature to describe the outcome as positive at this stage.

"Both sides need to continue their discussions, and I hope we can make a breakthrough within the next day or two," he said in a Facebook statement.

Wee confirmed that BN secretary-general Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh had met him and another MCA leader at a Kuala Lumpur hotel at about 11pm on Monday.

The meeting, held on Zahid's instructions, concluded at about 1am yesterday.

While acknowledging that discussions were cordial, Wee said MCA had firmly conveyed its dissatisfaction over the allocation of seats.

He also stopped short of confirming whether MCA would contest the election, emphasising that the party's final position would be determined collectively by its

central leadership.

"Any decision on MCA's next course of action and its final position regarding the Malacca state election will be deliberated and decided collectively by the party's central leadership," he said.

Earlier in Malacca, Zahid insisted that MCA's withdrawal had never been raised during the negotiations.

"The question of MCA withdrawing did not arise at all.

"The discussions were positive. There was no fighting," he was quoted as saying by media reports.

He emphasised that Ab Rauf had been entrusted with announcing the outcome of the discussions.

The dispute erupted on Saturday when Wee led MCA leaders in a walkout during BN's candidate announcement, protesting what he described as unilateral decisions that reduced MCA's allocation from seven seats in the previous election to just two.

BN has announced plans to contest 21 of Malacca's 28 state seats, with seven reserved for PAS and its strategic allies.

With nomination day set for Saturday, both sides have just days to resolve the impasse before candidates formally enter the race.

Local companies not linked to Indonesia fires, says minister

MALACCA: Malaysia has rejected allegations linking 21 Malaysian-connected companies to forest and land fires in Indonesia, saying monitoring reports show that the blazes originated outside their plantations before spreading into the estates.

Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad said findings obtained through the Malaysian Palm Oil Board (MPOB) indicate that the fires had spread from surrounding areas amid extreme heat, rather than starting within the plantations.

"Based on the reports we received through MPOB, the fires did not start on the plantations belonging to Malaysian companies. They started elsewhere, but because of the extremely hot weather, they spread.

"However, the fires were extinguished immediately," she was quoted as saying by media reports during an open day at Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka yesterday.

She said she had instructed her office to examine the allegations against each company named in the report.

Her remarks followed claims by Indonesian environmental group Wahana Lingkungan Hidup Indonesia on Monday that 21 companies linked to Malaysian business groups were implicated in forest and land fires between January and September.

The allegations were detailed in the group's mapping analysis report "Who Are Behind the Fires?", which examined corporate links to areas affected by the blazes.

Noraini emphasised that plantation operators are bound by sustainability standards under the Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil (RSPO) as well as Malaysian Sustainable Palm Oil (MSPO) certification schemes, both of which prohibit open burning.

"Under the RSPO, open burning is not allowed at all. The MSPO is the same," she said, adding that MPOB regularly monitors compliance.

The allegations have renewed scrutiny of plantation operations in Indonesia, where recurring forest and peatland fires have raised concerns over land clearing, environmental damage and transboundary haze.

Smoke from previous fires has repeatedly affected air quality across Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia and Singapore, disrupting schools and businesses while posing public health risks.

The fires have also raised questions over plantation operators' responsibility to prevent and control blazes within their concessions, including those that spread from neighbouring land.

Meanwhile, the Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Ministry (NRES) is awaiting a response from Indonesia to Malaysia's offer of assistance in addressing the fires.

On Friday, Communications Minister Datuk Seri Fahmi Fadzil said NRES and the Foreign Ministry have yet to receive details of the firefighting assistance that Indonesian authorities are prepared to accept.

He emphasised that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated Malaysia's readiness to deploy firefighting assets.

Fahmi also said NRES Minister Datuk Seri Arthur Joseph Kurup has briefed the Cabinet on enforcement action announced by Indonesian authorities against 11 companies, maintaining that no Malaysian companies have been identified as involved in forest-burning activities.

Anwar had previously said Malaysia would not defend any local company found responsible for the fires, stressing that Indonesia should be allowed to take action against those involved. — BY THESUN TEAM

RM3m allocated to Indian religious places of worship

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PUTRAJAYA: The government has allocated RM3.28 million to strengthen 164 Hindu, Sikh and Christian places of worship serving the Indian community under the Dharma Madani and Harmoni Madani programmes.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan said the Malaysian Indian Community Transformation Unit would continue its assistance programme for Indian community places of worship, including gurdwaras and churches, to strengthen their role in community development.

"I have informed the unit's director-general to continue the programme and include as many gurdwaras and churches serving the Indian community as possible."

He said under the Harmoni Madani Programme's first series, RM1.38 million was approved for 69 places of worship, comprising 57 gurdwaras and 12 churches.

"Each received RM20,000 to support religious, spiritual, cultural and community activities. Meanwhile, RM1.9 million was approved for 95 Hindu temples under Phase Two of the Dharma Madani Programme, bringing the total allocation to RM15.42 million for 771 Hindu places of worship nationwide."

Ramanan said Phase Two of the Dharma Madani Programme is ongoing, and RM15.42 million has been approved for 771 Hindu places of worship across the country.

He also said the assistance reflects the government's commitment to strengthening places of worship and expanding their role in the socioeconomic development of the Indian community.

"The financial assistance would not only strengthen places of worship but also enable them to organise more community activities, particularly in education, spiritual and character development, cultural activities and youth empowerment."

Ramanan emphasised that the government would continue to strengthen its support for eligible places of worship to enhance their role



Ramanan said the assistance reflects the government's commitment to strengthening places of worship and expanding their role in the socioeconomic development of the Indian community.

— AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

as centres of religious activities and community development.

He also urged recipients to use the funds responsibly and effectively to ensure the community benefits from the assistance, pledging to seek additional allocations if the programmes deliver positive outcomes.

He stressed that positive feedback and tangible benefits to the community are essential to sustaining the initiatives, saying this would enable the government to expand its efforts, create better opportunities and offer greater hope to the community.

Ramanan also highlighted education initiatives under Kalvi Madani, including tuition assistance and the provision of smart boards to

Tamil schools.

"Previously, we only provided boards to selected Tamil schools based on student enrolment. Now, every Tamil school will receive one."

He added that the Peranti Madani programme would continue providing free laptops to university students, emphasising that all devices distributed are brand new rather than secondhand or refurbished.

"With the additional funding available, we are providing brand-new laptops to everyone."

Ramanan also thanked Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for increasing the unit's allocation from RM100 million to RM150 million.

Maritime officer dies in Kuala Perlis pursuit

Eleven people detained after a 15-minute chase involving suspected migrant vessel

BY THE SUN TEAM
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KANGAR: A Malaysian Maritime Enforcement Agency (MMEA) officer was killed and three others injured after their patrol boat struck a concrete structure during a pursuit of a vessel suspected of carrying undocumented Myanmar migrants off Kuala Perlis.

Kedah and Perlis Maritime director First Admiral Romli Mustaffa said five officers were on an enforcement operation off Kuala Sungai Padang at about 11pm on Oct 26 when they spotted the vessel.

The boat sped towards shore on seeing the enforcement team.

The two vessels then jostled for position during a pursuit lasting nearly 15 minutes.

"The chase and attempts to force each other aside continued for almost 15 minutes before a collision caused the MMEA boat to veer off course and become pinned against a concrete structure," Romli said at a press conference at the Kuala Perlis Maritime Zone Headquarters yesterday.

The impact threw three officers overboard.

Two were rescued with injuries, while the third was reported missing.

Despite the collision, the two officers who remained on board, one of whom was injured, continued pursuing the vessel.

"Ten shots were also fired in self-defence following the aggressive actions of the migrant boat during the operation before it was successfully intercepted at 11.45pm," Romli said.

Nine Myanmar nationals suspected of being undocumented migrants and two Thai boat skippers were detained.

All 11 face further action under existing laws.

A search and rescue operation was launched for the missing officer.

He was found floating unconscious at sea at about 1.30am.

The officer was identified as Laskar Kanan Maritim (Teknikal) Mohd Roshaimi Mohd Ridzuan, 41, of the Kedah and Perlis Maritime Headquarters intelligence unit.

He was pronounced dead and is believed to have sustained serious head injuries.

The three injured officers suffered a fractured wrist, chest pain and pain on both

sides of the ribs, respectively.

The fifth officer was unhurt.

All five were taken to Hospital Tuanku Fauziah in Kangar for examination and treatment. Mohd Roshaimi's body was subsequently sent to Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital in Alor Setar for an autopsy.

Earlier in the Dewan Rakyat, Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail expressed condolences to Mohd Roshaimi's family and described the incident as one of the occupational risks faced by maritime enforcement personnel.

Similar incidents had occurred in the Strait of Malacca and the Eastern Sabah Security Command area, he said.

Saifuddin said MMEA had been prioritised for asset upgrades over the past three to four years, including fast boats, multipurpose vessels, helicopters, drones and radar, to strengthen its operational capabilities.

In a separate Facebook post, he described Mohd Roshaimi's death as a tremendous loss to his family, loved ones and fellow MMEA personnel.

Saifuddin said Mohd Roshaimi had dedicated his energy, expertise and commitment to safeguarding Malaysia's maritime security and sovereignty throughout his service.

"Every contribution and sacrifice made by the late officer is deeply appreciated and will always be remembered."



Nine Myanmar nationals suspected of being undocumented migrants and two Thai boat skippers were detained by MMEA personnel.

Prosecutors to decide next step in *khalwat* case

SHAH ALAM: The Selangor Syariah Prosecution Department will decide whether to bring charges in the alleged *khalwat* case involving former minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad after religious authorities recorded statements from him and the woman involved.

His Syariah lawyer Muhammad Amirul Ashraf A Ghani said Nik Nazmi had cooperated fully with the Selangor Islamic Religious Department (Jais) and was questioned for more than three hours yesterday.

"At this stage, the investigation is ongoing and statements have been recorded. We will now await feedback from the prosecution department on whether charges will be brought," Muhammad Amirul said outside Jais

headquarters.

Nik Nazmi arrived at the department's office in the Sultan Idris Shah Building at 9.15am.

He left briefly at 11.30am, returned at noon to continue giving his statement and departed through a rear entrance at about 1.30pm, avoiding reporters.

Muhammad Amirul said Nik Nazmi and the woman gave their statements separately under the Selangor Syariah Criminal Offences Enactment 1995.

The investigation stems from an incident on Oct 15, when religious enforcement officers detained Nik Nazmi and a woman who was not his *mahram* over allegations that they were together in an enclosed location in

Petaling Jaya.

Nik Nazmi subsequently confirmed that he was among those detained.

No charges have been filed against him.

Parti Bersama has suspended Nik Nazmi from official party activities for three months, until Jan 19, 2027.

Party president Ahmad Syukri Che Abdul Razab said the matter needed to be addressed appropriately.

Muhammad Amirul said concerns over an allegedly leaked video and photographs showing Nik Nazmi's movements before the enforcement operation would be raised at a later stage.

"For now, our priority is to complete the investigation." – by **theSun Team**

Principal lodges report over assault video

IPOH: A school principal in Bagan Datuk facing allegations that he sexually harassed a Form Three student lodged a police report on Sunday over a viral video showing him being attacked by the student's family.

Perak police chief Datuk Mohd Alwi Zainal Abidin said the 56-year-old principal filed the report after the video circulated online.

Police are investigating the matter under Section 323 of the Penal Code for voluntarily causing hurt and Section 233 of the Communications and Multimedia Act 1998 for improper use of network facilities and services.

"Our findings indicate that the student's family attacked the principal after he was accused of calling the student to express his romantic feelings for her," Mohd Alwi said at a press conference at the Perak police headquarters yesterday.

Police have recorded statements from nine people so far, including the principal.

In a separate investigation, Mohd Alwi said police were looking into a report lodged by the student's mother under Section 15(a) of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017.

The allegations against the principal surfaced in a Threads post claiming that he had sent the student inappropriate messages, including one saying "I love you".

Education Minister Datuk Seri Fadhlina Sidek has directed the Perak Education Department to investigate the allegations. – Bernama

Microsleep caused crash, says lorry driver

IPOH: The lorry driver involved in a crash that injured two journalists in Menglembu last Sunday told police he had experienced a microsleep before the collision.

Perak police chief Datuk Mohd Alwi Zainal Abidin said investigations were continuing.

The 35-year-old driver tested negative for drugs and had no criminal record.

"The lorry driver has given a statement. Whatever the reason, it is still an offence because he hit the vehicle from behind. We will take the necessary action," Mohd Alwi said at a press conference at the Perak police contingent headquarters yesterday.

Police have yet to obtain dashcam footage from any party and there was no closed-circuit television coverage of the crash site.

The two journalists, Bernama's Nur Afiradina Arshad, 34, and New Straits Times journalist Zahratulhayat Mat Arif, 37, were injured when the lorry struck their car at about 5.45am.

They were travelling in a sedan to cover a programme involving Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi in Bagan Datuk. – Bernama

Businessman claims trial over cheating

SHAH ALAM: A businessman pleaded not guilty at the Sessions Court yesterday to cheating a man of RM1.65 million in a deal to purchase a durian orchard in Raub in February 2024.

Chan Huann Heng, 58, was charged with deceiving the 66-year-old victim into transferring RM1.65 million from a company account through an invoice for the purchase of the orchard.

The offence was allegedly committed at a clubhouse in Jalan Kelab Tropicana, Petaling district, on Feb 5, 2024, under Section 420 of the Penal Code (Act 574).

If convicted, Chan, a CEO of a vegetable import and export company faces up to 10 years' imprisonment, whipping and a fine.

Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission deputy public prosecutor Muaz Ahmad Khairuddin proposed bail of RM100,000 with one surety, citing the substantial amount involved. – Bernama

PORT DICKSON: Designed like a traditional Malay village house with a classic touch, Warong Nora in Kampung Permatang Pasir, Linggi here offers more than just traditional Negeri Sembilan cuisine.

It invites visitors to step back in time and experience the charm of rural life in days gone by.

Located about 40km from Seremban, the family-run eatery is adorned with various antiques that seem to transport visitors to a bygone era.

However, beyond the old furniture and household items decorating the premises, one attraction stands out: a collection of vintage telephones spanning different eras, shapes as well as designs.

From home telephones that once connected families and friends to public payphones that have become increasingly rare, each item has its own story to tell, earning Warong Nora a reputation among visitors as a mini telephone museum.

Among the most eye-catching exhibits is a public telephone more than 70 years old that not only sparks curiosity, but also serves as a popular backdrop for visitors to take photographs and record videos.

The unique collection reflects the deep interest of its owner Hamdzan Ali, 69, who began collecting old telephones in the 1990s.

Over the years, his hobby grew into a personal collection that not only filled his home in Taman Tuanku Jaafar, Senawang, but also became a distinctive feature of Warong Nora.

"Many visitors are attracted to the designs of the telephones here, some dating back to the 1960s to the 1980s, in addition to the food we serve.

"They say our eatery is different

Family eatery offers traditional food and vintage phones

» Warong Nora has earned reputation among visitors as mini museum, with its collection spanning different eras, shapes and designs



Hamdzan (right), posing with his wife, travelled to various parts of the state in search of old treasures, building a collection estimated to number nearly 1,000 items, with total expenditure amounting to hundreds of thousands of ringgit. — BERNAMAPIC

from the cafes and restaurants with antique decorations they have visited before. Since I used to work at Telekom Malaysia, it was not too difficult for me to obtain old telephones that were no longer in use."

Hamdzan said his collection comprises telephones of various types and designs, including those once used in homes and public payphones, which were an essential facility in people's daily lives in the past.

The retiree travelled to various parts of the state in search of old treasures, building a collection estimated to number nearly 1,000 items, with total expenditure amounting to hundreds of thousands of ringgit.

All the items are carefully stored and maintained at his home.

However, when almost every corner of the house had been filled with antiques, the idea emerged to open Warong Nora on a plot of land belonging to his wife Che Tom Md Dom, 66, in Linggi.

Together with his son-in-law Safuan Mohd Pikri, 40, and his second child Norashimah Hamdzan, Hamdzan established the eatery as a space to share his passion for antiques with the public.

At the same time, the family introduced traditional Negeri Sembilan cuisine, with smoked *baung* fish cooked in *masak lemak cili api* (a rich, spicy coconut milk gravy) among its signature dishes.

Prepared by Norashimah and her mother Che Tom, the generations-old recipe is cooked only upon receiving

customers' orders to preserve the freshness and authentic flavour of the dish.

"People who visit Linggi will certainly look for smoked *baung* fish cooked in *masak lemak cili api*. What makes Warong Nora special is that we use wild *baung* fish caught from rivers rather than farmed fish.

"We continue to preserve Linggi's traditional cooking methods, using fresh turmeric, bird's eye chillies and fresh coconut milk.

"What makes Linggi's smoked fish *masak lemak cili api* special is the use of Vietnamese coriander leaves, which enhance its aroma, and calamansi lime, which adds a tangy flavour. Some districts use bilimbi, but we opt for calamansi lime to preserve our traditional taste," he said, adding that the eatery also offers other traditional village dishes.

Safuan added that Warong Nora operates only three days a week, namely Friday, Saturday and Sunday, Bernama reported.

"We are not focused on profit. What matters to us is allowing visitors to experience the authentic taste of Linggi's traditional cuisine.

"Aside from that, our eatery offers a place for customers to relive fond memories of village life and their mothers' home cooking."

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Strengthen energy security, Asean told

► 'Improve preparedness for supply disruptions'

SINGAPORE: Asean must strengthen energy security, accelerate regional electricity connectivity and mobilise investment for energy projects to meet growing demand and improve the region's resilience, said its Secretary-General Dr Kao Kim Hourn.

He said these three priorities were closely linked and important to translating regional energy cooperation commitments into practical outcomes for member states.

"The priority now is to turn this commitment into practical results," he said in his keynote address at the Singapore International Energy Week Summit here.

Kao said Asean must improve its preparedness for energy supply disruptions, diversify its sources of supply and enhance

energy efficiency amid uncertainties in energy markets.

He also stressed the importance of regional cooperation in sharing information, conducting joint emergency exercises and strengthening arrangements to coordinate responses to potential disruptions.

On electricity connectivity, Kao said the Asean Power Grid could enable countries to share resources, transfer electricity to areas of demand and provide mutual support during supply disruptions.

He said the Laos-Thailand-Malaysia-Singapore Power Integration Project had demonstrated that multilateral electricity trade could work, providing a foundation for expanding regional cooperation.

However, he said stronger electricity interconnections would need to be supported by coordinated planning, transparent cross-border trading rules and reliable infrastructure, including arrangements for maintaining and repairing submarine cables.

Kao said governments, private investors and multilateral financial institutions must work together to finance energy infrastructure and ensure regional plans could be translated into deliverable projects.

"I would encourage financial institutions to engage early and remain involved throughout the coordination effort.

"Different projects and stages of development require different forms of financing, grants and support for project operations."

Kao said governments need to establish clear rules for cross-border electricity trade and fair risk-sharing arrangements to encourage investment.

"Our cooperation will succeed when projects are completed and deliver tangible benefits across the region."

He said Singapore's Asean chairmanship next year would provide an opportunity to advance regional energy commitments and strengthen implementation. - Bernama



CELEBRATIONS BEGIN ... A Thai Buddhist monk walking next to a float at a parade during Chak Phra Buddhist Festival in Narathiwat yesterday. The festival celebrates the conclusion of the annual three-month 'rains retreat' known as Phansa, when monks seclude themselves in temples for reflection. - AFP/PPIC

Singapore, Indonesia reaffirm ties amid tensions

JAKARTA: Indonesia and Singapore are looking to set up a joint task force to deal with haze from Indonesia's wildfires, the countries' foreign ministers said yesterday, as they met to reaffirm their ties after weeks of simmering tensions.

The visit to Jakarta by Singapore Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan (pic) came amid mounting frustrations in the city-state over the transboundary haze generated by Indonesia's most intense forest fires in 11 years.

After a two-hour meeting, Singapore and Indonesia's top diplomats discussed establishing a task force that would enable the countries to share information, gather cross-border evidence and potentially even recover assets from companies linked to the forest fires, Indonesia's Foreign Minister Arrmanatha Nasir said.

"We must follow the money trail these companies have left behind.

"Singapore offered to share data on

companies linked to the fires," Nasir said.

"No border should shield those who profit from burning our forests."

Indonesia has previously launched criminal investigations into companies linked to the fires.

Nasir added that the two countries were mature enough to talk candidly about the fires, which have caused a spike in respiratory illnesses in Indonesia and engulfed neighbouring Singapore, Malaysia and East Timor in smoke.

"Singapore stands in solidarity with Indonesia. (Haze) is a common problem, and one that we can best achieve collectively," Balakrishnan said after the meeting.

Both foreign ministers said yesterday that the first victims of the haze were Indonesians, with Balakrishnan vowing to crack down on companies registered in Singapore found to be responsible for the fires.

In their remarks, neither minister

mentioned the tensions arising from Jakarta's decision to cut gas supplies to the city-state.

Jakarta cut pipelined gas to Singapore by about 8% as of Saturday, saying it was safeguarding domestic supplies.

Singapore generates up to 95% of its electricity from natural gas, and though the supply cut from Indonesia amounts to less than 2% of daily demand, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said on Sunday that he expects contract signatories to "honour their commitments".

Indonesia's energy minister, Bahlil Lahadalia, hit back on Monday, saying the amount of gas now being supplied to Singapore met the minimum level stipulated under their agreement.

"Our nation is a nation that honours contracts, rules. So don't lecture Indonesia on how to honour contracts," Bahlil said.

Veteran Singaporean diplomat Bilahari Kausikan called the gas cuts an "attempt at intimidation" but said they would be ineffectual. - Reuters

Myanmar woman files war crimes complaint

COPENHAGEN: A Myanmar citizen residing in Denmark on Monday filed a complaint with Danish authorities over alleged war crimes.

The complainant, Ngun Siang Dim, who is from the Chin minority, claims she saw 40 houses burn down in her village in Chin State, in western Myanmar, and that several members of her family and friends were killed or left permanently disabled by landmines.

The 39-year-old said children can no longer go to school, "and jet fighters keep (dropping) bombs, they destroy our houses. They have tortured a lot emotionally too".

Like thousands of others, she fled Myanmar, first to India and then Thailand, and has lived in Denmark since 2023.

Other Myanmar citizens living in Denmark could join the complaint, which allows Danish police "to start up an investigation on potential international crimes and human rights violations committed against our clients and also communities in Myanmar", said Eddie Khawaja, a lawyer representing the complainant.

"This is a very important step in being able to tell this story, not only for her, but also to denounce the crimes," said Tracy Bawi Hlei, president of Myanmar Action Group Denmark.

Since 2025, Denmark has adopted the principle of universal jurisdiction, allowing for the prosecution of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide. The principle permits judgment of such alleged crimes regardless of where they were committed, as long as the complainant or the alleged perpetrator is in Denmark.

In early February, the Chin Human Rights Organisation announced that East Timor had appointed a prosecutor to investigate a war crimes case. - AFP

Kalimantan residents pray for clear skies

PALANGKARAYA: Sudarsono shuddered as he inhaled from an oxygen tank while being evacuated from his small house here.

The 57-year-old fell sick after going out with three friends days earlier to fight fires creeping closer to the city in Central Kalimantan.

"I wore a mask, goggles, everything, but I was surrounded by smoke. I went home since I couldn't take it anymore," the farmer said as he was taken into an ambulance last week.

"I hope that there will be no more haze, that Central Kalimantan will be free from fires so people can feel safe, work and earn a living."

He is among more than 11,000 people treated for respiratory infections here.

More than 300,000 people in seven provinces were laid low by respiratory tract infections from August to October, the Health Ministry reported.

At a shelter in Palangkaraya, Alexandra Surya Habsari was treated with a nebuliser and oxygen for breathing difficulties and a headache.

"I'm fed up, but I don't know who I'm supposed to be angry with ... this is beyond what can be considered normal for a human being to endure," Alexandra said.

The toxic smog emitted by wildfires contains harmful elements including formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide and ammonia, as well as PM2.5 particles small enough to penetrate the lungs or bloodstream.

The World Health Organisation has linked PM2.5 exposure to increased illness and death.

Deforestation monitor Nusantara Atlas says fires have consumed more than 1.9 million hectares in the nine months to September.

The Health Ministry said it has set up nearly 500 facilities where people can access free oxygen and treatment for haze-related ailments.

Nearly 300 of them are in Central Kalimantan. The local government has also deployed buses with oxygen tanks around Palangkaraya.

One beneficiary, Siti Jumati, said: "On this bus, I can get help breathing for free."

Alexandra, 43, said: "We're supposed to be able to see the blue sky, breathe in oxygen, see the sun and enjoy clean air." - AFP



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Reparations calls to dog King Charles's Caribbean trip

Commonwealth heads meeting to discuss issue

LONDON: King Charles III began a tour of the Caribbean yesterday, overshadowed by calls to apologise and pay reparations for the slave trade, which he has called the "darkest days" of British history.

The 77-year-old king, who is receiving treatment for an undisclosed form of cancer, will embark on a jam-packed trip to some of the furthest corners of the Commonwealth taking in three countries in nine days.

He will first make solo visits to the Bahamas and Guyana, before being joined by his wife, Queen Camilla, for the final leg in Antigua and Barbuda, where he will address the bi-annual meeting of Commonwealth heads of government.

The programme will "not shy away from

'the darkest days of our past,' as His Majesty has described them," a Buckingham Palace spokesperson said, ahead of the tour of the former colonies.

Several of them have demanded the king takes the next step in making amends for colonisation and the transatlantic slave trade, which his ancestors profited off for centuries.

Last month Jamaica, where Charles is head of state, filed a petition in an appeals court in London "to advance Jamaica's push for reparations for the African ancestors who suffered under hundreds of years of enslavement".

Few in royal circles will have forgotten a 2022 turbulent trip to Jamaica by Prince William, when he and Princess Catherine were met with protests and calls for reparations.

Guyana President Irfaan Ali told ITV News the king's recognition of the "darkest days" was just the "first step".

"Now, moving to the apology is the next step," said Irfaan.

Modern monarchs have to various degrees expressed remorse for Britain's central role in chattel slavery, but none has yet formally apologised, and debt-laden London has balked at the idea of financial compensation.

Commonwealth Secretary-General Shirley Ayorkor Botchwey told Sky News that it "wouldn't hurt" for the king to apologise.

Botchwey also said the "time has come" to discuss reparations, in the form of financial payments or otherwise.

While she refused to elaborate on whether the UK government and royals should pursue slavery reparations, she said the issue would be on the table in St John's.

"What will happen in Antigua and Barbuda may be that the leaders will have a discussion on reparatory justice," said Botchwey, adding the Commonwealth would "support" countries in the talks.

"The Commonwealth has been an organisation that has never shied away from difficult situations." - AFP

Manga legend Chiba dies at 87

TOKYO: Tetsuya Chiba (pic), a titan of Japanese manga best known for the legendary boxing series *Ashita no Joe*, has died aged 87, his publishers said yesterday.



Chiba's works often told stories about the physical and mental growth of young athletes across various sports including golf, boxing and the martial art kendo, while also showing the poverty, despair, joy and optimism of ordinary life in postwar Japan.

Ashita no Joe, published in the 1960s through the 1970s, featured a troubled young man who learns boxing in a juvenile detention centre and rises through the professional ranks to engage in epic rivalries.

The series became a cultural phenomenon.

Fans held a funeral after Joe's main rival died in the story. Older fans can casually recite lines from the work, which also spawned enormously popular anime series, movies, video games, television commercials and theatrical productions.

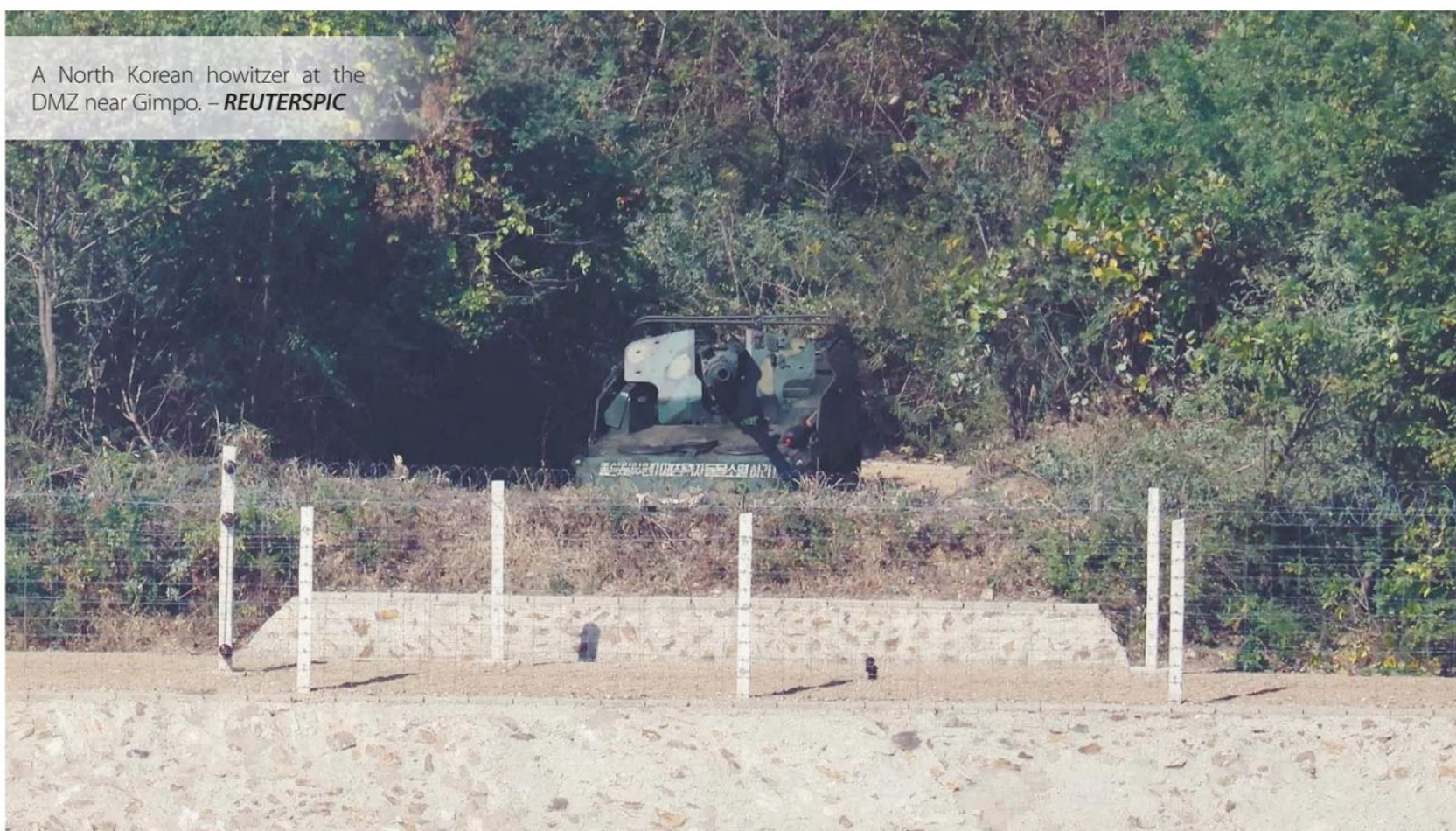
Chiba, with a seven-decade career, also taught at university level, led the Japan Cartoonists Association, and received a number of Japanese cultural accolades, including the enormously prestigious Order of Culture, given to people who have made a significant contribution to art, science and culture.

Major publisher Kodansha has honoured his legacy with the Tetsuya Chiba Award for young manga artists for the past 46 years.

"Countless rookie manga artists took master Chiba's words to heart as they embarked on the path to becoming professionals, and many of them are still active today," the firm said in a statement, adding that he died last Thursday.

Another publisher Shogakukan credited him with helping to shape Japan's manga culture and capturing the hearts of generations of fans.

"For 70 years, master Tetsuya Chiba has been at the forefront of the manga world. He created countless masterpieces," it said. - AFP



A North Korean howitzer at the DMZ near Gimpo. - REUTERS/PIC

North Korean artillery pointed south stirs concern

GIMPO: Visitors to a South Korean observatory that overlooks North Korea said yesterday that the appearance of artillery pieces with their barrels pointed south on the border was worrying, as tensions between the two countries intensify.

The two Koreas have traded barbs and strengthened their postures along the Demilitarised Zone (DMZ) separating them since September, after a mine blast wounded three South Korean soldiers. South Korea has demanded that North Korea apologise, while Pyongyang has accused Seoul of fabricating the incident.

Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korea's leader, said last Thursday that Pyongyang would place loudspeakers that can blast anti-South Korean propaganda on standby along the entire border within days and had put unspecified new countermeasures on alert.

On Friday, South Korean media photographed an armoured vehicle in clear view near the frontier. By Monday, there were three with their gun barrels pointed south.

"I'd only seen on TV that North Korea had deployed 122-mm artillery but seeing the area in person makes me realise just how real the danger is," Jang Gil-seong, an 83-year-old war veteran who fought in the Vietnam War, said outside the Aegibong observatory, which overlooks North Korea's Kaepung county from about 1.4 km away.

"I'm really concerned about how much South Korea will need to do."

The DMZ remains a draw for foreign and local tourists despite periodic flare-ups in tensions between the two Koreas, which remain technically at war.

Hannah Robbins, a 28-year-old tourist from Canada, said her tour group had only found out about the artillery pieces after their guide told

them about the weapons at the observatory.

"We're a bit scared obviously," she said. "The tour guide was like 'don't worry, they won't shoot' but then it's a bit of a worry that we have right now."

Analysts identified the weapons as M-1981 122-mm self-propelled howitzers, an older North Korean artillery system believed to have entered service in the late 1970s.

They have a maximum range of about 24km, putting areas such as the South Korean town of Gimpo where the observatory is located within reach, although they are less powerful than newer artillery systems, said Yang Uk, a military expert at Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

"I would view this more as a display of firepower than a meaningful increase in combat capability," Yang said.

"The fact that it was positioned where it can be easily seen suggests it was deployed to be noticed." - Reuters

Data protection group takes aim at Scale

VIENNA: A data protection group said yesterday it was filing five legal complaints in Europe against San Francisco-based startup Scale AI over the way its training platform Outlier handles data.

The European Centre for Digital Rights, known as Noyb, is filing two complaints in Austria, one in France, one in the Netherlands and another in Italy.

Outlier recruits freelancers and subject-matter experts to help train, evaluate and improve artificial intelligence models.

According to Noyb, it uses more than 900,000 freelancers to evaluate and correct the responses of AI systems, with customers including Meta, OpenAI, Google and the US government.

Outlier "collects huge amounts of personal data and forces workers to go through an invasive biometric verification to earn money", the NGO said.

"In Europe, this far-reaching workplace surveillance clearly violates the workers' fundamental right to data protection," it said.

Noyb alleges that while workers are on the Outlier platform, trackers from companies such as TikTok, LinkedIn and Facebook are placed on their devices and given access to personal data.

This includes IP addresses, contact details and data that can be used for targeted advertising and profiling, the group said.

It also alleges that Scale AI forces workers to repeatedly go through a biometric verification process. - AFP

Netanyahu's political survival on the line

➤ No Israeli party has clear path to power

TEL AVIV: Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a fight for political survival yesterday in an election seen by many Israelis as the most consequential in the country's history and a referendum on his leadership since the 2023 attacks.

The vote follows a turbulent period for Israel, shaped by the trauma of the Oct 7 attacks, wars in Gaza, Lebanon and with Iran, deepening international isolation, and the divisive policies of Netanyahu's right-wing coalition.

Yet Netanyahu, Israel's longest-serving leader with 19 years in office, remains a formidable survivor, with nationalist politics increasingly entrenched and Israel's fragmented system potentially leaving him best placed to form a government.

Opinion polls show a close race between Netanyahu's Likud party and its right-wing allies and a rival alliance led by Gadi Eisenkot, a former military chief of staff and security hawk with backers on the right and in the centre.

Netanyahu has campaigned on his wartime leadership and his alliance with US President Donald Trump, who has endorsed him and joined Israel in waging war on Iran. Netanyahu said on Sunday that Trump was prepared to act again to "finally" remove the Iranian threat, but only if Netanyahu remained in power.

Eisenkot has accused Netanyahu of "relying on a campaign of fear-mongering, lies and threats" and said he was confident Trump would work "in full cooperation with any leader chosen by the people".

Netanyahu may again depend on far-right leaders Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich to form a government.

Both have faced sanctions from some Western countries that accuse them of inciting violence against Palestinians, while Ben-Gvir's Jewish Power party has gained support in opinion polls.



Yousef Jabareen, leader of Israel's Arab-led Joint List political alliance, casts his ballot at a polling station in the Arab-Israeli town of Umm al-Fahm. – AFP

Neither Netanyahu nor Eisenkot has a clear path to power. If neither can form a governing coalition in the 120-seat parliament, Netanyahu could stay on as caretaker until another election is held next year.

The Israeli Central Election Committee said 7.3 million Israelis are eligible to vote, some 330,000 of them for the first time.

For many of Netanyahu's opponents, the election turns on accountability for the security failures of Oct 7. Opposition groups have promised a national inquiry.

Eldad Shaaltiel, a volunteer with

Eisenkot's Yashar party, said he had come early to hang campaign posters outside a Jerusalem polling station, aiming to sway the potentially critical pool of still wavering voters.

Some 13% of Israeli voters have yet to decide how they will vote, according to data collected by the Viterbi Family Centre for Public Opinion and Policy Research at the Israel Democracy Institute.

Nilli Mor, a volunteer for the Democrats party led by former general Yair Golan, another opponent of Netanyahu, said she

was campaigning "to try and bring a new day to Israel, a better day with hope and great change".

A high turnout among voters from Israel's Arab minority – Israeli by citizenship but Palestinian by heritage – could help nudge Israel's complex coalition arithmetic in favour of Eisenkot.

Though Eisenkot has ruled out partnering with Arab parties, citing a lack of shared values, analysts see a scenario where they could prop up a minority government he leads to ensure Netanyahu is removed from office. – Reuters

BRIEFS

IRAN PRESIDENT, QATAR RULER MEET

TEHRAN: Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian met Qatar's Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani in Moscow yesterday on the sidelines of an energy forum. "The two sides reviewed the state of relations between Tehran and Doha and emphasised the importance of deepening political and economic ties and making use of existing potential to strengthen bilateral cooperation," state television said. There was no mention of discussion of the Middle East war. The meeting took place on the sidelines of a summit of the Gas Exporting Countries Forum in Moscow. Qatar has taken part in recent months in mediation efforts to end the war which has spread across the region. – AFP

DUBLIN KICKOFF FOR FREE PALESTINE TOUR

DUBLIN: US rapper Macklemore on Monday launched his "Free Palestine Tour" in Dublin after being dropped as a supporting act by British pop star Ed Sheeran over pro-Palestinian comments. Excited fans praised the 43-year-old's stance. "Macklemore's support for Palestine is huge. He's stood up and he's put himself on the line instead of taking the easy way out," said Michael Keating, a 31-year-old who works in insurance. "He's risking his popularity, his future, his family's future ... everything just for peace. And it is very important." Last month Macklemore announced his tour, with shows in London and Paris this month and US dates also planned, saying all proceeds would benefit pro-Palestinian organisations. – AFP

Trump hits back at Obama

JOINT BASE ANDREWS: US President Donald Trump hit back at Barack Obama on Monday after the former president jokingly said his successor's White House looked as if it were a cheesecake restaurant run by Saddam Hussein.

"For you to say it's a Cheesecake Factory, that just shows why you were a lousy president," Trump said in a three-minute diatribe when asked about Obama's comments over the weekend.

"Guys like Obama, they would pass the front door, they would see the broken masonry ... He doesn't notice dirt and filth where the walls haven't been cleaned for years," Trump said.

Cheesecake Factory is a popular restaurant chain known for its lengthy list of indulgent dishes and an eclectic interior design.

Obama made a series of scathing criticisms of Republican Trump's "chaos and cruelty" as he hit the stump for Democrats in Ohio and Michigan ahead of next week's midterm elections.

But it was Obama's jabs at billionaire Trump's prized renovations at the White House – including building a massive ballroom and adding gold-leafed ornamentation throughout the Oval Office – that really appeared to sting.

"He's got the White House looking like Saddam Hussein opened a Cheesecake Factory," Obama said on Saturday. – AFP

Truce begins in Russian-occupied Ukraine city

KYIV: A truce between Ukraine and Russia aimed at allowing humanitarian aid into the Russian-occupied city of Oleshky entered into force early yesterday, after it was announced by US First Lady Melania Trump last week.

Both sides said they would observe the truce.

The war-ravaged city in Ukraine's southern Kherson region has been caught in middle of the fighting since 2022, when it was seized by Russian forces at the start of their invasion.

Former residents said earlier this year that those remaining in the city were starving, lacked medicine and could not easily leave.

The Russian Ministry of Defence said the truce was in effect.

"In connection with preparations for a humanitarian operation in the area of Oleshky, Kherson Oblast, (Russian forces) have ceased fire in the Kherson sector and introduced a regime of silence," the ministry said on its Telegram channel.

Ukraine's human rights commissioner Dmytro Lubinets said the country was "fulfilling its commitments" to the ceasefire.

"The sides are adhering to the agreements that we reached," he said on Telegram.

Kyiv continued to be a target for Russian strikes. The Ukrainian air

force command issued nearly a dozen messages yesterday warning of ballistic missiles fired towards the capital.

Mayor Vitaly Klitschko said a strike hit the Southern Bridge, one of Kyiv's main bridges, and damaged its metro infrastructure.

The ceasefire, which applies to a limited area, comes as the Ukraine war grinds through its fifth year.

Three-way peace talks between Washington, Moscow and Kyiv are set to resume next month after a months-long hiatus.

Neither Russia, Ukraine nor the United States have said who would monitor the truce or given details

about the humanitarian operation set to accompany it.

Announcing last Friday that she had brokered the ceasefire, Melania Trump said civilian officials from both Russia and Ukraine would visit residents in their homes and "determine the level of assistance they require".

"Residents who wish to evacuate will receive coordinated support and transport to their preferred destination. I anticipate some will want to go to Russia, and some to Ukraine," she said.

Neither Russia nor Ukraine have said how long the truce would last. – AFP



COMMENT by Dr Ng Kwan Hoong

Seeing beyond sight

OVER the past few months, I have been making regular trips to Methodist College Kuala Lumpur in Brickfields. Directly opposite the college stands the Malaysian Association for the Blind, a familiar landmark that thousands of motorists pass every day. And yet, it is easy not to notice it.

Cars, buses and motorcycles weave through the streets. Pedestrians move quickly towards offices, shops, restaurants and train stations. The rhythm is constant, purposeful and, at times, hurried. It is only when one pauses briefly that another layer of the scene begins to emerge.

Amid this movement, I have started to notice visually impaired men and women making their way through the busy neighbourhood, many walking alone, guided by the steady tapping of a white cane. Their steps are measured and attentive, shaped by a world they experience differently from most of us.

At first, what stood out to me was their determination. But over time, something else began to trouble me. It was not their difficulty but how easily they could be overlooked.

The greatest challenge is often crossing the street. For those of us with sight, this is a routine act. We glance at traffic, judge distances and move instinctively, repeating the process so often that we rarely think about it.

For a visually impaired person, the same act unfolds very differently. I have watched individuals standing quietly at the roadside, listening carefully to the flow of traffic, waiting for a moment that feels safe. There is no eye contact with drivers, no visual confirmation that they have been seen. What guides them instead is sound, experience and judgement shaped over time.

Around them, traffic continues. Many motorists, myself included at times, move forward without realising what is happening just a few steps away. Not out of indifference but out of habit.

We are focused on where we are going, and the few seconds required to slow down or stop can feel longer than

they are. And yet, every so often, something changes. A passer-by notices, walks over and gently offers an arm. Together they cross the road, without announcement or expectation, the moment passing almost unnoticed by others.

Once seen, however, it is difficult to forget. These encounters have led me to reflect on something we rarely question. We often speak of sight as our most important sense, and in many ways it is. It allows us to recognise faces, read words and move through the world with confidence.

Yet seeing, I am beginning to realise, is not the same as noticing. We can pass a familiar building countless times without registering its presence, share the same space with others and remain unaware of their experience or look directly at a situation and still fail to understand what it asks of us.

In this sense, the challenge is not always the absence of sight but the absence of attention. The visually impaired individuals I encounter in Brickfields are not defined by what they lack. They commute, attend classes, run errands and organise their lives with a quiet independence.

Their white canes are not symbols of helplessness but tools that enable them to navigate a world that is not always designed with them in mind. What is less visible, however, is how much of their journey depends on the attentiveness of others.

Infrastructure matters, of course. Audible signals, safer crossings and accessible spaces all play an important role. But beyond these, there is something more immediate and more human: a moment of awareness, a willingness to pause and a decision to respond.

A few seconds of patience from a driver may not seem like much, yet for someone standing at the roadside, it can mean the difference between uncertainty and confidence, between hesitation and movement. Such gestures are rarely noticed in a broader sense but they shape how a space is experienced by those within it.

"Vision, in this sense, is not about what the eyes can see but about what we allow ourselves to recognise. It is the capacity to notice what is present, even when it does not demand our attention."



What is less visible is how much visually impaired individuals rely on the attentiveness of others along their journey. – **AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN**

Helen Keller once wrote: "The only thing worse than being blind is having sight but no vision." Her words are often quoted but perhaps not always considered.

Vision, in this sense, is not about what the eyes can see but about what we allow ourselves to recognise. It is the capacity to notice what is present, even when it does not demand our attention.

In Brickfields, this lesson appears quietly, without instruction. It is there in the steady tapping of a cane, in the pause before crossing a busy road and in the brief moment when one person notices another and chooses to act. These are not dramatic events and they do not call

attention to themselves but they reveal something about the kind of society we are becoming.

Perhaps the measure of a community is not only how efficiently it moves but how attentively it sees, not only in what is visible but in what is often overlooked. And perhaps, in learning to notice again, we begin to understand what it truly means to see beyond sight.

Dr Ng Kwan Hoong is an emeritus professor of Biomedical Imaging at the Faculty of Medicine, Universiti Malaya. A 2020 Merdeka Award recipient, he is a medical physicist by training. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

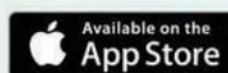
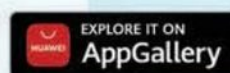


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Decoding scammer language

COMMENT by Tamilhiile Manggai G. Mohgan

BY shifting our focus from victim-blaming to conversational analysis, we can dismantle the coercive scripts behind financial fraud.

"You should have been more careful." "Foolish people lose money like that." "Uneducated." "Greedy." "Use your brain." These are the harsh words scam victims often hear after losing their money. Instead of receiving sympathy and support, they are frequently blamed for what happened to them.

But before we point a finger at a scam victim, we should pause and ask: Was the victim really making decisions in a neutral state of mind?

In almost every case, the answer is no. A scam phone call suddenly confronts a person with intense fear, artificial urgency, aggressive authority and uncertainty.

Under severe emotional pressure, critical thinking degrades. By the time the victim realises something is wrong, the money is already gone, leaving behind deep financial loss, embarrassment and trauma.

Telling a victim "You should have known better" does not recover lost funds. Calling someone "stupid" does

not prevent the next crime. Victim blaming simply silences people, keeping critical scam patterns hidden.

This brings us to a more important question: Why do even educated, careful and experienced people fall for scams? To answer this, we must look beyond the victim and examine what the scammer is actually doing.

Scammers are not merely people who lie; they deliberately construct conversations engineered to manipulate how a person thinks, feels and responds. In other words, scams are linguistic events.

Scammers know how to weaponise language against us, so we need to use linguistic analysis to recognise and break their tactics.

How scammers weaponise language: **➤ Impersonation:** Scammers often impersonate police officers, government officials, bank managers or tax agents.

By adopting formal language, precise administrative titles and local details, such as "I'm Aida, inspector from IPD Muar, Johor. We need your address and IC to double-confirm your information", they exploit our natural tendency to respect authority. The formal phrases and explicit local references make the call sound authentic, even though

"Scammers are not merely people who lie; they deliberately construct conversations engineered to manipulate how a person thinks, feels and responds."

sounding official is not the same as being official.

➤ Manufactured urgency: Scammers want victims to act before they have time to verify facts or consult family. When a scammer claims that "...the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission wants to bar all your lines and may blacklist you", the conversation shifts from a standard inquiry to an immediate crisis. Driven by fear of severe disruption, victims focus on solving the perceived threat rather than checking if the threat is genuine.

➤ Enforced isolation: A critical instruction in many scam scripts is "Do not discuss this matter with anyone". While framed as official confidentiality, its real objective is isolation. A third party, a colleague, relative or friend can easily interrupt the scammer's narrative by asking simple, objective questions. Secrecy keeps the victim trapped in the scammer's psychological grip.

➤ Fear: Scammers use legal threats to induce panic. Statements like "This enquiry could cause actions to be taken against you legally under the Official Secrets Act", are delivered, not to inform, but to terrify.

Words like legal action, blacklist, arrest and penalty carry heavy psychological weight. Delivered in a calm, authoritative tone, they effectively paralyse critical judgement.

Reframing the public response

When a victim loses money, they lose far more than a figure on a bank statement. They lose months or years of hard work, time and security saved for retirement, education or healthcare. Preventing these losses requires a fundamental shift in how society responds.

Instead of asking victim-blaming questions, we must start asking diagnostic questions: "What did the scammer say?" and "How did they make you feel?"

Sharing scam experiences provides crucial intelligence. When victims report hearing similar phrases, threats and instructions, those linguistic patterns become public knowledge that can protect others.

Recognising the warning signs, demands for immediate action, threats of legal arrest, instructions for secrecy and hyper-formal language allows potential victims to pause, verify and stay safe.

The fight against financial fraud is not only about banking security or legal enforcement but also about language. Scammers weaponise language; by analysing it, we can break their code.

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An ageing nation needs a caring economy

COMMENT by Dr Wan Farisan Wan Sulaiman

IMAGINE a typical Malaysian family 10 years from now: The parents are in their 70s; their adult children are working, perhaps in another city; and they are raising their own children while managing increasingly demanding careers.

Then comes a simple but uncomfortable question: Who will care for our parents when they can no longer care for themselves?

For generations, Malaysia has largely relied on families to provide care. Looking after children, elderly parents and family members with disabilities has traditionally taken place at home, often unpaid and with women shouldering a disproportionate share of the responsibility.

But Malaysia is changing. We are ageing, families are shrinking, people are living longer and younger Malaysians are increasingly mobile. Care can no longer be seen as solely a family responsibility; it is also an economic challenge.

The 13th Malaysia Plan (13th MP) provides an important opportunity to integrate the care economy into Malaysia's development strategy. A report by Isis Malaysia estimates the country's care economy to be worth around RM379 billion.

This requires care to become a central part of economic policymaking. Ageing cuts across health, employment, social protection, housing, transport and skills development, making fragmented policies inadequate.

Malaysia needs an integrated care ecosystem that brings together the government, communities, families, businesses and civil society.

Economically, we must rethink care. Often seen as a cost, it also creates economic value. An ageing population will drive growing demand for caregivers, nurses, physiotherapists, community-care workers, age-friendly housing, transport, insurance and specialised services.

Better childcare and eldercare can also ease the unpaid care burden that prevents some Malaysians, particularly women, from fully



Care can no longer be regarded merely as a private family responsibility. It is becoming an economic matter and a challenge. — AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

participating in the workforce.

The care economy could thus deliver a double dividend: creating jobs while enabling others to work.

Socially, we must recognise that Malaysian families are changing. The answer is not to replace families but to build an ecosystem that supports them in providing care. Technology, particularly artificial intelligence, can play a transformative role in this effort.

Imagine an elderly Malaysian living independently at home. Wearable devices and smart sensors can detect unusual changes in movement or daily routines while AI can alert family members or caregivers to potential

problems. Telehealth can also connect them with healthcare professionals without frequent trips to hospitals.

AI can also reduce professional caregivers' administrative workload, from scheduling and documentation to care coordination, freeing up more time for those who need their support.

This also opens up economic opportunities in AgeTech, the technology sector focused on meeting the needs of an ageing population.

Malaysia can also nurture businesses that develop assistive technologies, smart homes, remote monitoring systems, rehabilitation tools and AI-powered care platforms.

An ageing population can thus be viewed not only as a fiscal challenge but also as an opportunity for innovation and entrepreneurship.

However, technology raises important legal and ethical questions. Who owns the data collected in an elderly person's home? Who is accountable when an algorithm fails to detect an emergency? And will advanced care technologies be accessible to everyone or only to affluent households?

Environmental design is equally important. An ageing society needs more than hospitals and nursing homes. Walkable neighbourhoods, accessible public transport, parks, universal design and age-friendly housing can help older Malaysians remain active and independent.

Malaysia must, therefore, make a fundamental shift in how it views care: as essential social and economic infrastructure.

We recognise roads, ports and digital networks as investments because they enable economic activity.

Quality childcare, eldercare and community care serve a similar purpose, enabling people to work, participate in society and live with dignity.

The 13th MP gives Malaysia an opportunity to begin building this fourth pillar of infrastructure.

AI can help but it must remain a means, not an end. It can detect when an elderly woman has been inactive for several hours, remind her to take her medication and arrange her next appointment. But it cannot replace a daughter sitting beside her mother and holding her hand.

The future of care is not about choosing between humans and machines but empowering people through technology.

As Malaysia ages, perhaps the true measure of our development will not be how much our economy produces, but how well we care for one another.

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PNB unveils Sustainability Framework 2026

KUALA LUMPUR: For Permodalan Nasional Bhd (PNB), sustainability is ultimately about people: how the savings entrusted by Malaysians can be invested responsibly today, to create lasting value, opportunities and a better future for generations to come.

This principle sits at the heart of PNB's newly unveiled Sustainability Framework 2026 (SF 2026), a strengthened roadmap that embeds the environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations across PNB's investments, operations and stewardship activities.

Under Advancing Organisational Sustainability, PNB will continue strengthening sustainability within its own operations. This includes maintaining Net Zero Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions, supporting its longer-term aspiration of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, reducing indirect emissions from business travel and strengthening sustainable procurement.

PNB will also advance accessibility and inclusivity across its premises and services to ensure more equitable access for its stakeholders.

Through Responsible Stewardship, PNB will use its position as a significant institutional investor to encourage stronger and more sustainable businesses.

The PNB Sustainability Framework 2026 introduces targets related to portfolio decarbonisation, climate resilience, nature and biodiversity considerations and fair and equitable employment practices, including labour and living wage principles.

These efforts are ultimately aimed at strengthening the resilience and long-term competitiveness of the companies in which Malaysians' savings are invested.

The third anchor, Strengthening the Nation-Building Agenda, brings the impact directly back to Malaysians. In line with PNB's Purpose of uplifting the financial lives of Malaysians across generations, the framework strengthens PNB's commitment to social and financial inclusion and impactful social investments.

This includes initiatives spanning talent development, scholarships, community investment, financial literacy, heritage preservation and broader social impact, reinforcing a simple principle: value created through Malaysians' investments should ultimately contribute towards creating greater value and opportunities for Malaysians.

"Sustainability has always been integral to how PNB fulfils its mandate. When we introduced our Sustainability Framework in 2022, we made a deliberate commitment to turn our sustainability ambitions into measurable action. Now, we have progressively achieved eight of the 10 targets we set and made meaningful progress across our broader sustainability agenda," said

➤ Roadmap targets RM15 billion in green and transition investment and RM500 million in social impact initiatives

PNB president & group chief executive Datuk Rizal Rickman Ramli (*pic*).

He added that this include achieving their Net Zero Enterprise 2025 target, ensuring 100% of their electricity use is supported by renewable energy certificates for PNB Enterprise, and investing RM8.1 billion in green and transition assets.

"We have made good strides in strengthening workplace practices and responsible investment across our portfolio. These tangible outcomes demonstrate how sustainability has become embedded in the way we invest, operate and fulfil our role as a responsible institutional investor," said Rizal Rickman.

"SF 2026 is therefore not a reset, but a progression. We are building on the foundations

established over the past four years and setting a higher bar for ourselves, with greater emphasis on responsible investment, long-term stewardship, social impact and nation building.

"As an institution entrusted with the savings of millions of Malaysians, we must ensure that the value we create endures across generations, while contributing to a more resilient, inclusive and sustainable Malaysia."

Underpinned by 16 measurable targets, SF 2026 translates PNB's sustainability ambitions into clear actions and outcomes across environmental, social, and governance dimensions.

Among its key commitments, PNB aims to channel RM15 billion into green and transition asset investments and RM500 million into



impactful social investments by 2030.

The commitments reflect a broader view of how capital can create impact.

It is not only about generating sustainable financial returns, but also about supporting the transition towards a more resilient economy, expanding opportunities, and investing back into society.

At its core, SF 2026 closes the loop between investing for Malaysians and investing in Malaysians, ensuring that the value created today can continue empowering generations to come.

PNB Sustainability Framework 2022		Key Achievements of the 10 ESG Commitments	
Commitment		Where We Are Today	
#1	Net Zero Enterprise 2025	• Achieved Net Zero Enterprise 2025 target for Scope 1 and Scope 2 • 100% electricity use by PNB Enterprise supported by renewable energy certificates • Enhanced enterprise emissions data quality via automation.	
#2	Net Zero Portfolio 2050	• 22% reduction in financed emissions intensity compared to FY2022 baseline. • 40% of PNB's portfolio emissions covered by credible Net Zero targets. • Increased financed emissions intensity target to 35% by 2030 • Published the PNB Nature and Biodiversity Policy.	
#3	RM10bil in Green and Transition Assets by 2030	• Invested RM8.13 billion in green and transition assets as at December 31, 2025. • Upscaled commitment to RM15 billion in green and transition assets by 2030.	
#4	Living Wage in PNB by 2023	• Achieved 100% Living Wage at PNB and expanded Living Wage focus to Strategic Companies.	
#5	Labour Rights Policy	• Published PNB Labour Rights Policy • Embedment of labour expectations into procurement process and engagements with investee companies.	
#6	40% Women in PNB Leadership by 2025	• Achieved 41.5% of Women in PNB Leadership and we aim to maintain 40% Women in PNB Leadership positions.	
#7	Balancing Profitability and Social Investments	• Launched PNB Social Investment Framework (SIF) and Volunteerism Framework. • Committed to contribute RM500 mil guided by SIF and 60,000 volunteering hours by 2030.	
#8	Triple Bottom Line Stewardship	• Enhanced sophistication of Board, Chair & CEO assessments with stronger governance diagnostics	
#9	Transparency in voting	• Disclosed voting decisions for all domestic equities and for international equities within the defined voting scope	
#10	TCFD - aligned Disclosure	• Aligned our disclosures with TCFD and planning towards NSRF and ISSB-aligned disclosure.	

E&O introduces Legacy for Tomorrow blueprint

KUALA LUMPUR: Eastern & Oriental Bhd (E&O) has launched Legacy for Tomorrow (LFT), a long-term sustainability blueprint that brings together and formalises the group's longstanding efforts in responsible development, community engagement, sustainable design and environmental stewardship.

Launched at E&O's Seri Embun gallery in Elmina recently, LFT provides a group-wide framework for how E&O embeds sustainability into the way it builds, operates, engages and grows, with the aim of creating lasting value for its communities, stakeholders and future generations.

At its core, LFT is founded on a simple belief: what we do today should benefit not only the present, but also the generations that follow.

The framework brings together five interconnected pillars of Community & Engagement, People Empowerment, Sustainable Innovation & Design, Environmental Stewardship, and Economic Viability & Growth, reflecting the broader dimensions of sustainability across E&O's business.

The launch was marked by the inaugural Young Green Guardians programme at Seri Embun, City of Elmina, which brought together 130 students and parents for a morning of learning, creativity and hands-on exploration around sustainability.

Through a sustainable product design workshop and competition, students explored different types of plastics and considered how

material choices, product design and creativity can contribute to more sustainable solutions.

"Legacy for Tomorrow reflects the way we have always looked at the future, not simply in terms of what we create today, but what it can mean for the people, communities and generations that follow. As we move forward, LFT gives us a broader lens to bring together these longstanding values and consider how they can continue to shape the way we think, create and grow. Ultimately, it is about leaving behind more than what we build – a legacy that carries meaning into the future," said managing director Kok Tuck Cheong.

Set within a 36-acre hillside enclave and bordered by a 2,700-acre forest reserve, Seri

Embun brings together nature, wellness, community and residential living.

Its clubhouse provides a shared space for recreation and community interaction, while its three-storey homes are designed to support multi-generational living and evolving family needs.

The development also incorporates future-ready considerations, including solar energy and EV charging infrastructure.

These elements reflect the broader thinking behind LFT: that sustainability encompasses not only environmental outcomes, but also how we design, how we live, how communities connect and how places evolve with changing needs.



■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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KUALA LUMPUR: Entrepreneur and Cooperatives Development Minister Steven Sim has urged SMEs to position themselves to capture business opportunities arising from Budget 2027, saying household assistance, tax savings and domestic investments could stimulate demand across the economy.

He said businesses should look beyond direct government grants and financing, as measures that put more money into households' pockets could translate into higher spending at restaurants, retail outlets, neighbourhood shops and service providers.

"Businesses in restaurants, retail and services should prepare to capture this spending," Sim said at SME Tax Talk 2026 at Berjaya Times Square yesterday.

Among the measures the minister highlighted was the government's plan to provide RM200 to every school-going child from Standard One to Form Five next year, involving more than RM1 billion in expenditure. Form Six students will receive an annual allowance of RM2,500.

Sim said the assistance could spur spending on school books, bags, clothing and other necessities, benefiting businesses supplying these goods and services.

He also pointed to the RM16 billion allocation for cash assistance under the *Sumbangan Tunai Rahmah* and *Sumbangan Asas Rahmah* programmes that would put more money into the hands of lower and lower-middle income households.

The additional disposable income could support a wider range of businesses, including those that do not receive government assistance directly. Up to five million Malaysians could also save as much as RM1,600 in personal income tax, potentially providing a further boost to consumer spending.

Sim said the impact of the measures would extend beyond the initial recipients as money circulated through the domestic economy.

He cited the example of households spending at local eateries and shops, whose owners could then use the additional income to buy equipment, renovate their premises or purchase furniture, generating further business for other suppliers.

Sim urged SMEs to prepare for the anticipated increase in demand rather than rely solely on direct government support. "Prepare your businesses to attract this new money that will be injected into the economy."

Capture opportunities arising from Budget 2027, SMEs told

➤ Sim highlights measures to put more money into households' pockets, says they are set to spur spending



Sim says he wants to support the SME sector not just to survive, but to charge forward, fight and 'win the economic race'.

He also highlighted the increase in the allocation for small government contracts reserved for G1 to G4 Bumiputera contractors to RM7.5 billion in 2027, from RM4 billion this year.

The higher allocation is expected to expand opportunities for smaller contractors undertaking government projects.

Government-linked investment corporations have been instructed to invest RM25 billion domestically next year, in a move intended to channel more investment into Malaysia.

Sim said the measures showed that the impact of Budget 2027 should not be assessed solely by the amount of financing or assistance received by individual SMEs. Businesses could also benefit indirectly when their customers, suppliers and vendors gained from government spending and investment.

He added that the ministry's budget proposals had been shaped by feedback from business owners, SME associations and non-governmental organisations, with priorities including increasing support for SMEs, lowering the cost of doing business and

improving government efficiency.

"Next year, I want to support the SME sector not just to survive, but to charge forward, fight and win this economic race," Sim said.

He acknowledged that government grants and financing remained out of reach for some SMEs because of eligibility requirements and limited funds amid competition from about one million businesses nationwide.

While encouraging business owners to scrutinise reports by the Auditor-General, Sim said financing decisions should be based on established rules, laws and guidelines rather than ministerial discretion.

To speed up access to financing, Sim has instructed providers to decide on complete applications for amounts below RM1 million within 14 days. Applications below RM100,000 should receive approval or rejection within seven days, while an initiative in Terengganu targets decisions within 24 hours for financing of RM20,000 and below.

He said unsuccessful applicants could seek assistance from the ministry and reapply, although approval was not guaranteed.

Beyond immediate financial assistance, Sim said the government would pursue longer-term reforms under the SCALE action plan, covering SME redefinition, cash flow protection, artificial intelligence adoption, local content requirements and easier access to financing.

On cash flow protection, he criticised the practice of larger companies using SMEs as an "interest-free credit line," saying delayed payments could leave smaller businesses struggling to meet operating expenses.

"Enough of treating SMEs as an interest-free credit line," Sim said.

He cited research indicating that payment delays could extend beyond 120 days, or more than three months, and said the government wanted to address delayed payments and excessive retention sums to free up cash for businesses to operate and expand.

Sim also called on SMEs to accelerate AI adoption, saying early movers could gain greater productivity benefits over time.

TeleChoice wins S\$1.3 billion contract renewal from U Mobile

PETALING JAYA: SGX Mainboard-listed TeleChoice International Limited has won a contract renewal estimated at S\$1.3 billion (RM4.14 billion) from U Mobile Sdn Bhd, one of Malaysia's leading telcos.

The group's wholly owned subsidiary, Planet Telecoms Managed Services Sdn Bhd (PTMS), will continue to provide U Mobile with end-to-end supply chain services.

The renewed contract's annual value is higher than that of the first, reflecting an expanded scope of services. The first contract was announced in February 2024 and valued at S\$500 million over three years.

The renewal takes effect from February 2027 for a term of three years, which may be extended for a further two years.

The U Mobile partnership has been an important growth driver for TeleChoice in Malaysia. It has contributed significantly to the group's Personal Communications Solutions Services Division. The renewal is expected to continue to have a positive impact on the group's consolidated net tangible assets per



share and consolidated earnings per share for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2027.

TeleChoice president and CEO Pauline Wong said, "This renewal is a strong vote of confidence in us, and we are grateful for the partnership. In just three years, the network we manage for U Mobile has grown from over 600 to more than 1,000 touchpoints across Malaysia. This reflects the hard work of our PTMS team and the close collaboration between our two companies."

"As U Mobile extends the nationwide reach of its ULTRA5G network, we will invest further

in our people, systems and automation. We will also build on this experience to take our managed services business further across the region."

U Mobile CEO Wong Heang Tuck said, "Our renewed agreement with TeleChoice builds on the operational capabilities our teams have developed together. It will help us respond to changing demand across our sales and distribution channels as we expand our 5G network nationwide. This supports our vision of being Malaysia's preferred mobile and digital services provider."

Under the agreement, PTMS manages U Mobile's device supply chain from end to end. As U Mobile's procurement partner, it oversees the full product lifecycle. Its services include stock management, warehousing, order fulfilment and distribution. PTMS also finances the device inventories and provides insurance coverage for deliveries. Real-time data is used to monitor performance and manage stock levels efficiently.

Since the partnership began, PTMS has continued to strengthen these capabilities. This has enabled faster procurement and a broader product portfolio for U Mobile, spanning new brands and models, accessories and wearables.

PTMS also ensures products are readily available across U Mobile's touchpoints, particularly during campaigns and promotional periods. Going forward, it is committed to further investment in its people, systems and technology with plans to explore the use of AI in demand forecasting and inventory planning.



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Coordinated investment strategy for Borneo proposed

► Mida chairman says action plan should focus on shared value chains, improve cross-border ease of doing business and prioritise realisation

KUALA LUMPUR: The Invest Borneo action plan should focus on shared value chains, improve cross-border ease of doing business and prioritise investment realisation to strengthen Borneo's position as an investment hub, according to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida).

Its chairman, Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz, said Mida, through its offices in Kota Kinabalu and Kuching, stands ready to work with Invest Sabah, Invest Sarawak, the Brunei Economic Development Board, Indonesian colleagues and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific to advance the initiative.

"Borneo is unique. It is the only island in the world shared by three countries. To an investor, that means three sets of rules, three sets of

incentives and, since Sabah and Sarawak each have their own investment agencies, at least four separate sales pitches.

"Borneo has never lacked resources or potential. What investors have often lacked is a clear picture of how its parts fit together," Tengku Zafrul said in his opening remarks at the Borneo Business Roundtable 2026 yesterday.

He said Malaysia recorded a historic RM426.7 billion in approved investments in 2025, while Sabah and Sarawak, which account for about 60% of the country's land area, collectively attracted less than 7% of total approved investments last year, representing an untapped investment opportunity for Borneo.

"The momentum is encouraging. In the first half of 2026 alone,

Sarawak recorded RM10.8 billion in approved investments (about three quarters of its total for the whole of 2025), while Sabah recorded RM6.8 billion.

"Our cross-border numbers tell a similar story. Trade between Malaysia and Brunei was RM5.86 billion last year. For two close neighbours that share a long border and a common history, there is clearly room to do much more," he said.

Tengku Zafrul said that under the Asean Regional Investment Promotion Action Plan 2025-2030, Asean is positioning itself as a single investment destination across regional value chains, with investment-ready projects presented at the Asean Investment Forum in Kuala Lumpur last October.

He said Invest Borneo applied the same approach by leveraging complementary strengths, with Brunei offering downstream industries in methanol and fertiliser, and strength in halal products and Islamic finance; Sarawak providing renewable energy; Sabah contributing oil and gas, agriculture and tourism; and Kalimantan offering opportunities through Nusantara and access to

Indonesia's domestic market.

On Monday, Tengku Zafrul said in his keynote address at the Brunei Business Conference 2026 that Malaysia is expanding into high-value sectors like semiconductors, artificial intelligence (AI), and green technology via the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, the National Energy Transition Roadmap and the National Semiconductor Strategy, while strengthening regional digital infrastructure, sustainability and public-private partnerships.

"We are already part of the regional semiconductor and electric vehicle value chains. And we are going strong on data centres," he said.

Looking specifically at Brunei and Malaysia, three near-term sectoral opportunities stand out, namely energy transition and green industry, halal and Islamic finance, and digital and AI skills, he said.

"None of this happens by government decree alone. It happens when business leaders pick up the phone, sign the memorandum of understanding and take the first risk," he said, adding that when "Asean prospers, the world follows." - Bernama

SSF Home Group to acquire industrial land in Pulau Indah for RM42.47 million

PETALING JAYA: Furniture, home décor and home living products retailer SSF Home Group Bhd, through wholly owned subsidiary SSF Sdn Bhd (SSFSD), has entered into a conditional sale and purchase agreement (SPA) with IFFCO Foods Sdn Bhd for the proposed acquisition of three parcels of leasehold industrial land in Pulau Indah, Klang, Selangor, for a total cash consideration of RM42.47 million.

The proposed acquisition represents a step in strengthening the group's operational infrastructure to support its next phase of growth and expansion.

The three parcels of land, measuring about 52,611.13 square metres or 13 acres in total, are currently vacant and designated for industrial use. The proposed land acquisition is in line with SSF's long-term business strategy to enhance its warehousing and logistics capabilities, improve operational efficiency and support future business expansion.

SSF intends to construct a warehouse and distribution facilities, enabling the group to progressively reduce its reliance on rented premises while providing greater flexibility in managing its warehousing and distribution operations.

The land in Pulau Indah is also expected to facilitate more efficient logistics operations and potentially generate long-term cost savings.



SSF's Glenmarie flagship store.

Executive director Lok Kok Khong said, "The proposed land acquisition marks an important step in SSF's next phase of growth. By developing our own warehouse and distribution facilities, we aim to increase our warehouse capacity and achieve long-term cost savings compared with renting.

"This investment is expected to enhance our operational efficiency and scalability, while strengthening our asset base and reducing our exposure to rising rental costs over

time, providing a stronger foundation to support our future business expansion."

The proposed acquisition will be funded through a combination of internally generated funds and bank borrowings, with the group having secured bank borrowings of up to 90% of the purchase consideration. Subject to the fulfilment of the terms of the SPA, the acquisition is expected to be completed within four months and is not expected to materially affect

the group's earnings for the financial year ending June 30, 2027.

Moving forward, SSF remains committed to strengthening its operational capabilities and expanding its business presence in Malaysia. The proposed land acquisition is expected to provide a stronger foundation for the group's long-term growth strategy, complementing its ongoing business expansion initiatives while enhancing operational flexibility and efficiency.

Aneka Jaringan secures RM53m piling works deal

PETALING JAYA: Aneka Jaringan Holdings Bhd, a basement and foundation construction specialist through wholly owned subsidiary Aneka Jaringan Sdn Bhd (AJSB), has received and accepted a letter of award (LoA) valued at RM53.35 million from EDP Consulting Group Sdn Bhd for and on behalf of IOI Rio Mall Sdn Bhd, IOI Hospitality Sdn Bhd and IOI Rio Towers Sdn Bhd to undertake the construction and completion of bored piling works for the proposed Rio City Town Centre development in Petaling District, Selangor.

The contract is targeted for completion by Aug 19, 2027 and is expected to contribute positively to the group's consolidated earnings and net assets for the financial year ending Aug 31, 2027 during the duration of the works.

Managing director Pang Tse Fui said, "This contract reflects continued confidence in our capabilities and track record in delivering specialised bored piling and foundation works. The Rio City Town Centre project represents another meaningful addition to our project portfolio within the Klang Valley, and we remain focused on disciplined execution, strong safety standards and timely delivery throughout the contract period."

He added, "We will continue to selectively pursue projects that align with our technical strengths and offer favourable commercial terms, while maintaining a disciplined approach towards project execution and cost management. This remains important as we continue to strengthen our order book and support sustainable revenue and earnings visibility for the group."

Matrix Concepts to buy 57 parcels of land totalling 175ha in Kulai

KUALA LUMPUR: Matrix Concepts Holdings Bhd's unit, Matrix Concepts (Southern) Sdn Bhd, has signed separate sale and purchase agreements to acquire 57 parcels of land spanning about 174.77 hectares in Kulai, Johor, for RM169.31 million cash.

The agreements were signed with corporate and individual landowners, as well as the executors of the estates of deceased landowners.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia yesterday, Matrix Concepts said the proposed acquisition would expand the group's existing land bank, support its long-term growth strategy and provide a sustainable pipeline of future developments.

The group said the sizeable land bank, coupled with the area's expanding industrial ecosystem and ongoing developments, offered strong development prospects.

Its preliminary feasibility assessment indicates that the proposed mixed development could have an estimated gross development value of about RM2.1 billion, it added.

Matrix Concepts said the development would complement surrounding projects and contribute to the area's overall growth. It is also expected to support property value appreciation through improved infrastructure, accessibility and supporting amenities. - Bernama

Nestle Malaysia maintains positive trajectory in Q3

► Resilient domestic demand, targeted commercial and brand initiatives drive increase in sales and profitability

PETALING JAYA: Nestle Malaysia maintained its positive trajectory in the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2026 (Q3'26), recording a turnover of RM1.86 billion, up by 5.3% from the corresponding quarter of 2025.

Growth was led by resilient domestic demand in key product categories, supported by continued innovation and effective commercial execution, while demand for the company's halal made-in-Malaysia products remained consistent across export markets.

For Q3'26, profit before tax (PBT) increased to RM263.1 million, while profit after tax (PAT) rose to RM197.5 million.

Nestle said the improvement was attributable to higher sales, some softening in commodity costs and continued focus on operational efficiencies and digitalisation initiatives.

During the quarter, the company added it continued to invest in its core brands through innovation, brand-building and strong marketplace execution, reinforcing their relevance to consumers across multiple consumption occasions.

This included the latest edition of Nestle's flagship *Gaji Seumur Hidup* campaign, which brought together brands across the company's portfolio and further strengthened engagement with Malaysians.

For the first nine months ended Sept 30, 2026, turnover increased by 6.7% to RM5.55 billion, driven primarily by stronger domestic sales. PBT and PAT grew to RM740.7 million and RM557.6 million respectively.

Nestle said the year-to-date performance reflects its ability to balance growth with financial discipline, while sustaining investment in its brands and reinforcing the competitiveness of its operations.

In line with the company's commitment to delivering sustainable shareholder returns, the board of directors declared a second interim dividend of RM0.80 per share for the financial year ending Dec 31, 2026.

CEO Juan Aranols said, "Our performance for the first nine months reflects the resilience of consumer demand for our trusted brands and the disciplined and high-quality work across all our teams. While consumers remain discerning, we continue to focus on delivering quality, nutrition, convenience and value, supported by innovation and sustained investment in our brands and operations."

"With our deeply rooted manufacturing footprint and 100% halal-certified products that are made in Malaysia, by Malaysians, for Malaysians, we are deeply connected to the consumers and communities we serve. This

solid foundation is central to how we grow our business and create value over the long term."

As part of its creating shared value approach, Nestle Malaysia continues to leverage its scale, expertise and partnerships to create positive impact beyond its business operations. By supporting farmers through its Farmer Connect programmes, strengthening local sourcing, advancing circularity and environmental stewardship, and investing in the well-being of communities, the company is helping to build a more resilient food system and a more sustainable future while creating long-term value for individuals, communities and the planet.

Aranols said, "We reconfirm a solid outlook for the full year 2026. Moving into the fourth quarter, which will have a high comparative base against a very strong period in 2025, our focus is on sustaining growth by staying closely attuned to evolving consumer needs and preferences, sharpening execution across channels and expanding the reach of our brands across consumption occasions."

While the operating environment remains dynamic, investments in digitalisation, automation and productivity will help them operate more efficiently and respond with greater speed and agility, he added.

"With our local manufacturing capabilities, broad distribution network and our committed teams, these efforts will further reinforce our competitiveness and position us for sustainable growth over the long term," said Aranols.

Formal sector's median monthly wage rises to RM3,000 in June

PUTRAJAYA: Median monthly wage of formal sector employees increased 4.8% to RM3,000 in June 2026, said the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM) yesterday.

During the same period, it added, the number of Malaysian formal employees increased to 7.2 million persons, representing a 3.3% year-on-year growth from 6.97 million persons in June 2025.

A comparison of median monthly wages by sex indicated that male formal employees, comprising 55.1% of total Malaysian formal employees or 3.97 million persons, earned a median monthly wage of RM3,000.

In contrast, female formal workers accounted for 44.9% of the total or 3.23 million persons and received a median monthly wage of RM2,964.

Formal employees aged 45 to 49 years continued to register the highest median monthly wage throughout the second quarter of 2026, recording a median monthly wage of RM4,000 in April 2026, and RM3,945 in both May and June 2026.

DoSM said the highest year-on-year increase in median monthly wage was registered among employees aged 50 to 54 years, while the median monthly wage for employees aged below 20 years remained unchanged at RM1,700 since February 2025.

By economic activity, it said, the mining & quarrying sector, which accounted for only 0.5% of the total formal employees, recorded the highest median monthly wages at RM6,722 in June 2026.

The agriculture sector, which accounted for 1.8% of total formal employees, reported the lowest median monthly wage at RM2,282 during the same period.

Across the states, Wilayah Persekutuan Kuala Lumpur recorded the highest median monthly wage in June 2026 at RM4,245, followed by Selangor at RM3,245 and Penang at RM3,000.

The lowest median monthly wages were recorded in Kelantan (RM1,827), Perlis (RM1,864) and Sabah (RM2,045).

The share of Malaysian formal sector employees earning below RM1,700 per month fell to 8.2% in June 2026, from 10.4% in June 2025.

Furthermore, percentile analysis indicated that the bottom 10% of Malaysian formal employees earned RM1,700 or less per month, whereas those in the top 10% earned at least RM9,600 per month.

Therefore, employees in the 90th percentile earned more than five times the wages of those in the lowest-wage group, underscoring the gap in monthly wages between the highest and lowest earners.

Stryv raises US\$11.5m in ACV Capital-led funding

PETALING JAYA: Stryv, a personal care and home wellness company, has raised US\$11.5 million (RM47 million) in Series B funding.

The round was led by ACV Capital, with participation from Openspace Capital and Octave Capital, among other investors.

In a statement yesterday, Stryv said it will use the funds to grow its regional presence, expanding into new markets such as Taiwan while growing its business in Malaysia and Hong Kong.

It will also expand its product ecosystem by increasing investment in R&D, as well as by

acquiring brands that fit it, as it did with Singapore-based Sterra. Acquired in March 2026, Sterra brought a presence in 200,000 households and opened up the home appliances category.

In addition to gaining talent and product portfolio, acquiring brands with market presence distinct from Stryv will also open up more Apac markets for the company.

Already known for its personal care products such as hair dryers, stylers, shavers, Stryv is now also a home care brand.

Leveraging the Sterra team's expertise in this space, Stryv has launched the Stryv Oasis massage chair and Stryv Halo air purifier since September this year.

This is underpinned by the successful integration of Sterra into Stryv, with the final steps of the brand merger to be completed in the next few months.

ACV Capital managing partner Helen Wong said Stryv is well-positioned to meet growing demand for affordable, quality personal care and home wellness products across Asia.

EDUCATION

FOCUS 2026

Education retains its importance in the Malaysian landscape for parents, students and stakeholders. The changes are fast paced with new developments in new fields of study such as cybersecurity, data protection, augmented and virtual reality, machine learning in education, digital education and artificial Intelligence. Leading the way are universities, who are invited to showcase their latest programmes, curriculum and content in our Education Focus for 2026.

Impact Capital prepares to enter next phase of growth

► ICT solutions provider to raise RM21.27 million from IPO to fund business and workforce expansion, strengthen capabilities

BY **NIK ZARIF AZHAN**
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Impact Capital Holdings Bhd expects to raise RM21.27 million from its initial public offering (IPO) to fund its business expansion, strengthen its technology capabilities and expand its workforce.

The Sarawak-based information and communications technology (ICT) solutions provider launched its prospectus yesterday ahead of its listing on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities on Nov 24 at an IPO price of 22 sen per share.

Managing director Winston Chai Fung Chun said the IPO marked an important milestone for the group as it prepares to enter its next phase of growth after about 21 years of operations.

"Over the past two decades, we have developed our technical capabilities and experience in delivering ICT infrastructure and systems integration solutions that support the evolving requirements of critical infrastructure and enterprise customers," he added.

Of the proceeds raised, RM4.67 million will be allocated for office expansion, including a new Klang Valley office that will house its Digital Innovation and Solutions Centre (DISC), while RM4.53 million will fund workforce expansion and business development initiatives.

A sum of RM2.1 million will be used to enhance technology capabilities, RM5.17 million for working capital and RM4.8 million for estimated listing expenses.

Impact Capital's IPO comprises a public issue of 96.69 million new shares and an offer for sale of 28.62 million existing shares. The public issue applications will close on Nov 6.

Upon listing, the group is expected to have a market capitalisation of RM105.6 million, based on an enlarged issued share capital of 480 million shares at the IPO price of 22 sen each.

Chai said, the group plans to establish DISC as a platform for solution demonstrations, customer engagement and in-house technical validation. "We will also increase our design and development activities, incorporating foundational data and AI software into our solutions to enhance their capabilities and



From left: Chai, Sarawak Deputy Premier Datuk Amar Professor Dr Sim Kui Hian and Lee at the prospectus launch. — **BERNAMAPIC**

deliver greater value to our customers."

Impact Capital is expanding into digital twin solutions, which create virtual representations of physical assets and infrastructure to support real-time monitoring, simulation and operational optimisation.

The group intends to integrate artificial intelligence (AI) and data-driven capabilities into its solutions to support predictive analytics, asset management and decision-making, targeting potential applications in smart cities, utilities, telecommunications and other critical infrastructure sectors.

Public Investment Bank Bhd CEO Lee Yo-Hunn said the group's expansion plans and technological capabilities could strengthen its competitiveness in the local ICT industry.

"As the Impact Capital Group expands its

operational presence and technological capabilities, we have no doubt that the group will not only be competitive but will be at the cutting edge of ICT solutions in Malaysia.

"We believe the group's capabilities and growth ambitions present a compelling investment opportunity for investors," he said.

According to the group's independent market research report by Vital Factor Consulting Sdn Bhd, Malaysia's information and communication services industry generated RM189.5 billion in revenue in 2025, representing a compound annual growth rate of 5.4% between 2023 and 2025.

Malaysia's digital economy accounted for 23.4% of gross domestic product in 2024, highlighting the growing contribution of digital infrastructure and services.

Three M'sian startups target South Korean market, seek business partners

KUALA LUMPUR: Seeking to tap into the South Korean market and forge partnerships with local investors and industry players, three Malaysian startups showcased their innovative technologies and business solutions at the recent 2026 Asean-Korea Startup Week.

The startups – Enygma Technologies Sdn Bhd (Enygma AI), Vendfun Sdn Bhd (Vendfun), and Zircoschem Resources – were among 28 from 10 Asean member states participating in the four-day programme held from Oct 20 to 23 in Seoul and Daegu.

Organiser Asean-Korea Centre (AKC) said the three Malaysian outfits are from the hospitality technology, software-as-a-service (SaaS), and green technology sectors.

"The Asean-Korea Startup Week serves as a valuable platform for promising Asean startups, including those from Malaysia, to explore new business opportunities, connect with potential investors and industry partners, and gain greater exposure to the Korean market," AKC said in a statement to Bernama.

Enygma AI uses artificial intelligence (AI) and digital twin technology to detect defects and safety risks through drone, 360-degree camera, and CCTV footage to help asset owners improve operational safety and reliability.

Vendfun provides self-service hotel kiosks for check-in, check-out and room key management, and has more than 180 kiosks deployed across several countries.

Zircoschem Resources has developed BIOMÉ, a water-soluble stick product for household and personal care applications that uses powder-to-gel technology. It allows the user to prepare the product themselves by adding water.

Enygma AI was selected for a FIX Media Award in recognition of its innovative solutions.

The 2026 Asean-Korea Startup Week brought together technology-driven startups from across Asean specialising in fields such as AI, information and communications technology (ICT), mobility, and robotics to explore business and investment opportunities with South Korean companies.

Participating startups showcased their products and technological solutions at the ICT Convergence Expo (ICTE) held alongside the Future Innovation tech eXpo (FIX) 2026 in Daegu on Oct 21 and 22.

The startups also pitched their business models to South Korean investors and industry experts at the Asean-Korea Startup Demo Day, the statement read.

On top of that, AKC matched the startups with South Korean investors, accelerators, and companies according to sector and partnership needs, and arranged one-on-one meetings.

AKC Secretary General Kim Jae-shin said Asean startups play a key role in driving digital transformation and sustainable growth.

"We will continue to expand opportunities for cooperation so that innovative companies from both regions can grow beyond borders," he said, adding that AKC would provide follow-up support beyond the programme.

LPI Capital Q3 net profit slips to RM96.8 million

KUALA LUMPUR: LPI Capital Bhd's net profit fell 15.7% to RM96.82 million in the third quarter ended Sept 30, 2026, from RM114.83 million a year earlier, due to lower profit from its investment holding segment.

Revenue rose 1.1% to RM555.52 million from RM549.31 million in the same quarter last year, driven by higher insurance revenue from its general insurance segment.

For the first nine months ended Sept 30, 2026, the company's net profit declined 11.1% to RM263.21 million from RM295.97 million in the same period last year. Revenue increased to RM1.64 billion from RM1.57 billion, mainly driven by its general insurance

segment.

Looking ahead, LPI Capital, which provides general insurance products and services, said Malaysia's economic growth outlook remained broadly resilient, supported by technology-related exports and investment, as well as robust domestic demand.

However, it cautioned that the conflict in West Asia, energy price volatility, trade uncertainty and supply chain disruptions remained significant external risks.

"Against this volatile business environment outlook, the LPI Group will continue to prioritise profitable growth over premium growth. The key objective will be sustainable

underwriting profitability, rather than just increasing market share.

"The group will strengthen technical pricing and risk segmentation, and review loss ratios, expense ratios and combined ratios by product, customer, channel, geographical region and agent to reinforce underwriting discipline and support profitability," it said in a filing with Bursa Malaysia yesterday.

LPI Capital also said adopting artificial intelligence technology would enable the group to enhance risk monitoring, improve pricing accuracy and strengthen underwriting decisions. — **Bernama**

South Korea economy grows 3 times faster than expected in Q3

SEOUL: South Korea's economy grew more than three times faster than expected in the third quarter, driven by booming semiconductor demand, central bank data showed yesterday.

The country's gross domestic product (GDP) jumped 1% in the July-September period compared to the previous three months, according to preliminary figures from the Bank of Korea (BOK).

The figure exceeded the central bank's forecast of 0.3% growth made in August.

Growth was supported by a 2.3% rise in exports, "led by semiconductors, machinery and electrical equipment", the BOK said.

Investment in facilities jumped 4.1%, driven mainly by machinery used in semiconductor manufacturing.

From a year earlier, the country's economy expanded 3.4%, slightly below the 3.7% recorded in the previous quarter.

The country's real gross domestic income, a measure of purchasing power, surged 18.8% year-on-year, its fastest increase in nearly 49 years, helped by rising semiconductor prices.

Separately, according to central bank data, South Korea's semiconductor exports could fall by US\$50 billion to US\$100 billion (RM204 billion to RM408 billion) compared with earlier forecasts if capital spending on artificial intelligence by major US technology firms slows next year, according to central bank data.

In a written response submitted to lawmaker Ahn Do-geol, the BOK modelled a "pessimistic scenario" to assess the economic fallout if US tech giants curb their aggressive infrastructure outlays.

Under the scenario, a sudden export shortfall would shave approximately 0.4 percentage point off South Korea's GDP growth rate next year, by driving the country's current account surplus well below the central bank's initial projection of US\$430 billion for 2027.

The report said combined capital expenditure by five major US technology firms, Amazon, Google, Microsoft, Meta, and Oracle, has been growing rapidly, from US\$40 billion last year to an estimated US\$80 billion this year, and is projected to reach US\$110 billion next year. — AFP, Reuters

Meta eyes record US\$97.5b equity raise for AI expansion

➤ Offerings include US\$37.5b of common and convertible preferred stock, separate share sale programme of up to US\$60b after Class C stock begins trading

BENGALURU: Meta Platforms said yesterday it increased its largest-ever equity fundraising to US\$97.5 billion (RM398.3 billion) as the social media giant aggressively expands its artificial intelligence (AI) infrastructure.

It said it was increasing the common stock offering it announced on Monday from US\$22.5 billion to US\$25 billion, priced at US\$625 per share.

Meta also priced its 250 million depositary shares at US\$50 per share.

The Facebook parent has launched public offerings worth about US\$35 billion in common and preferred stock, and said it also plans to launch a separate at-the-market share sale programme, under which a company sells shares gradually at prevailing market prices, worth up to US\$60 billion.

The company will launch the larger share sale programme after its new non-voting Class C shares begin trading, expected in the

first quarter of 2027, but it has not yet finalized the sale's timing and terms.

Meta's fundraising plan, among the biggest by an AI company, has also drawn interest of up to US\$5 billion in total from Nvidia, Advanced Micro Devices and Broadcom for Class A shares.

In a separate statement, Nvidia said it would invest US\$3 billion in Meta's equity offering.

Their funding interest adds to concerns about an increasingly circular flow of capital in the AI industry, as chip suppliers help finance the expansion of one of their biggest customers. Meta has been pouring money into chips and data centers to compete better with OpenAI and Anthropic.

"We expect investors to continue to question the financing and potential for future capital raises," William Blair analysts said in a note.

"Overall, we believe the financing reinforces both Meta's confidence in the long-term returns from AI investment and the increasingly capital-intensive nature of pursuing that opportunity."

Meta has committed to spending about US\$825 billion in the future, driven primarily by growing investments in data centers, AI-related infrastructure, and cloud computing power.

But the aggressive expansion has eroded its historically strong free cash flow.

The company reported a US\$2.12 billion cash burn in the third quarter, its first negative free cash flow in over a decade, compared with a positive cash flow of US\$10.63 billion a year ago.

Still, the early popularity of its consumer-focused AI agent Muse and release of a competitive new series of AI models have helped partly justify Meta's aggressive investments.

"We believe that Meta will ultimately produce a profitable AI business and its returns longer-term should help the company diversify, although the path may not be linear," William Blair analysts said.

The company had US\$82.45 billion in cash, cash equivalents, and marketable securities and US\$80.92 billion in long-term debt as of September 30, according to its latest quarterly filing. — Reuters



Passengers alighting from a tram outside the HSBC bank headquarters in Hong Kong yesterday. — AFP/PICT

EAST TIMOR AGREES TO BUY WOODSIDE'S STAKE IN GREATER SUNRISE GAS FIELD

SINGAPORE: East Timor has agreed to buy Woodside Energy's stake in the Greater Sunrise gas project for up to US\$200 million (RM817 million), paving the way to speed up development of the fields that could be essential to Asia's smallest economy. Australia's Woodside, which long opposed East Timor's plan for developing the project, said yesterday it would sell its 33% operating stake to state-owned Timor Gap, including titles to the Greater Sunrise fields, making Timor Gap the 100% owner. The two fields that make up Greater Sunrise, discovered in 1974, are estimated to hold 5.1 trillion cubic feet of gas and 226 million barrels of condensate, a light crude oil typically found with gas. — Reuters

CHINA INDUSTRIAL EARNINGS GROWTH PICKS UP IN SEPTEMBER

BEIJING: China's industrial profits grew at a faster pace in September, though a deepening divergence across the economy weighed on business earnings. Profits at industrial firms rose 14.4% from a year earlier last month, quickening from a 4.2% increase in August, data from the National Bureau of Statistics showed yesterday. Profits were up 15.5% in the first nine months of this year, largely unchanged from the 15.7% increase in the January-August period. Profits in the computer, communication and other electronic equipment manufacturing category more than doubled over the nine-month period, whereas profits in the furniture manufacturing sector fell by more than half. — Reuters

HSBC quarterly net profit jumps but misses forecasts

HONG KONG: Banking giant HSBC said yesterday that net profit in the third quarter rose less than expected, as it carries out sweeping job cuts and an artificial intelligence (AI) expansion.

Profit attributable to shareholders rose 45.5% year-on-year to US\$7 billion (RM28.6 billion) from July to September, the bank said in a filing to the Hong Kong stock exchange.

That figure was up from US\$4.87 billion a year earlier, but fell short of the US\$7.3 billion market estimate.

HSBC has been carrying out job cuts and a global restructuring since CEO Georges Elhedery took the helm two years ago, turning the London-headquartered bank's focus to core Asian markets.

Pre-tax profit in the third quarter grew 32% to US\$9.6 billion, with revenue increasing by US\$800 million to US\$18.6 billion, the filing said.

HSBC also approved a third interim dividend of US\$0.10 per share, and announced a second US\$1 billion buyback after completing one in the previous three months.

"As we simplify HSBC, we are creating greater capacity to invest, grow and deliver strong returns for our shareholders," Elhedery said in the filing.

The third quarter performance "shows that in a more complex world, clients continue to turn to us to navigate uncertainty and seize new opportunities", he added.

However, yesterday's results left investors disappointed. HSBC shares in Hong Kong

closed 5.55% lower.

Restructuring and cost-saving actions, which include selling off a series of business units this year, have saved the bank US\$1.4 billion since 2025, according to its report.

HSBC has also been increasingly adopting AI in its operations, which Elhedery has said "will change how work is done across industries, impacting some jobs, transforming others".

The bank said in yesterday's filing that it remained "confident in achieving the targets" set out this year, including a return on tangible equity of 17% or better through 2028.

"We continue to target year-on-year growth in revenue from 2026 to 2028, rising to 5% growth in 2028 compared with 2027," it said. — AFP



Microsoft offers voluntary exit packages to 60,000 staff

SAN FRANCISCO: Microsoft is offering voluntary buyouts to about 60,000 employees, the company said on Monday, roughly a quarter of its workforce, as the tech giant seeks to cut costs while pouring money into artificial intelligence (AI).

Staff on select teams in the US, Canada, India and Britain at vice-president level and below will be eligible, a Microsoft spokesman said, while some groups of employees, including some working on data centres, sales and marketing, are excluded.

"The Voluntary Exit Offer reflects an important part of how we're evolving our approach to change: creating greater flexibility and, where possible, more ways for employees to shape their next chapter," Amy Coleman, an executive vice-president and chief people officer, told employees in a memo.

It's the second voluntary buyout offer that Microsoft has offered employees this year.

In April, the company reportedly offered around 7% of its US workforce the option to retire early.

Around 30% of those eligible took the voluntary retirement plan, according to CNBC.

Microsoft had 223,000 employees globally at the end of June, down from 228,000 at the end of 2025, according to regulatory filings.

Around 27% of Microsoft's workforce is eligible for the new buyout offer.

The company is expected to report quarterly earnings later this week.

As major tech giants continue to spend heavily on AI-related investments, concerns persist about the impact of the technology on jobs.

Even industry insiders, such as Anthropic CEO Dario Amodei, have warned of mass job losses.

Netflix will reportedly cut around 6% of its workforce, or 1,000 jobs, US media reported last week.

Auction site eBay laid off 1,000 employees earlier this month, adding to a previous round earlier this year which impacted 800 jobs.

In May, Meta laid off around 10% of its global workforce, impacting around 8,000 employees.

In April, Meta also said it would cancel plans to hire an additional 6,000 people and also shift 7,000 other employees into AI workflow-related roles.

Ride-hailing giant Uber said in September that it would lay off around 10% of its staff, impacting an estimated 3,000 or more employees.

And e-commerce giant Amazon announced 16,000 global job cuts in January.

Microsoft previously cut nearly 5,000 jobs in July that heavily targeted its Xbox gaming division.

Amazon, Microsoft, Alphabet and Meta are collectively on track to pour roughly US\$700 billion (RM2.9 trillion) into AI data centres, chips and computing infrastructure this year alone.

In July, Microsoft said it spent US\$41 billion overall between April and June and expected to increase its spending to US\$50 billion between July and September. — AFP

In China, the AI bubble has already burst

► Tech selloff wipes out US\$480b as investors fear further losses

SINGAPORE: While global tech stocks teeter, in China they have already crashed as lofty valuations collapse under worries about AI demand and curbs on Chinese exports.

The meltdown, tanking the mainland STAR50 index of AI and semiconductor leaders by 40% in less than four months and vapourising some US\$480 billion (RM1.96 trillion) in market value, is an ill omen for wobbly world markets and a dampener on China's efforts at encouraging its savers into stocks to fund the AI boom.

It has also slammed the brakes on a rally running two years, since economic stimulus promises sent

shares soaring, and has stalled Beijing's push to break with a long boom-bust pattern and drive a "slow bull" market that delivers reliable performance. China's broad blue-chip index has dropped about 20% from highs made in June.

"The stock market later evolved into a speculative crazy bull," said Beijing-based fund manager Dong Baozhen. "And now we see the bubble bursting."

The reversal reflects a rally that ran to higher heights than markets in the West or elsewhere in Asia, and compares with a mere prick to US AI stocks, which have led a 6% drawdown in the Nasdaq from a record high scaled three weeks ago.



Shares in Chinese robot maker Unitree have halved since their market debut in August despite strong investor interest. — AFPPIX

There has been no obvious selling trigger in China, although traders said high prices, tax bills and the threat of the US or other nations banning Chinese equipment in data centres all contributed.

With AI stocks running to 42% of China's market capitalisation and 57% of turnover across mainland-listed A-shares and Hong Kong's H-shares, according to Goldman Sachs, few in a market dominated by small investors have escaped pain.

Shares in robot-maker Unitree, 8,000 times oversubscribed by retail buyers at listing, have halved since they started trading in August, and chipmaker CXMT has lost more than a quarter of its value in the past month.

Chipmakers MetaX Integrated Circuits and Moore Threads Technology, which leapt 700% and 400% respectively on their market debuts last year, have also halved in value since July.

Chen Wensheng, a small business owner and investor from China's southern Hainan, said he bought into the rally emboldened by what he felt was official support for the likes of Unitree, which counted state-backed funds as investors. But Chen and his friends are now nursing losses.

Frustration that an investment theme backed by Beijing has ended so badly has driven many investors into defensive assets and is likely to slow equity fundraising by tech firms.

Shares in optical parts makers Zhongji Innolight and Eoptolink Technology are down roughly 60% from highs in June and July, in part as Washington moves towards banning the one-time darlings from supplying US data centres.

With the STAR50 index still at around 100 times trailing earnings, albeit down from a high of nearly 250, investors compare the Nasdaq 100's multiple of 30 and worry the selloff could get worse before it gets better.

"What's happening is now going to put a stop for many of the companies trying to get themselves listed," said Hong Hao, managing partner and chief investment officer at Lotus Asset Management in Hong Kong.

The frenzy and its fallout contrast with a push by authorities to improve returns and dampen volatility by cracking down on leverage and high-frequency trading. State-backed investors were sellers into rallies to keep gains in check.

China's market regulator, the China Securities Regulatory Commission, did not immediately reply to questions faxed by Reuters last week.

CRSC chairman Wu Qing met with market participants earlier this month to hear suggestions on improving capital markets, the regulator said on its website, and some in the investment community say the boom has been bad for the market's structure.

"Overemphasising the 'technology content' — that is, the weighting of tech firms by market value in major indexes — leads to a deviation, even a distortion, in capital behaviour," said Leo Wang, partner at Beijing-based Qianchuang Capital.

"This created a severe bubble in certain sectors and a serious drain on others."

Some see value in the selloff, saying it is neither surprising nor detrimental to market reforms that are geared for the long term and have gained traction in driving up returns, particularly income, in recent years. — Reuters

Ambani, Adani media firms challenge Modi's privacy law

NEW DELHI: A group of 21 news publishers, including companies owned by billionaires Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani, has challenged India's privacy law in court, arguing it would trample investigative work and let New Delhi identify journalists' sources, documents show.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government last year announced implementation of a privacy law to protect digital personal data of users, raising compliance requirements for platforms like Meta and Google. The publishers have said that since media outlets were not exempt, the law was an invasion of press freedom.

Media companies received assurances in an August meeting with the government that the law would protect press freedom, but not having a written carve-out for journalists like in the European Union, Singapore and Britain was alarming, India's Digital News Publishers Association (DNPA) said in a confidential filing at the Supreme Court, reviewed by Reuters.

The Oct 6 lawsuit, being reported

for the first time and due to be heard yesterday, is the most high-profile challenge to Modi's privacy law. Until now, only free speech activists and a group of smaller news outlets had challenged it.

It also marks an unusual challenge to the government from businesses headed by Ambani and Adani, who opposition parties allege are close to Modi and get favourable treatment — charges the businesses and the government vehemently deny.

DNPA and the media groups did not respond to requests for comment from Reuters, and neither did India's information technology ministry.

The publishers are demanding that most of the law's contentious provisions, which kick in from May 2027, should be quashed. They are arguing the law could force a journalist to get prior consent from a person they want to investigate and force publishers to erase stories. They also say powers granted by the law to demand information could expose reporters' sources.

The law would "render

investigative journalism a benign and neutered recorder of events," the 698-page filing said. The provisions "constitute pre-censorship which is anathema to any democracy worth its name".

The lawsuit comes amid accusations of declining press freedom in India since Modi took office in 2014. Critics say many mainstream media outlets have not done enough to scrutinise Modi's government.

India's ranking in Reporters Without Borders' World Press Freedom Index fell to 157th out of 180 countries this year, from 140th in 2014 — but the government rejects the rankings.

Modi's government says it respects press freedom and says India, which has a "vibrant press and media ecosystem" of hundreds of newspapers and TV channels, does not need validation from foreign bodies.

DNPA's members include Ambani's Network18, which has seven digital news platforms, Adani's NDTV and other marquee media groups including the Indian Express

and Times Internet, which is part of the Times of India group, publisher of India's largest-selling English-language daily.

A key concern in the law is the requirement of consent, the group's filing says.

A social media platform or online retailer can seek consent from users when they sign up, but the DNPA has argued that requiring a journalist to notify the subject of an investigation and seek consent "would allow that subject to destroy evidence, intimidate witnesses".

The law also lets people withdraw consent at any time and demand that their data be erased, without any public-interest safeguard, which DNPA says could force its members to unpublish or heavily redact a factual news report.

News publishers are concerned that a federal authority created under the law can impose fines for non-compliance, and grants powers to New Delhi to block access to any information in the "interests of the general public", which would curtail press freedom, DNPA said. — Reuters

MARKET ROUND-UP: OCT 27

27-Oct-2026
Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million):
Participation

Retail **-55.88** **22.40%**

Local Institution **-61.30** **38.71%**

Foreign Institution **+117.18** **38.89%**

QR Code to register for 1-to-1 Coaching

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research
Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to www.bursamalaysia.com.

Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn. Bhd. is now rebranded as **Berjaya Securities Sdn. Bhd.**

Berjaya Securities

(formerly known as Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd)

- Quick updates on market news, statistics & information
- Monthly Traders' Talk for directions & positioning
- Company coverage & trading insights
- One-to-One trading coaching (available upon request)

SUNBIZ presents a summary of the day's trading activity on Bursa Malaysia and other markets in an easy to digest format.

Sources: Bursa Malaysia, Bernama, shareinvestor.com and websites

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Bursa Indices		
INDEX	CHANGE	
FBMEMAS	12,022.89	+45.89
FBMKLCI	1,611.30	+6.94
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	441.56	+0.15
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	176.63	+1.22
CONSTRUCTION	313.20	+0.42
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,600.36	+26.50
ENERGY	849.94	+1.21
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	379.20	-1.11
HEALTH CARE	1,571.79	+16.41
TRANSPORTATION	1,017.53	-7.64
PROPERTY	975.33	-4.19
PLANTATION	8,640.86	+16.89
FBMSHA	12,022.11	+47.32
FBMACE	5,412.46	+18.80
TECHNOLOGY	75.23	+0.71
TURNOVER: 3.371 bil		VALUE: RM3.100 bil

Bursa Malaysia ends higher on renewed bargain hunting

BURSA Malaysia closed higher yesterday, supported by bargain hunting activities following the previous day's sell-off.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI rose 7.49 points, or 0.47%, to 1,611.85 from Monday's close of 1,604.36.

The benchmark index opened 2.98 points higher at 1,607.34 and traded between 1,606.14 and 1,611.94 during the trading session.

The broader market was positive, with gainers outpacing losers 683 to 380, while 571 counters were unchanged, 1,259 untraded, and 52 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng said the FBM KLCI remains attractively valued, underpinned by resilient domestic economic fundamentals.

Among heavyweight stocks, YTL Power International rose 14 sen to RM5.10, YTL Corporation gained nine sen to RM2.05, Tenaga Nasional added two sen to RM13.30, while Maybank and CIMB each rose one sen to RM9.99 and RM7.11, respectively.

In active trade, Zetrix AI and V.S Industry each gained one sen to 8.5 sen and 34.5 sen, respectively. Top Glove rose 3.5 sen to 96.5 sen, Ni Hsin added three sen to 50.5 sen, while Velesto Energy eased half a sen to 19.5 sen.

Nestle led the gainers, rising RM4.02 to RM94.28, Malaysian Pacific Industries improved 72 sen to RM41.30, UMS Integration added 38 sen to RM7.58, Telekom Malaysia climbed 23 sen to RM8.05, and Kee Ming gained 20 sen to RM2.68.

Among the top losers, Fraser & Neave declined 32 sen to RM19.68, PPB Group decreased 22 sen to RM8.80, United Plantations was down 20 sen to RM29.70, Bintulu Port slid 15 sen to RM5.20, and Hong Leong Financial Group lost 14 sen to RM17.36. – Bernama

Top 20 Actives				
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
ZETRIX	0.085	+0.010	+13.33	2,865,541
HSI-CWU4	0.065	-0.020	-23.53	1,254,438
TOPGLOV	0.965	+0.035	+3.76	763,826
VELESTO	0.195	-0.005	-2.50	672,865
NIHSIN	0.505	+0.030	+6.32	611,172
HSI-CWWB	0.055	-0.020	-26.67	582,459
VS	0.345	+0.010	+2.99	557,630
MAG	0.155	-	-	474,287
MRDIY	1.150	-	-	410,553
AXTERIA	0.220	+0.025	+12.82	390,141
YTLPOWR	5.100	+0.140	+2.82	354,516
HSI-PWV4	0.130	+0.010	+8.33	346,470
AIMAX	0.005	-	-	335,220
CTOS	0.420	+0.045	+12.00	324,270
L&G	0.180	-	-	300,979
NATGATE	2.160	+0.090	+4.35	270,578
SUPERMX	0.485	+0.010	+2.11	260,988
JAKS	0.160	+0.010	+6.67	256,955
GENM	1.150	-0.010	-0.86	256,768
M&G	0.305	-	-	247,285



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('000)
NESTLE	94.280	+4.020	923
ALLIANZ-PA	20.280	+0.760	1
MPI	41.300	+0.720	2,086
UMSINT	7.580	+0.380	238
TM	8.050	+0.230	16,070
HSI-PWXI	0.870	+0.220	60
KEEMING	2.680	+0.200	16,544
DUFU	3.170	+0.190	54,699
UWC	7.450	+0.190	32,511
WPRTS	7.080	+0.190	163,712
KGB	8.580	+0.180	24,779
ITMAX	4.570	+0.150	5,766
BUSCAP	0.845	+0.145	146,269
DLADY	28.800	+0.140	15
YTLPOWR	5.100	+0.140	354,516
BKAWAN	19.300	+0.120	132
KLK	20.520	+0.120	12,973
PENTA	5.740	+0.120	50,068
SUNCON	7.660	+0.120	39,697
VITROX-C21	1.010	+0.120	34

Top 20 Gainers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
SDG-C41	0.090	+1700.00	4,900
CTOS-C41	0.020	+100.00	98,443
GENM-C4A	0.010	+100.00	10
KPJ-C41	0.010	+100.00	9,963
MPAY-WB	0.010	+100.00	18,316
SINARAN-WB	0.010	+100.00	10
SUNWAY-C65	0.010	+100.00	1
TAWIN	0.010	+100.00	14,350
YTL-C2S	0.020	+100.00	6,301
HARTA-C3V	0.090	+80.00	3,100
MUDAJYA-WB	0.045	+80.00	147
PENTA-C68	0.210	+75.00	1,200
DAYANG-C66	0.025	+66.67	2
KOSSAN-C98	0.050	+66.67	10
FBMKLCI-CRV	0.015	+50.00	200
HARTA-C3K	0.030	+50.00	5,400
YTLPOWR-C2J	0.030	+50.00	1
YTL-C2U	0.065	+44.44	59,727
OASIS-WC	0.035	+40.00	8,180
YTL-C2T	0.035	+40.00	10,000

World Stocks/Commodities			
INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	52,361.58	146.42	0.28
S&P 500 (US)	7,676.77	53.09	0.7
NASDAQ (US)	26,169.38	214.04	0.82
NYSE (US)	24,186.86	69.59	0.29
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	6,102.24	-13.99	-0.23
FTSE 100 (UK)	10,660.18	-107.15	-1
DAX (GER)	25,387.16	-23.68	-0.09
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	63,268.37	1,078.72	1.73
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	3,997.37	24.39	0.61
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	23,041.32	-170.49	-0.73
CSI 300 (CHN)	4,049.55	-53.99	-1.32
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	258.18	-0.64	-0.25
SHANGHAI SE COM (CHN)	3,648.30	-49.22	-1.33
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	5,638.34	168.87	3.09
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	73,209.23	-397.52	-0.54
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,850.10	40.17	0.46
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,968.78	42.18	0.47
FBM KLCI	1,611.30	5.91	0.37
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	5,398.98	-16.93	-0.31
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	102.47	0.71	0.7
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	116.54	0.73	0.63
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	4,005.10	-33.3	-0.82
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	52.94	-1.41	-2.59
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	1,499.83	-31.04	-2.03
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	657.45	3.25	0.5
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	14,327.50	5	0.03
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	454.25	-0.75	-0.16
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	616.25	0.25	0.04
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	66.99	-0.02	-0.03
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	5,490.00	-102	-1.82
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	248.5	-2.1	-0.84

As at 6pm, Oct 27.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('000)
HEIM	12.740	-0.500	19,423
HSI-CWUA	0.425	-0.450	280
CARLSBG	12.600	-0.380	8,335
F&N	19.680	-0.320	3,786
PPB	8.800	-0.220	19,897
UTDPLT	29.700	-0.200	3,773
BIPORT	5.200	-0.150	3
APOLLO	5.700	-0.140	42
HLFG	17.360	-0.140	534
BURSA	7.960	-0.130	9,250
PETDAG	19.200	-0.120	10,732
BAT	4.200	-0.110	1,068
HI	1.570	-0.110	13,832
KGB-C6	0.565	-0.110	35
HSI-PWVQ	0.530	-0.100	2,022
ECOWLD-C62	0.065	-0.085	305
JTIASA-C19	0.065	-0.085	100
KESM	4.590	-0.080	803
PBBANK-C2U	0.070	-0.080	1,000
QL	3.700	-0.080	12,454

Top 20 Losers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('000)
HUAHONG-C1	0.015	-75.00	852
MBSB-C99	0.005	-75.00	800
DIALOG-C2W	0.015	-62.50	1,342
IOIPG-C56	0.010	-60.00	3,100
ECOWLD-C62	0.065	-56.67	305
JTIASA-C19	0.065	-56.67	100
PBBANK-C2U	0.070	-53.33	1,000
HSI-CWUA	0.425	-51.43	280
HSI-CWUZ	0.005	-50.00	400
HSI-CWWE	0.005	-50.00	2,500
MRCB-WB	0.005	-50.00	7,253
MSM-C14	0.005	-50.00	1,000
PADINI-C17	0.005	-50.00	503
SCBUILD	0.005	-50.00	5,761
XDL	0.005	-50.00	46,011
HSI-CWW9	0.095	-36.67	500
AFFIN-C32	0.020	-33.33	2,000
ASIAPLY-WC	0.010	-33.33	576
PETRONM-C12	0.010	-33.33	6,800
REKATECH	0.030	-33.33	45,607

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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TNB: Approved data centres to get access to grid within a year

PETALING JAYA: Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) has pledged to connect approved data centres to the electricity grid within one year, as Malaysia strengthens its domestic network to keep pace with rising power demand and regional electricity connectivity. TNB chief distribution network officer Ahmad Sazree Abd Aziz said strong domestic transmission and distribution networks were crucial to ensuring that Malaysia could fully benefit from the Asean Power Grid (APG).

"APG does help to strengthen the regional electricity security, but, at the same time, the real benefit from APG came about from how strong is the domestic network, in particular, transmission and distribution," he said during a panel session titled "Strengthening Electricity Security through the APG" at the Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW) 2026 yesterday.

Ahmad Sazree said TNB needed to keep pace with growing electricity demand arising from economic growth, residential and commercial consumption, as well as energy-intensive data centres, while ensuring that the network remained reliable and resilient.

He said three practical measures were important in preparing Malaysia's electricity network for growing demand, namely demand forecasting, network capacity planning and targeted infrastructure development.

"For Malaysia, we do actually have pressure in terms of the data centre.

"So, once it's been approved by the ministry-chaired committee, we pledge to get data centres connected to the grid in one year's time," he said. – Bernama

Ringgit higher against major currencies, eases vs US dollar

THE ringgit closed higher against most major currencies yesterday but weakened slightly against the US dollar as investors remained cautious ahead of the US Federal Open Market Committee's (FOMC) monetary policy decision later this week, with market participants closely monitoring the outcome for signals on the direction of US interest rates and its potential impact on global currency markets, an analyst said.

At 6pm, the ringgit inched down to 4.0865/0900 against the US dollar from Monday's close of 4.0855/0895.

Meanwhile, Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said Brent crude prices remain elevated at around US\$116 per barrel, suggesting a fairly visible risk of higher inflation that could affect the FOMC's monetary policy stance.

"For now, the ringgit has been quite steady despite heightened uncertainties," he told Bernama.

Against major currencies, the ringgit strengthened against the British pound to 5.4412/4458 from 5.4517/4570 at Monday's close, advanced vis-a-vis the Japanese yen to 2.5903/5927 from 2.5961/5988 and climbed against the euro to 4.5524/5563 from 4.5774/5819.

The ringgit was also mostly higher against its Asean peers. It rose against the Singapore dollar to 3.1883/1913 from 3.1920/1954 at Monday's close, and the Indonesian rupiah to 225.0/225.3 from 225.3/225.5.

It also gained against the Philippine peso to 6.36/6.37 from 6.39/6.40, but weakened against the Thai baht to 12.1010/1160 from 12.0766/0930 previously.

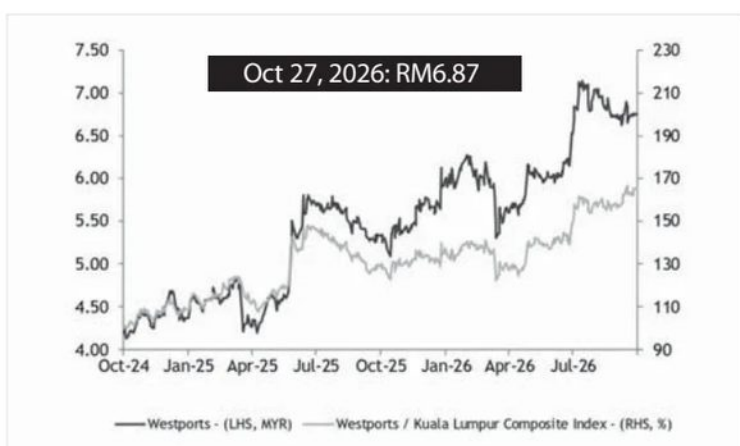
Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.1595	4.0145	4.0045
1 Australian Dollar	2.9290	2.8110	2.7950
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2410	3.1410	3.1330
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9600	2.8780	2.8660
1 Euro	4.6420	4.4920	4.4720
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.3710	2.2840	2.2680
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2410	3.1410	3.1330
1 Sterling Pound	5.5450	5.3680	5.3480
1 Swiss Franc	5.0470	4.8330	4.8180
100 UAE Dirham	114.2700	108.3800	108.1800
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4160	3.1840	2.9840
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.6100	59.9800	N/A
100 Danish Krone	63.6600	58.5800	58.3800
100 Hongkong Dollar	53.4400	50.7900	50.5900
100 Indian Rupee	4.4500	4.1400	3.9400
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0240	0.0212	0.0162
100 Japanese Yen	2.6560	2.5340	2.5240
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	45.7400	42.0600	41.8600
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5600	1.3900	1.1900
100 Philippine Peso	6.5900	6.2000	6.0000
100 Qatar Riyal	115.0800	109.2500	109.0500
100 Saudi Riyal	111.7700	106.1100	105.9100
100 South Africa Rand	25.8500	23.3500	23.1500
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.3100	1.1500	0.9500
100 Swedish Krona	43.0000	39.1500	38.9500
100 Thai Baht	12.8300	11.3800	10.9800

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Westports Holdings Bhd

Buy. Target price: RM7.77



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

9M'26 core net profit (CNP) increased to RM1,025 million as revenue grew 26% YoY, outpacing the 10% increase in operating costs. Higher fuel and manpower expenses (salary adjustments and headcount expansion) drove cost growth. However, fuel cost per litre fell 3% QoQ, partly reflecting lower diesel prices and more efficient deployment of marine tugs and pilot boats. Container yield rose 26% YoY to RM233/TEU (9M'25: RM184), supported by tariff hikes and VAS, which contributed c.29% of container revenue (9M'25: 23%), matching the previous post pandemic peak.

Q3'26 CNP eased to RM346 million as a stronger transshipment mix and lower VAS contribution reduced container yield by 9% QoQ. Container volume grew 7% QoQ (transshipment: +15%; gateway: -3%), supported by more ad hoc vessel calls but partly offset by softer gateway demand. Westports maintained its FY26 volume growth guidance of 0-5% (vs. our +2% forecast).

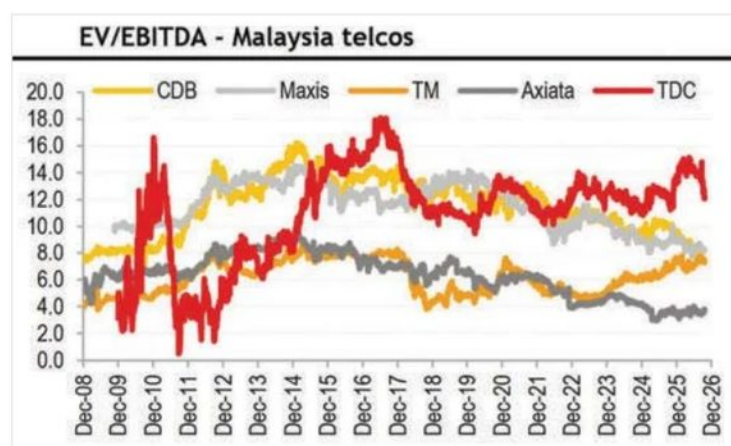
No dividend was declared for the quarter. We remain positive on Westports' outlook, supported by resilient volumes from sustained FDI and intra-Asia trade, alongside tariff driven earnings growth. Westports expects strong Q4'26 volume growth, supported by market share recovery from Northport and sustained transshipment demand. Expanded yard capacity should accommodate higher monthly throughput without congestion, supporting an FY27 volume growth outlook. There were no material updates on M&A. Westports may terminate its DRP before the planned five year period if no suitable investment opportunities emerge.

We raise our FY26E CNP forecast by 5%, reflecting a higher VAS revenue contribution of 28% (previously: 25%), while keeping our FY27 assumption largely unchanged at 24%.

BUY with RM7.77 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 27**

Telcos

Neutral



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

WE have updated our ESG scores of telecom stocks under coverage post review of their FY25 annual reports. All 5 telcos under our coverage now score above 50, with CelcomDigi and Maxis posting improved YoY scores. Fundamentally, our preferred sector picks are TM and Axiata.

Having incorporated latest ESG data from FY25 annual reports, our updated ESG scores (out of 100), based on our proprietary ESG scoring methodology are as follows: 1) Axiata 61 (from 66 previously), 2) CelcomDigi 66 (from 50 previously), 3) Maxis 53 (from 47 previously), 4) TM 57 (unchanged), and 5) TIME 61 (from 63 previously). The changes in overall scores were largely driven by movements in their respective "Quantitative" scores.

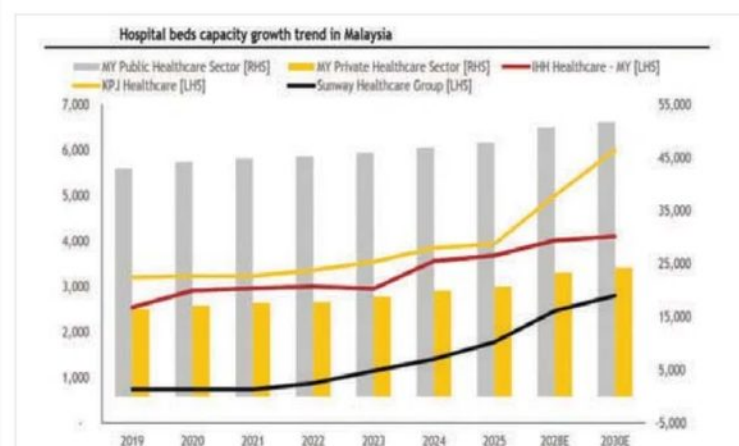
The ESG pressure faced by telcos is overall benign. Telcos are not major emitters and social issues (such as digital inclusion and data protection) can generally be managed operationally. Given the industry's population reach and core specialty in connectivity, telcos are well-positioned to serve as ESG enablers for other industries.

Axiata saw a decline in its "Quantitative" score in FY25, with lower average training hours, lower proportion of independent and female directors and higher LTIF offsetting lower emissions (partly from deconsolidation of subsidiaries). Axiata's "Qualitative" score was also lower after it opted to not disclose Scope 3 emissions (after applying transition relief under IFRS Sustainability Disclosure Standards). Axiata continues to score well for the "Target" section.

TM's "Quantitative" scores are unchanged in FY25 with higher female management and board representation, lower LTIF and higher customer satisfaction offsetting higher absolute emission and lower emission and energy intensity and higher waste generated. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 27**

Healthcare

Positive



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

WE believe the occupancy ramp-up rate on new hospitals would be determined largely by local population density, household affordability, insurance penetration and existing private hospital competition within the area. We view KPJ Kuala S'gor (turned EBITDA +ve <1 year) as a good example of capturing an underserved catchment, supported by early marketing efforts and quick insurer panel onboarding. Likewise, we believe SUNMED's proposed Putrajaya hospital and PMCK's Kulim expansion both target underserved markets.

We believe operators that can effectively capture patient volumes while improving revenue intensity are best positioned to translate capacity expansion into sustainable earnings growth. While greenfield hospitals offer longer-term growth runway, brownfield expansions and daycare facilities could provide immediate chances to profit-maximise existing assets. Within our coverage, we favour IHH for its exposure to higher acuity care and attractive valuations, while KPJ's extensive domestic footprint and SUNMED's sizeable expansion pipeline provide differentiated growth opportunities.

Malaysia's private hospital operators are entering another expansion cycle, across a combination of brownfield expansions, acquisitions, and new greenfield hospitals. Within our coverage, KPJ targets to land at 6,000 beds by 2030, IHH aims to expand to >4,000 beds in its MY ops by 2030, while SUNMED expects to grow its capacity to >3,400 beds by 2032. PMCK targets to add a 90-bed hospital in Kulim, with target to operate in Q1'28. Thomson Hospital Kota Damansara is currently listed at 399 beds and is also planning a 500-bed hospital Thomson Hospital Iskandariah in Johor Bahru. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 27**



**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



**Four sides
of love**

Ili Ruzanna on her own terms - P22

INSIDE

p23

Taobao 11.11 sale offers free
shipping on 400m items

p24

Wearing high heels while
caring for your feet

p25

Ipoh-born director bags
award at Busan film fest



With Love

Singer-songwriter Ili Ruzanna learns to wear heart on sleeve

BY ASHIQIN AHMAD
lifestyle@thesundaily.com

AFTER nearly nine years in radio, Ili Ruzanna is entering a new chapter, one in which she no longer has to be the voice keeping others company but can turn the microphone towards herself.

The singer-songwriter, who stepped away from radio earlier this year to explore other creative pursuits, has returned to music with *With Love, Ili*, a four-track EP that explores love, personal growth, grief and healing. Released on Oct 16, the project reflects a side of Ili that has always existed beneath her work as a broadcaster and content creator, but one she now has more room to explore.

"I've always been involved in music, even before I started working in radio. The challenge was never a lack of interest but finding enough time to give both creative pursuits the attention they deserved. Now feels like the right time to bring music back to the centre of my life," she told theSun.

Music has remained a constant throughout her career, with Ili releasing original material since 2019 and collaborating with Malaysian independent musicians including MFME, Afaro, Airliftz and Asyrfnsir. Her track Pixels has surpassed 747,000 Spotify streams, while *I Don't Mind* and *Shady* have each accumulated more than 200,000 streams.

With Love, Ili, however, represents a different milestone because it is the first body of work she has developed entirely on her own creative terms - from songwriting to production.

"Having that creative freedom has been amazing. I get to choose who I want to work with and I was fortunate that the people I collaborated with are also my friends. Being your own boss is an indescribable feeling because you can explore your ideas and really allow yourself to grow creatively," she said.

Although the independence was initially daunting, the support surrounding her made the process easier to navigate. It also allowed her to work without the same pressure of meeting a label's release schedule.

Two of the EP's songs had been written and kept aside for years, waiting for the right moment to be released. Ili decided to revisit them because she still connected with the person she was when she wrote them, while the other two songs came together in just two writing sessions.

"Altogether, the process took about six months but a lot of the material was already there. When we finally sat down to complete the EP,

everything flowed quite naturally," she said.

Four songs, four sides of love

Rather than following a deliberately constructed narrative, the EP emerged as a collection of different emotional experiences. Its four tracks explore the excitement of meeting someone new, the ache of unrequited feelings, the certainty of lasting love and the difficulty of accepting that some people are not meant to stay.

For Ili, the songs are ultimately less about telling someone else's story than understanding her own.

"Each song feels like a letter to myself. When you write about life, there will inevitably be other people involved, but ultimately, this EP is mostly for me. It is a way of expressing things I have experienced and giving those feelings somewhere to go," she said.

The opening track, *I Didn't Know*, explores the awkward frustration of having a friend develop feelings for a you only to realise that the opportunity has passed. Meanwhile, *I Love You To Death* offers a more idealistic vision of romance, celebrating the kind of love that remains unwavering until the end.

Ili admits that the latter is her favourite, describing it as her "delulu" song, a playful reference to its unapologetically romantic outlook.

"*I Love You To Death* represents a love that is so strong that the only thing that could separate the two people is death. It is about choosing each other through love and marriage and staying together until the very end," she said.

At the other end of



Whether she is sharing a story, creating content or making music, Ili has a knack for turning everyday emotions into something people can connect with.

the emotional spectrum is *Whatchu Wanna Do Tonight*, the EP's lead single, released on Sept 25. With its pop sound influenced by the 2000s, the track captures the excitement of meeting someone new and feeling that familiar spark of possibility.

And *Why?* completes the collection by confronting the reality that not every relationship is meant to last. Together, the songs move between hope, longing, devotion and acceptance, reflecting the different ways people experience and make



Ili brings her own personality to everything she does, embracing a creative life that leaves room for experimentation and self-expression.

— ALL PICS BY AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN

and share meals in memory of her late mother, reached more than 13 million views. The project also prompted more than 800 people to reach out, demonstrating how an experience rooted in personal grief could resonate with others going through similar losses.

With her new EP, that instinct to find common ground through personal experiences continues, although the process of writing about her own emotions has not always been comfortable.

"Writing these songs felt like therapy. Being able to get things off my chest has been one of the greatest privileges of making music. At the same time, because the project is so personal, there are moments when I feel quite exposed. I am sharing parts of myself that people might not otherwise see," she said.

That vulnerability is also what she hopes will allow listeners to connect with the songs. Rather than expecting people to interpret every lyric in the same way, Ili wants them to find their own experiences reflected in the music.

For her, the measure of success will not simply be the number of people listening but whether the songs make someone

feel understood.

Raw, new chapter

Ili will perform the four songs live for the first time at her *With Love, Ili* showcase this Saturday, which coincides with her birthday. All ticket proceeds from the showcase will go to the National Cancer Society Malaysia.

While she hopes the event will receive strong support, her expectations extend beyond the stage and the release itself.

"Of course, I hope people come and support me but more than anything, I hope they can relate to what I have been through. I want them to listen to the songs and feel that they are not alone in whatever they might be experiencing," she said.

Asked to describe this next phase of her life in one word, Ili simply chose "raw", explaining it represents being genuinely authentic to oneself.

It is an apt description for an artiste who has spent years making space for other people's stories and is now learning to make that same space for her own.

Sometimes, the most honest thing a songwriter can offer is a feeling that someone else recognises as their own.

TAOBAO Malaysia has unveiled its Taobao 11.11 Global Shopping Festival 2026 until Nov 13, offering shoppers free shipping on 400 million items across the platform. Together with the newly introduced Zhang Linghe-themed in-app interface and the Daily Treasure Hunt campaign, the platform makes this year's 11.11 more exciting, engaging and rewarding for Malaysian consumers.

Free shipping gets bigger

Whether shoppers are refreshing their wardrobes or picking up something for the home, more than 400 million eligible products now come with free shipping and no minimum spend, even for single-item purchases. Those looking to receive their purchases sooner can also upgrade eligible orders to air shipping for a fee, with delivery to select major cities in as fast as five days.

For Malaysian fashion lovers, this 11.11 brings even more reasons to shop, with free shipping available across participating fashion categories. Beyond fashion, free shipping also extends to a wide range of lifestyle categories, including home essentials, dinnerware, toys and pet products, beauty tools and travel gear.

Throughout the campaign, Taobao is also offering platform discounts of up to 15% sitewide, air shipping discount vouchers released daily at 12pm and 8pm, instant rebates of up to RM50 for eligible RHB cardholders, transaction fee waivers of up to RM8, 88VIP membership vouchers worth up to 2,525 yuan (RM1,515), new-user perks of up to RM40 and platform vouchers of up to 50% off for Taobao English app users.

For shoppers furnishing their homes, more than one million furniture items, including sofas, dining tables and height-adjustable desks, can now be shipped directly to Malaysia. During 11.11, shoppers buying eligible furniture can receive furniture shipping vouchers worth up to RM30. Taobao Official Logistics also provides compensation protection for eligible damaged items, giving consumers greater peace of mind when investing in their homes.

Join Daily Treasure Hunt, redeem gifts

Taobao app users can take part in the Daily Treasure Hunt and earn points by completing daily tasks such as browsing, placing orders or inviting friends to earn points. Points collected would allow them to unlock eight behind-the-scenes clips of Zhang, as well as an opportunity

Taobao Malaysia 11.11: Free shipping on 400m items

➤ Air delivery in as fast as five days, 1,400 return drop-off points nationwide

淘 Taobao 11.11 11.11 Sales Starts

NOW-13 Nov

Vouchers Up to 50% OFF

Daily Shipping Vouchers at 12PM&8PM

Transaction Fee Waiver Up to RM8

T&Cs apply.

Taobao aims to become a destination for discovery, helping Malaysians access quality products, emerging trends and lifestyle inspiration, while enjoying a more seamless shopping experience.



The Zhang-themed app interface. - HANDOUT PICS

to redeem autographed items, limited-edition Zhang merchandise and Taobao red packets.

Zhang will also go live on the Taobao app during the 11.11 period, connecting with fans across markets in real time.

1,400 local return drop-off points nationwide

From November, Taobao will partner with J&T Express to progressively roll out more than 1,400 local return drop-off points across Malaysia, enabling shoppers to conveniently return eligible purchases at a nearby location without arranging international return shipping.

This further strengthens Taobao Official Logistics, which provides greater certainty throughout the cross-border shopping journey, from clearer shipping costs and delivery timelines to proactive assistance for parcel exceptions, compensation for lost or damaged shipments, and one-stop customer service.

"Today's consumers shop for more than everyday essentials - they want products that reflect their interests, lifestyles and standards of quality. Taobao is not only about helping Malaysians discover more great products at great value, we want to be the platform where they can find inspiration and trends anytime, anywhere. Ultimately, our goal is to make the entire journey, from discovering a favourite item to completing the purchase, as simple and seamless as possible," said Taobao Malaysia country head Jess Lew.

Zhang's larger-than-life visuals are now on display at landmarks around Kuala Lumpur, bringing the 11.11 spirit to the streets.

The Taobao 11.11 Global Shopping Festival 2026 reflects Taobao's continued investment in the Malaysian shopping experience, providing greater choice, better value and more convenient service for every shopper.

Shop fashion deals: Most popular category among Malaysians

BY EE ANN NEE
lifestyle@thesundaily.com

THIS 11.11 season is the time to "shop till you drop" on Taobao Malaysia in conjunction with the Taobao 11.11 Global Shopping Festival, anchored by free shipping on fashion items across the platform.

Taobao Malaysia country head Jess Lew said fashion generates the highest sales on Taobao Malaysia. It has seen strong consumer demand on the platform, with double-digit sales growth in the past five years.

"Fashion is the most loved category, where many people want to buy on Taobao. There are millions of styles on Taobao, you can search for what you want.

"The second most-visited category people explore is snowboarding (equipment) to prepare for the December holidays," Lew told *theSun*.

She said 11.11 is its biggest sale of the year and Taobao Malaysia is focusing on enhancing the user experience for shoppers.

"We want to get more users to try Taobao and get existing users to explore more items they have not discovered before."

This year's campaign ushers in a new chapter of value-driven convenience, integrating AI-powered shopping tools with an expanded



AI Try-On allows users to visualise items on their own photos.

local logistics network to eliminate traditional cross-border pain points for Malaysian consumers.

Running until Nov 13, the festival connects Malaysians to more than three billion products spanning fashion, home living, furniture, collectibles, hobbies, wellness and emerging lifestyle trends.

Beyond promotions, this year's campaign reflects Taobao's move in making cross-border shopping more

convenient and reliable for Malaysian consumers.

Empowering smarter choices with integrated AI tools

Taobao Malaysia is transforming the shopping journey through four integrated AI innovations designed to enhance confidence, clarity and value:

➤ AI Try-On eliminates the uncertainty of online fashion by allowing users to visualise items on their own photos, fostering inclusivity and enabling frictionless style experimentation.

➤ AI Shopping Assistant acts as a hyper-personalised concierge to support informed decision-making, offering scenario-based recommendations alongside real-time price comparisons and quality assessments.

➤ AI Product Insights cuts through information overload by instantly highlighting key features, translating specifications and extracting balanced pros and cons from user reviews.

➤ Voice-Search-by-Hold makes it easy for users who cannot find a keyword for an item. It helps users pinpoint their true needs and cut through choice overload via voice and descriptions, helping them find products that better meet their needs amid a vast catalogue.

TRENDY

On Taobao

Catch the viral trends



Zhang brings refreshed shopping experiences to life.



High heels, healthy feet

Common conditions linked to raised shoes, how to choose more supportive footwear

HIGH heels may look stylish, but wearing them often can place significant stress on your feet and body. Over time, this can lead to pain, deformities and long-term joint problems. Understanding how heels affect your body can help you enjoy them more safely.

Heels: Beautiful, but deadly

When you wear high heels, up to 75% of your body weight shifts onto the front of your feet. This unnatural position increases pressure on the toes, balls of the feet, ankles, knees, hips and even the lower back. Over time, this strain can change how you walk and may permanently alter the structure of your feet.

Common forefoot problems include:

- ➔ Metatarsalgia: Pain and inflammation in the ball of the foot due to excess pressure
- ➔ Morton's neuroma: Thickening of tissue around a nerve, often causing burning pain or the feeling of walking on a pebble
- ➔ Bunions
- ➔ Hammertoes: Toes that bend permanently due to muscle imbalance and tight shoes

High heels also increase the risk of heel and ankle conditions such as:

- ➔ Plantar fasciitis: Stabbing heel pain, especially when taking the first steps in the morning
- ➔ Achilles tendonitis: Soreness and stiffness at the back of the ankle
- ➔ Ankle sprains
- ➔ Haglund's deformity: A painful bony bump at the back of the heel

Skin and nail issues such as corns, calluses and ingrown toenails are also common, especially when shoes are narrow or rub repeatedly.

How to choose the perfect heel

For daily wear, a heel height of one to two inches is clinically ideal because it can relieve Achilles tendon tension. You should select wedges or block heels over thin stilettos to ensure a wider, more balanced base for your body. Additionally, look for functional features such as a wide toe box, firm arch support and secure straps or laces to prevent foot sliding and long-term toe deformity.

Those with high foot arches must prioritise cushioning to manage intense pressure on the balls of their feet and avoid frequent ankle rolls. Individuals with flat feet should limit heel use because the lack of arch support can quickly lead to bunions or plantar fasciitis. Finally, if you have wider feet, it is essential to choose styles with broad toe boxes to prevent nerve compression and nail damage caused by narrow designs.

Staying comfortable for longer periods

You can address calf tightness by leaning against a wall for a deep stretch and pulling your toes toward your shins to loosen your arches. To restore your range of motion and reduce joint stiffness, it is also beneficial to rotate your ankles in circular patterns. The small internal muscles of the feet is best strengthened through "towel scrunches" or by using your toes to pick up marbles. Additionally, performing regular calf raises will help stabilise your ankles and improve balance. For immediate relief after a long day, roll your foot over a tennis ball or a frozen water bottle and finish with a 20-minute



High heels may be fashionable, but there are downsides to wearing them under certain circumstances.

salt soak to soothe inflammation.

You should follow the "two-day rule" by never wearing the same pair of heels back-to-back, which allows the shoe's cushioning to decompress and provide better support.

Experts also suggest limiting high-heel wear to three hours or less, perhaps by commuting in sneakers and only switching to heels once you arrive at your destination.

A healthy schedule involves varying your heel heights, such as wearing high heels on day one, moderate block heels on day two and supportive sneakers for recovery on day three.

This constant variation is essential to prevent your muscles and tendons from adapting to a single damaging position.

Finally, avoid flats on your recovery days, opting instead for shoes with built-in arch support and a slight half-inch lift to ensure proper alignment.

Listen to your feet

Burning pain in the forefoot, sharp heel pain upon waking, numbness, tingling or the sensation of walking on a pebble may indicate nerve compression or early tissue damage. Visible changes such as bunions, curled toes or bony bumps at the back of the heel are also warning signs.

Persistent calf tightness, lower back fatigue and recurring skin or nail problems further suggest that footwear may be contributing to strain.

If pain or instability lasts more

than two weeks, medical advice should be sought to prevent long-term damage.

When you should not wear high heels

Heels should be avoided on unstable surfaces such as grass, gravel, cobblestones or in environments that involve manual labour or slippery floors.

You should also skip heels when standing for more than three hours, as they lack the necessary stability and shock absorption for these tasks.

Medical experts specifically advise against wearing them during pregnancy and postpartum recovery because shifting centres of gravity and loose ligaments significantly increase the risk of injury.

Separating foot facts from fiction

In recent years, the myth that high heels are the primary cause of bunions has been debunked. Instead, while heels can worsen symptoms, inherited foot structure is the actual root cause.

It is also a misconception that you can "train" your feet - even if you improve your balance or gait, the structural pressure on your joints will remain unchanged.

Furthermore, a slight heel of 1 to 1.5 inches often provides better arch support and relieves more tension from the Achilles tendon than a totally flat sole.

Finally, persistent foot pain should never be dismissed as a normal part of ageing as these symptoms typically signal treatable underlying conditions.

Knowing these truths can help you make informed choices, ensuring your comfort and mobility in the long run.

This article is contributed by Columbia Asia Hospital Batu Kawan consultant orthopaedic surgeon Dr Kor Yee Sang.



Short, thick heels are better for your feet compared with tall, thin heels. - PICS FROM 123RF

MALAYSIAN filmmaker Lim Han Loong has been named one of two recipients of the 2026 Chanel X Bafa Promising Filmmaker Award, presented during the 31st Busan International Film Festival in South Korea.

Lim received the honour alongside South Korean filmmaker Lee Jong-heon, with both recognised for their outstanding talent and achievements throughout the Chanel X BIFF Asian Film Academy (Bafa). Each recipient was awarded US\$5,000 (RM20,410) to support their filmmaking careers.

The awards were presented following the academy's graduation ceremony and screening on Oct 14 at the Busan Cinema Centre, where 24 emerging filmmakers from 14 countries and regions showcased eight newly produced pilot short films.

Selected from 501 applicants across Asia

Lim was among 24 fellows selected from 501 applications submitted from 34 Asian countries, making this year's programme a highly competitive platform for emerging filmmaking talent.

Now in its 20th edition, the Chanel X BIFF Asian Film Academy is a talent development initiative organised by the Busan International Film Festival with support from Chanel.

The academy brings together emerging directors, cinematographers and other film professionals for intensive filmmaking, mentorship and international collaboration.

This year marked a shift towards feature-film development, with participants working in teams to create short proof-of-concept films based on feature-length projects.

The 20-day programme, which ran from Sept 26 to Oct 15, was led by South Korean filmmaker Shin Su-won as dean, with Indonesian director Yosep Anggi Noen serving as directing mentor and South Korean cinematographer Park Junghun as cinematography mentor.

From Ipoh to international film stage

Hailing from Ipoh, Perak, Lim has developed a filmmaking practice centred on memory, family, migration and the quiet transformations of everyday life.

His 2025 short film *In the Valley* premiered in the Wide Angle section of the Busan International Film Festival. Set against the limestone landscape of Ipoh, the film follows an 11-year-old girl confronting the prospect of leaving her home and best friend behind when her mother

Ipoh-born director wins award at Busan international film fest

➤ Fledgling filmmaker Lim Han Loong marks milestone with prize



A grateful Lim delivers a speech after receiving his award. — HANDOUT PICS

Lim's works are centred around memory, family, migration and the quiet transformations of everyday life.

decides to move to the city.

The film subsequently screened at the Singapore International Film Festival, continuing Lim's growing presence on the international festival circuit.

Lim is currently developing his debut feature *Maybe Today, If Not Today, Maybe Tomorrow*, which returns to his hometown of Ipoh.

Set in Malaysia in 2018, the project follows an 18-year-old school leaver navigating uncertainty about his future as his family, hometown and the country undergo significant changes.

The feature project has also been selected for the 2026 Produce au Sud Asean workshop, organised by the Festival des 3 Continents.

Recognition for Malaysia's emerging film talent

According to the Busan International Film Festival, the Promising Filmmaker Award recognises two fellows who demonstrate exceptional promise through their creative achievements during the academy.

For Lim, the recognition follows his earlier participation in Busan as a



short-film director and marks a further step in his transition towards feature filmmaking.

His achievement also highlights the presence of Malaysian independent filmmakers within international filmmaking networks, where locally rooted stories continue to find audiences and collaborators beyond the country.

The 2026 Chanel X BIFF Asian Film Academy concluded on Oct 15, continuing its mission to support emerging Asian filmmakers through international exchange, practical filmmaking experience and professional development.



(From left) Asian Film Academy dean Shin Su-won, fellow award recipient Lee Jong-heon, Lim and Chanel Korea CEO Claus Henrik Vestergaard Oldager pose for a photo.



Lim is currently working on a debut feature set in his hometown of Ipoh.

Uyaina tackles bullying, its consequences in debut film as producer

TELEVISION presenter and actress Uyaina Arshad is taking on the issue of bullying and its consequences in her first film as a producer, titled *Ragging-Melawan Bungkam*, as part of her commitment to social responsibility.

Uyaina, 32, whose full name is Saidatul Naseha Uyaina Arshad, said the film aims to convey the message that bullies must face punishment regardless of their power, influence or rank.

She said the idea for the film, directed by Kamal Husni, came about following several bullying cases reported in Malaysia, including those that resulted in deaths.

"More and more cases go beyond

bullying and have escalated into murder. So, I felt that perhaps it is time to tell a story that does not glorify such behaviour, but instead shows what happens when someone engages in bullying or ragging, including the consequences and the punishment they will face," she told reporters recently.

Uyaina, a former host of TV programmes *Nona* and *Wanita Hari Ini*, said the challenges of being a first-time producer prompted her team to produce a 15-minute promotional video last year to demonstrate their capabilities to potential financiers and brands.

"The video allowed potential

financiers and brands to see for themselves the film's visual quality and storytelling approach, because anyone can pitch an idea verbally. Once they saw what we could produce, we were able to move forward with the film despite being a relatively new production company," she said.

Uyaina said the response to the auditions has also exceeded expectations, attracting aspiring performers from Malaysia and abroad. The process also included closed auditions attended by popular local actors such as Sweet Qismina, Adam Lee and Syafiq Kyle.

"The auditions were scheduled to

start at 9am, but people were already queuing outside the gate at 6.30am. Some had travelled all the way from Brunei, Penang and Malacca, so we ended up returning home late at night after spending time attending to them," she said.

Ragging-Melawan Bungkam, a collaboration involving four production companies, is currently in pre-production and filming is scheduled to begin in December. It is expected to be released next year.

Uyaina also hopes to submit the film to the Malaysian Film Festival and international film festivals, including those in Qatar and other parts of Asia. — Bernama



Uyaina says she was inspired to make the film after several fatal bullying incidents in Malaysia. — PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @UYAINAARSHAD



Blackpink's Lisa drops first solo EP

► **Press Play**
Thai artiste comes with six tracks, including *Tarantino*

LISA of K-pop girl group Blackpink returned to the music scene recently with her new solo EP *Press Play*, marking her first release in one year and eight months, Yonhap News Agency reported.

The six-track album, released at

midnight, serves as the singer's first solo EP and follows her debut full-length album *Alter Ego*, which came out in February last year.

Fronted by the lead track *Tarantino*, the EP also includes the songs *Sawadika*, *V12*, *Cobra*, *Cut U Off* and *Sweat*.

Sawadika, which was released ahead of the album in September, debuted at number 69 on the Billboard Hot 100 chart shortly after its release. It set a new record as the highest-charting song from the artiste.

The comeback follows a major

milestone for Lisa at the 2026 MTV Video Music Awards in Los Angeles last month. She won the Best Pop award, a major category, for *Dream*, a track from *Alter Ego*, becoming the first Asian solo artiste to claim the prize. – Bernama-Yonhap



Fronted by the lead track *Tarantino*, the EP also includes the songs *Sawadika*, *V12*, *Cobra*, *Cut U Off* and *Sweat*. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @WEARELLOUD

Iman Fandi explores ambition, shines with *Afterglow*

SINGAPOREAN artiste Iman Fandi recently released her new EP *Afterglow* across all major streaming platforms, the culmination of a breakout year and her most significant work yet as an independent artiste.

Afterglow is all about placing yourself at the heart of everything, even when the work begins from the ground up. It is about shifting the focus back to yourself, tapping into ambitions that build confidence and honouring the wins that come with personal development. Across the EP, Iman navigates the complexities of stepping into her own light, leaving behind what no longer serves her and rising to the occasion with a greater sense of self-assurance. Yet, this process is not without its struggles, as she finds herself caught between the heart's desire for connection and the mind's instinct to walk away. These conflicting impulses find their way into the music, where vulnerability and conviction exist in constant conversation.

Iman shared: "But it's also about having fun along the way. Dancing around with your girls, celebrating how far you've come and romanticising your own life."

Through its sleek, edgy pop and R&B sound, *Afterglow* becomes a feel-good soundtrack for choosing yourself, embracing your ambition and letting your glow shine.

Where earlier singles *Tip Toes*, *Out Of My Mind* and *It Is* traced that journey one chapter at a



Iman is a Singapore-born singer working at the intersection of music, fashion and contemporary culture. – PIC BY JAYDEN TAN

time, *Afterglow* brings the full arc together – the clearest statement yet of who Iman is as an independent artiste.

The EP arrives on the back of a defining year, from her Singapore National Day Parade debut before a 42,000-strong crowd at the National Stadium to her first US stage at *Broadus Together: Superstar Among Friends* in Los Angeles.

Iman is a Singapore-born singer working at the intersection of music, fashion and contemporary culture. The daughter of football legend Fandi Ahmad, she is building an independent career on her own terms. Managed by Gushcloud International, her music draws from modern pop and R&B, exploring themes of growth, resilience and self-possession.

Chinese singer Yao Xiaotang set to bring overseas solo tour to Malaysia in December

CHINESE rising singer Yao Xiaotang is set to bring her solo concert *Breaking Dawn – Bangbangtang* to the Arena of Stars, Resorts World Genting on Dec 12 at 6pm.

Marking her first overseas solo concert in the five years since her debut, this show will bring her closer to Malaysian fans as she embarks on a bold new chapter in her music career.

Since its launch, the *Breaking Dawn* concert tour has travelled across several major cities, including Beijing, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Nanjing, Hangzhou and Guangzhou. Now making its way to Malaysia, Yao will bring her signature vocals, heartfelt emotions and captivating stage presence to Arena of Stars, looking forward to sharing an exciting and memorable "Night of Breaking Dawn" with her long-awaited fans, affectionately known as "Bangbangtang".

Rising powerhouse with crystal-clear voice

With her clear, delicate vocals and sincere, natural singing style, Yao has gradually made her mark on the Mandopop music scene. From *Yi Jing You Wo La* (*GotChu*), *Ta De Shu* (*Her Tree*), *Guan Yu Ni* (*About You*) and *Shi* (*Lost*), to *Yi Tian Shi Jie* (*A World in a Day*), *Zhong* (*Heavy*), *Lian Dai Bao Zheng Ren* (*Joint Guarantor*) and *Yi Wan Gong Li De Si Nian* (*Ten Thousand Kilometres of Longing*), she continues to explore her personal expression across different musical styles, showcasing an increasingly diverse musical identity.

She has also lent her voice to film and television OSTs of various styles,



The show is Yao's first overseas solo concert in the five years since her debut. – HANDOUT PIC

including *Zhi Ru Chu Jian* (*Like Our First Meeting*), *Lei Nian* (*Tearful Longing*), *Yuan* (*Willing*), *Guang Mang Wei Wo Chun Zai* (*Light Exists for Me*) and *Tian Mi Pei Fang* (*Sweet Recipe*), bringing the emotional worlds of their stories to life through music.

Yao's star power skyrocketed further through standout performances on hit music variety shows such as *Tian Ci De Sheng Yin* (*The Treasured Voice*), she delivered compelling renditions of *Zui Hou De Yi Ye* (*The Last Page*), *Kan Wo De Yan Jing Shuo* (*Look into My Eyes and Tell Me*), *Zuo Wei* (*Seat*), *Tuo Xie* (*Compromise*) and *Hong Zi Jian* (*Between the Rainbow*), showcasing her solid vocal technique and nuanced emotional control.

She made her debut appearance at the China Media Group Spring Festival Gala in 2025. In the same year, she received the Newcomer Award at the 32nd Chinese Top 10 Music Awards alongside the Rising Musician accolade at the Weibo Music Awards.

Breaking Dawn: Symphony of growth and breakthrough

The word "dawn" represents the first ray of light breaking through the darkness, symbolising Yao's understanding of growth, breakthroughs and freedom. If life were likened to the passing of a day, she is now standing at her own sunrise, embracing the future's endless possibilities while remaining grateful for everything that has shaped her journey.

Centred on her personal transformation, the concert tour brings together music, striking stage visuals and emotional storytelling to create an immersive experience. From gentle, moving ballads to high-energy singing and dancing performances, Yao will showcase her artistic versatility, allowing fans to discover a vibrant side of her artistry far beyond her recorded music.

Yao envisions *Breaking Dawn* as a carefree, liberating musical utopia – a sanctuary where everyday worries melt away and fans can sing their hearts out, release their emotions and share in an unforgettable night of joy and moving melodies.

Organised by Titans Entertainment, By Moon Entertainment and jointly organised by Star Planet, tickets for the concert in Malaysia are on sale.

King to the rescue

LIV Golf appoints former TaylorMade CEO as senior adviser to secure its future

LIV GOLF yesterday appointed former TaylorMade chief executive Mark King (pic) as senior advisor of the rebel circuit that will soon learn if it will move ahead with a restructured 2.0 model or wind down operations.

King's role is effective immediately and comes at a critical point for LIV, which is attempting to emerge from Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection with a restructured ownership model and a proposed new investment arrangement with BC Partners Credit.

LIV, which in recent weeks has seen some of its biggest names decide that they want no part of the league's uncertain future, said in a press release that King will be expected to recruit, build and serve as chairman of LIV Golf's Advisory Board for the next era of the league.

"His deep understanding and relationships in and around the professional golf industry, combined with his expertise in driving

innovation and building high-performing organizations, makes him a valuable addition as an advisor to our team at this pivotal moment," LIV Golf CEO Scott O'Neil said in a press release.

King spent 34 years at TaylorMade, where he moved up the ranks, starting as a sales representative in the 1980s. He was named president in 1999 and CEO in 2002.

"Having spent much of my career in golf, I believe there is a tremendous opportunity for LIV Golf to establish itself as a competitive and enduring force in the game," said King.

"With a renewed business model that puts players at the centre, I see significant potential for the League to build on that foundation, and create lasting value for players, fans, and partners alike. I look forward to working with Scott and the team at LIV Golf."



Eala back in business

PHILIPPINES STAR Alexandra Eala said "the ball doesn't know what rank you are" after beating world number 411 Mika Stojsavljevic 6-1, 6-2 in her opener in Tokyo on Monday.

World No. 19 Eala arrived at the Pan Pacific Open on the back of a poor run of form that saw her win just one match at her last three tournaments.

That included a shock first-round defeat to 217th-ranked Chinese qualifier Shi Han at the Wuhan Open this month.

Eala avoided a similar banana skin against British 17-year-old Stojsavljevic, brushing past her opponent in 75 minutes.

"I try to look at the player separate from the ranking," said Eala.

"The ball doesn't know what rank you are. It's just being ready and trying to keep that intensity all the time."

Eala is followed everywhere by adoring fans eager to see the 21-year-old, who in August became the first player from the Philippines to win a title on the women's WTA Tour.

She was again supported by a small but passionate group of fans on centre court in Tokyo.

Eala breezed into a 5-0 lead in the first set and closed it out despite Stojsavljevic pulling a game back.

The British player gave her more problems in the second set, but Eala was never seriously trou-



match without ever having her service broken. "It's a little faster than the court I played on last week," said Eala.

"It's indoor, comfortable weather, not very hot. I think I'm finding my groove."

Elise Mertens of Belgium also progressed, beating Japan's Moyuka Uchijima 6-4, 6-2 but Maja Chwalinska and defending champion Belinda Bencic both withdrew from the tournament through injury without playing a match.

Bencic, who was the fourth seed, said her season was over after several ligament tears were discovered in her right foot.

"I am still completely unsure when and how this occurred, but it is sadly preventing me from competing here in Tokyo this week and in Hong Kong next week," said the Swiss player. — AFP

Alexandra Eala in action against Mika Stojsavljevic (not pictured) during the 2026 Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo on Monday. — AFP/PPIC

Top doubles players call on ATP to rethink proposed changes

LEADING men's doubles players have called on the ATP Tour to reconsider plans that would reduce the size of the doubles competitions at events and move prize money to the singles format.

In a letter addressed to the ATP board and management and signed by 137 active players, 33 former players and 20 federations, the group said it understood the need for reforms but was deeply concerned about the plans being discussed.

The ATP said this month it was reviewing potential changes to the size of the doubles draws at tournaments as part of its plans for 2028 and beyond, with the freed-up funds going towards singles qualifying and early-round prize money.

"The current plans would shift about US\$20 million (RM81m) in prize money from doubles to singles, while cutting a significant number of pro-

fessional opportunities for doubles specialists," the group wrote.

"That shift would make it much harder for talented players to build and sustain a doubles career. A healthy professional sport cannot rely solely on a small group of top stars; it needs pathways for players to develop, compete and earn a living."

Reuters has contacted the ATP for comment.

The governing body of men's tennis said earlier this month doubles will continue to be a core part of the tour and its reviews were focused on identifying a model for its sustainable long-term future.

It added that discussions would continue with the Player Advisory Council.

The ATP is set to hold its year-end meetings in Turin next month.

The plans being discussed include cutting the number of doubles teams at elite ATP Masters

1000 events to 16 from 32, with events below that level featuring smaller fields.

Apart from the Grand Slams and Olympic Games, doubles receives much less attention than singles and few top singles players commit to playing the format, though it is hugely popular at club level.

Dutch player Sem Verbeek said the ATP should look after the interests of all its members.

"Tennis is more than a business," the doubles world No. 60 said on X. "It's a legacy built on joy, health and sportsmanship. A sport built on those values should open doors, not close them."

The ATP outlined plans this month to boost its bonus pool to US\$50 million (RM204m) from US\$21.5 million (RM88m), and reshape its rankings and calendar as part of a package aimed at lifting player compensation to US\$350 million (RM1.3b) from 2028. — Reuters

BRIEFS

Nadal returns

RAFAEL NADAL will return to hardcourt competition for the first time since his retirement in November 2024 in a one-night Las Vegas exhibition event next February, organizers announced on Monday. The 40-year-old Spanish left-hander who won 22 Grand Slam singles titles will compete in "The MGM Slam" on Feb 28, 2027, at T-Mobile Arena. Other players and a format for the event will be disclosed later. Nadal makes a hardcourt return in Vegas after playing in an exhibition event at his academy in Spain earlier this month. Nadal played a 2024 match in Las Vegas against countryman Carlos Alcaraz. "I remember how impressive it was to feel the energy of a full arena in a city like Las Vegas," Nadal said. "Now I return in a different stage of my life, without the pressure of the tour but with the same passion for this sport. I have always loved competing, and even if my professional career is finished, that feeling never really goes away."

Sinner eyes Six Kings

JANNIK SINNER has signalled he will return to action in the "Six Kings Slam" tournament in Riyadh, which has been rescheduled for late December due to the conflict with Yemen's Houthis. The 25-year-old Italian currently ranked world No.1 has been out injured since winning Wimbledon in July. He also looked set to miss the Riyadh event, originally scheduled for October which organisers hope will go ahead on Dec 27-30. Sinner shared a poster for the event Monday on his Instagram account featuring his image and the event name and dates but without further comment. The tournament is expected to feature 24-time major champion Novak Djokovic, world No.2 Alexander Zverev, winner of the French Open and the US Open this season, and possibly seven-time major winner Carlos Alcaraz.

Judge keeps Trump's golf project on ice

A US judge extended yesterday a court order blocking President Donald Trump's plans to renovate a historic Washington golf course where she had deemed a removal of trees "inexcusable". The renovation, at the center of a lawsuit over environmental and historic preservation concerns, is one of the projects Trump is pursuing to reshape landmarks in the US capital. "The court still does not speak for the trees," US District Judge Ana Reyes said in her order filed in the district court for the District of Columbia, adding, "It speaks only for the rule of law." Her order barred the government from "removing or damaging additional trees" on the course. It also ordered the government to provide 10 business days' of written advance notice before it makes any "irreparable modification" at the park, pending the suit outcome. Two weeks earlier, Reyes faulted the conduct of Justice Department lawyers in the lawsuit seeking to halt the Trump administration's takeover of the historic golf course. It was "inexcusable" that hundreds of trees were removed from the course during the prior weekend, she added. Last week Trump said his administration would begin renovation work immediately, despite the judge's order that work could not proceed without prior notice to the court. In an online post, Trump declared his administration had "an absolute right" to proceed, while blasting the judge as "lunatic," and calling the lawsuit "ridiculous."



MIKA GODTS scored his first Paris Saint-Germain goal as the reigning European champions put aside a raft of injuries to key players to go top of Ligue 1 with a 2-0 win at home to Lyon yesterday.

Godts, the Belgian international signed from Ajax, came off the bench and set up Senny Mayulu for the 72nd-minute strike which broke the deadlock at the Parc des Princes.

He then sealed the win late on as PSG made it eight straight victories in all competitions and moved into first place in the table, one point ahead of Rennes.

"Mika is an ambitious player with a lot of quality, and he is only 21," said PSG coach Luis Enrique.

"We have full confidence in him and we signed him because we want him to be here for many years."

The game was initially due to be played on Sunday before being postponed by 24 hours following a request by Paris police who wanted to divert resources amid a wave of violent protests in the French capital.

Godts stars ... as PSG beat Lyon to go top of Ligue 1

That meant a clash with the *Ballon d'Or* ceremony happening at the same time in London, in which 10 PSG players were among the 30 nominees for the most prestigious individual award in football.

Among the nominees were last year's laureate Ousmane Dembele and Georgian winger Khvicha Kvaratskhelia, perhaps the team's standout performer during their run to a second straight Champions League title last season.

Ousmane Dembele and Khvicha Kvaratskhelia were both unavailable for this game anyway due to injuries with the latter facing months on the sidelines after tearing his ACL.

"I would like to dedicate this win to 'Kvara,'" said Luis Enrique. "We are very proud of him. We remain motivated as a team to keep winning but

this victory is for him."

A year ago Dembele picked up his *Ballon d'Or* award at a theatre in Paris while PSG were losing 1-0 in Marseille in a game postponed by 24 hours because of stormy weather.

This time PSG – with Nuno Mendes and captain Marquinhos also injured – maintained their focus to claim a fifth successive Ligue 1 victory, although it took them some time before they translated their dominance into a goal.

Godts, who replaced Joao Neves just before the hour mark, fed Mayulu on the edge of the box and the 20-year-old scored his first of the season with a fierce drive into the bottom corner.

Lyon had come close twice in the first half, with Julien Duranville and Zachary Athekame forcing good saves from Matvey Safonov.

They could have gone top themselves with a

win, but PSG made sure of the three points as Quentin Ndjantou released Godts in the 84th minute and he picked his spot beautifully.

"They deserve it because they deserve to play more often, but it is difficult in this team," Luis Enrique added when asked about the impact of his substitutes.

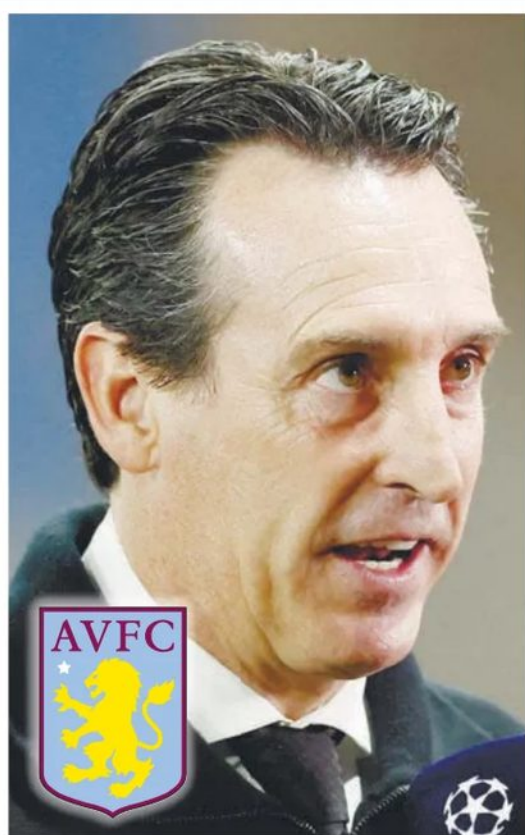
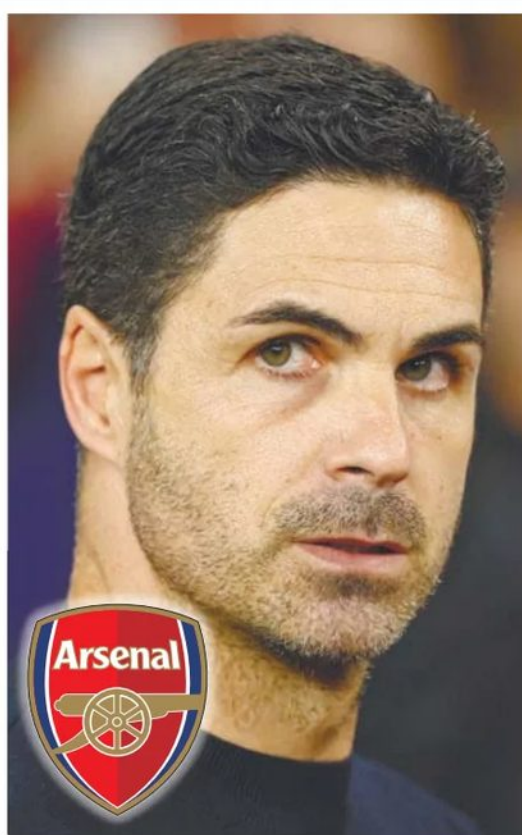
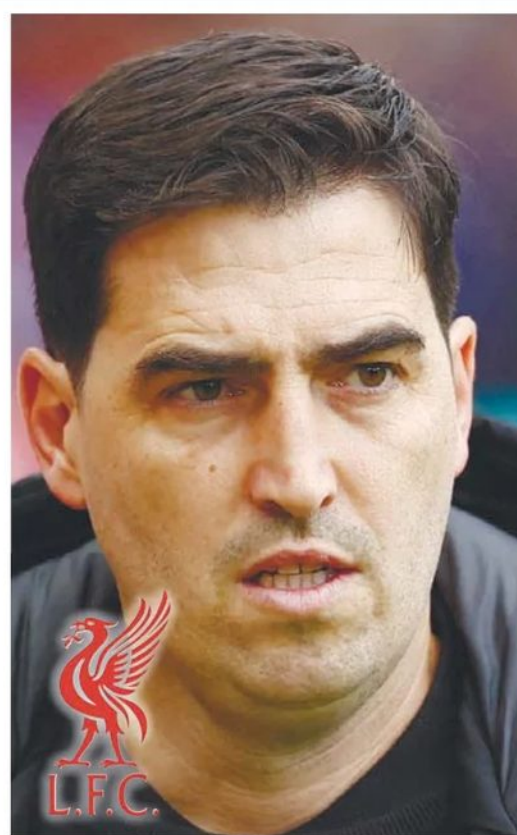
PSG failed to win any of their first three games in Ligue 1 this season, so the fact they find themselves clear at the top already is ominous for the rest of French football.

"It is still just the start of the season," Luis Enrique insisted.

"We have only played three Champions League games and don't forget that last season we won our first three Champions League games and didn't finish in the top eight.

"The season is very long but we have shown we are a very reliable and resilient team that always wants to win.

"Now is not the time to be at 100 percent, but we will try to find our rhythm going into the key part of the season, which will be around April." – AFP



FROM LEFT: Aston Villa's Unai Emery, Arsenal's Mikel Arteta, Liverpool's Andoni Iraola and Chelsea's Xabi Alonso are the products of Gipuzkoa football system. – AFP/IC/REUTERSPIC

PREMIER LEAGUE heavyweights Liverpool, Arsenal and Chelsea clash this week with an unlikely thread linking them – the men in charge all hail from the small Basque province of Gipuzkoa.

Andoni Iraola's Liverpool host Xabi Alonso's Chelsea in the League Cup on Thursday, and then Mikel Arteta's English champions Arsenal on Monday in the Premier League.

Unai Emery, a fourth Premier League coach from Gipuzkoa, takes Aston Villa to face giants Barcelona on November 4 in the Champions League.

So how did Spain's smallest province, of just 1,980 square kilometres, with a population of around 730,000, produce 20% of the Premier League's coaches?

A good starting point is one man, who mentored them all but, unlike Alonso or Arteta, is little known outside of the region – 80-year-old Mikel Etxarri.

"A wise man and a master of football, the teacher of teachers," Josu Zubia Ramos, the Gipuzkoa football federation's director of coaching, told AFP.

Etxarri, whom the federation's coaching school is named after, has worked tirelessly for over half a century to spread his ideas.

"We Basque coaches have been fortunate to have a very strong bond between us," Etxarri told AFP, days

No envy, no secrets: How Spain's Gipuzkoa became football coaching hotbed

after he was honoured for his career at a friendly between Real Sociedad and Athletic Bilbao in October.

"I think we've been lucky enough to live professional football without being professionals in that sense, without showing that passion for money, but rather a passion for knowledge."

Once, when asked about why coaches from the region were so successful, Arteta highlighted the "passion" of his people and "the education we all got".

An education which began as kids. Arteta, Iraola and Alonso all played in the same midfield aged eight – for youth football club Antiguoko Kirol Elkarte, in San Sebastian.

Their shirts hang in the club offices, with the coaches never forgetting their roots.

Current Arsenal midfielder Martin Zubimendi is another Antiguoko graduate.

Overcoming limited resources

Historically, Real Sociedad and Athletic Bilbao have provided Basque football's core.

Athletic, based in neighbouring Bizkaia, still operates its famous local player policy, while Real Sociedad abandoned its own restrictions on signing players from outside the region in 1989, but their academy remains an important source.

The pathway from academy to first team seems clearer than at other clubs, with players focused on how to compete for their local team, and give back afterwards.

Their fans expect success despite their limited resources compared to giants Real Madrid and Barcelona. Some of that gap is made up for in work rate and competitive spirit.

Both teams have in recent years won the Copa del Rey and competed in the Champions League.

Good coaching produces better players, players who understand the game deeply can become coaches themselves, and those coaches pass on their ideas – a "virtuous cycle".

"There's no envy – I don't see envy in the way people move – what I see is that people want to perform, they want knowledge, they want information.

And that's the space we all operate in," continued Etxarri.

Another recurring theme is a culture of high standards and self-improvement.

"I think we have a very strong, very high idea of performance, of demands, and of hard work, right?"

"That's because in any field, not just football, the Basque coach is demanding of himself," added Etxarri.

"Take my own case as an example – I've gone more than 60 years in a row without missing a single year."

Etxarri signed Alonso from Antiguoko in 1999 as Real Sociedad sporting director, and he also coached Eibar and the Basque national team.

The region has its own language, Euskara, and it's not just football where Gipuzkoans excel – San Sebastian boasts the world's highest concentration of Michelin-starred restaurants per capita.

In the wet and cloudy Basque country, there is a strong outdoor sporting tradition. In Gipuzkoa, youngsters under 10 undertake multiple disciplines, rather than specialising in one.

Local sports such as stone-lifting and wood-cutting remain part of the culture.

"(Success is) tied a bit to the local

culture, to Basque culture, Gipuzkoan culture, to how our society is, to teamwork, to how club culture has been lived over the years, to how we identify with a project when we get involved and wear a badge on our chest," explained Zubia Ramos.

"We throw ourselves into it as if we had started our careers there or had been born there.

"England has quite a lot in common with us – a bit in terms of climate – but above all in terms of the philosophy of how football is lived there, which is similar to Gipuzkoa."

500 coaches

Many coaches gain licences in Gipuzkoa. Will the province continue to provide?

"Look, right now our coaching school is going through a really good spell," Zubia Ramos said.

"We have more enrolments than ever. For such a small population... this season we have more than 500 coaches enrolled in our school.

"What does that mean? It means there's a real interest in education, in self-improvement... I see how excited our coaches are about working."

The numbers suggest the pipeline is unlikely to dry up, with the next Arteta, Alonso or Iraola likely sitting in one of those classrooms right now.

BY RICHARD JOLLY

Carrick fights on

United manager survives initial crisis talks with Wilcox and Berrada

But the popular former midfielder – who was backed by the United supporters at Old Trafford despite the abject defeat to Bournemouth – remains in charge and is continuing to prepare for this weekend's trip to Chelsea in the Premier League as usual. United's first-team squad will be back at Carrington for training on Tuesday, which is expected to be led by Carrick.

That's despite United's hierarchy reportedly sounding out potential replacements for Carrick if they are required to appoint a fourth permanent manager in the three years since the minority Ineos ownership took control of football operations from the Glazers.

Former Newcastle manager Eddie Howe and Julian Nagelsmann, the ex-Bayern Munich and Germany head coach, are both available and are considered the frontrunners for the job if Carrick is sacked. Aston Villa's Unai Emery and Brighton's Fabian Hurzeler are admired but their clubs would demand significant compensation.

The United supporters made clear who they blame for the club's worst start to a league season in 40 years and longest winless run since 2015 as they turned on the players and chanted against the Glazers, co-owner Sir Jim Ratcliffe and the Ineos hierarchy, including director of football Wilcox, on Sunday.

Carrick made the decision to drop Bruno Fernandes and leave him on the bench following the captain's criticism of his manager's tactics, a move that appeared to receive support from the United fans as they did not chant for the Portuguese to be introduced despite the humbling to Bournemouth.

Former United defender Gary Neville accused the United players of "downing tools", meanwhile, as the progress they made under Carrick last season has spectacularly unravelled and revealed a fractured dressing room.

"Michael Carrick is a brilliant man," Neville

said on *Sky Sports*. "He's a man of integrity, of credibility, of decency, of professionalism, of high-quality football and consistency and reliability. Everything the group of players in that dressing room aren't."

"I know that because if Bruno has turned on him publicly, with that little statement, imagine what they're like behind the scenes. If that's your captain saying that, imagine what they're saying in the dressing room behind closed doors when no one's listening. That's horrific."

"There's a few of them that don't go to bed at the right time, don't eat the right things, don't think about Manchester United every single minute of every day, and aren't living and breathing this football club as they should be – and as professionals should."

"Why? Because it's gone to their heads. But they still walk around like King William. They are nothing, some of those players."

Carrick initially returned



Manchester United manager Michael Carrick. – REUTERS/PIC

Kane has plenty more to prove

HARRY KANE is targeting Champions League glory for Bayern Munich and ending England's wait for a major international tournament after lifting the *Ballon d'Or* in the highlight of his career to date yesterday.

"I'd say a dream come true but it's beyond my wildest dreams, so just incredible," said the England captain.

"I think it's massive for England, for our country. Being here in London was a good omen for me and it's been too long. To put us back on the map and put us here with this trophy, I'm extremely proud."

Kane is England and Tottenham's all-time record goalscorer but his haul of collective trophies is limited to domestic German honours since he joined Bayern in 2023.

Bayern bowed out to eventual winners Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League semi-finals last season.

Kane suffered more heartbreak with England in a defeat to Argentina in the World Cup semifinals but at the age of 33 he believes he can still win some of the biggest prizes in football.

"I still have a lot to achieve in this game. The Champions League, at club level, and to win a major trophy with England is the number one priority for sure," he added. "There's so many great things I want to achieve."

As teenager, Kane did not appear destined for greatness.

He was farmed out on loan by Tottenham four times to the lower leagues before breaking into the first team, but he said memories of those times drive him to succeed at the top level for as long as possible.

"I had to go through many ups and downs, especially early in my career, when you're learning about yourself, both as a professional and in life," he said.

"I found ways to improve and get the edge on maybe other players who had more ability than me."

"From that moment I think it helped shape me as a professional because I never take it for granted. I know there's always someone like me, someone younger, trying to take my spot, whether it's with the England team or the Bayern team." – AFP

to Old Trafford as interim manager – his second stint in caretaker role – after the dismissal of Ruben Amorim at the beginning of the year.

He was rewarded with the full-time position after guiding United to third in the Premier League last term and securing a return to the Champions League.

United spent £155 million (RM709m) on three new midfielders this summer – signing Carlos Baleba, Youri Tielemans and Andre Santos, after missing out on their top targets Elliott Anderson and Sandro Tonali – but failed to sign a back-up leftback to Luke Shaw or another forward to support the injury-prone Benjamin Sesko.

Lisandro Martinez criticised the club's hierarchy for not doing more to support Carrick following the 2-1 defeat to Atletico Madrid earlier this month while Fernandes questioned his manager's tactics following the 4-1 loss at Como last week.

Carrick said Fernandes did not play against Bournemouth due to "pure football" reasons while the Portuguese was also present at Carrington on Monday, reportedly for pre-planned treatment on a pre-existing injury. – The Independent

SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 6204/2026 DATE: 27/10/2026 (TUE)
STM LOTTERY SDN. BHD.
196901000090 (8420-D)

TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
9241	6818	4768

Special

8125	2365
5347	8874
4866	0587
7512	4517
0613	5924

Consolation

5344	5358
2712	6033
2624	9743
2574	4839
9618	7060

4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1 **RM 13,377,460.83**

9241	6818	6818	9241
9241	4768	4768	9241
6818	4768	4768	6818

Jackpot 2 **RM 559,881.22**
Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

4D Fireball 6

4D Zodiac 亥猪

1st Prize	9241	+	BOAR
2nd Prize	6818	+	
3rd Prize	4768	+	
4th Prize	Special Prize	+	
5th Prize	Consolation Prize	+	
6th Prize	Any 4D drawn number		

TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

5D

1ST	7 6 9 8 8
2ND	2 3 1 0 2
3RD	8 0 1 0 1

6D

1ST	3 4 7 7 7 7
2ND	3 4 7 7 7
3RD	3 4 7 7
4TH	3 4 7
5TH	3 4

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SUPREME 6/58

9	13	23	24	39	56
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Jackpot **RM 9,317,378.93**

POWER 6/55

18	20	37	40	42	55
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Jackpot **RM 20,682,279.84**

STAR 6/50

8	16	27	31	38	47	+	9
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Jackpot 1 **RM 1,911,329.59**
Jackpot 2 **RM 100,000.00**

Toto 6D
RM 1,000,000

Toto 4D Jackpot 2 (i-System)
RM 104,391
won on 25/10/2026!

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WINNING NUMBERS

PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL

Draw Date: 27/10/26 (Tue) Draw No: 6151/26

1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	7750
2nd Prize	3964
3rd Prize	8263

Starters Consolation

0232	1726	5214	7787
1111	7410	1172	5975
3699	6438	6727	9485
4480	5609	3836	9540
5148	2108	1846	7734

1-3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM8,977,593.20**

7750+3964	3964+7750
7750+8263	8263+7750
3964+8263	8263+3964

Jackpot 2 **RM706,296.90**
Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

3-3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
417 750+	GOAT	RM818,333.30
2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
663 964+ROOSTER		RM1,460,114.60
3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
448 263+DRAGON		RM2,133,339.00

Starters Consolation

180 232	591 726	795 214	997 787
151 111	707 410	391 172	865 975
243 699	956 438	656 727	749 485
964 480	375 609	623 836	449 540
445 148	792 108	231 846	487 734

3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
750	964	263

Jackpot **RM655,455.40**

750 + 964 + 263	964 + 263 + 750
750 + 263 + 964	263 + 750 + 964
964 + 750 + 263	263 + 964 + 750

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

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Nur Eryna ready to shine in Penang

KUALA LUMPUR shuttler Nur Eryna Izzati Muhammad Haizad's dominant performance at the Allianz Junior Badminton Championship (AJBC) Qualifying Round 10 in Penang recently has earned her a precious slot in the AJBC Grand Finals in early December.

The 13-year-old from SMJK Chong Hwa, Kuala Lumpur, who bagged the Girls' Under-13 (U-13) Singles title and took the silver in the Girls' U-13 Doubles event, is especially thrilled at the prospect of making her AJBC Grand Finals debut.

Nur Eryna Izzati defeated Lim Yan Xi of SJKC Kim Sen, Pulau Pinang, 15-9, 15-10 to win the Girls' U-13 singles title.

However, she and partner Foo Nai Wen of SMK Segambut, Kuala Lumpur, fell short in the Girls' U-13 doubles final, losing 11-15, 15-12, 15-10 to Eugene Lim of SMK St Mark, Pulau Pinang, and Lim Yan Xi.

Tan Ee Jay of SMJK Jit Sin, Pulau Pinang,

secured his second AJBC Grand Finals appearance after finishing runner-up in both the Boys' U-15 Singles and Doubles.

He pushed Yeoh Zhen Hong of Regent International School, Kedah, to three sets in the singles final before losing 10-15, 16-14, 13-15.

In the doubles final, Ee Jay and partner Cavan Tan Kai En of SMK Chung Ling, Pulau Pinang, lost 10-15, 7-15 to Dani Syafi Zaidi and Putra Assolihin Mohamad Hamim of Maahad Integrasi Madad, Kedah.

At the 2024 AJBC Grand Finals, Ee Jay reached the Boys' U-13 Singles quarterfinals and competed in the doubles group stage.

In just five years, the AJBC has become one of the country's most popular and anticipated junior events, with no entry fees for players.

This year's competition features 10 qualifying rounds, culminating in the Grand Finals in Kuala Lumpur.

RESULTS & STANDINGS

LA LIGA: Sevilla 2 (Romero 24, Correia 82) Osasuna 0.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Barcelona	10	9	0	1	40	11	27
Atl Madrid	10	8	1	1	20	8	25
Real Madrid	10	8	0	2	25	10	24
Betis	10	6	2	2	16	14	20
Sociedad	10	6	1	3	19	18	19
Sevilla	10	5	2	3	16	16	17

FRENCH LIGUE 1: Paris Saint-Germain 2 Lyon 0.

TOP 6	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Paris SG	8	5	2	1	16	9	17
Rennes	8	5	1	2	18	14	16
Lille	8	4	3	1	11	6	15
Monaco	8	4	3	1	11	7	15
Lyon	8	4	2	2	13	7	14
Paris FC	8	4	2	2	13	9	14

Malaysia Young Tigers stand tall

MALAYSIA emerged as the only team from Southeast Asia to advance to Tier B at the 2026 Fifa Under-15 (U-15) World Cup and Festival in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The national youth squad, coached by P. Maniam, achieved this proud feat after finishing Group H as runners-up with three wins, one draw, and one defeat, thereby qualifying for the Round of 32 of Tier B. Tier B is the second-highest tier of the tournament, bringing together teams ranked from 33rd to 64th best.

Football Association of Malaysia (FAM) President Datuk Ab Ghani Hassan described the achievement as proof of the national youth players' ability to compete on the international stage, while also reflecting the positive development of the country's grass-roots football.

"I am happy and satisfied with the performance shown by the national U-15 football squad coached by P. Maniam at the 2026 Fifa U-15 World Cup and Festival in Baku, Azerbaijan.

"What we are even more proud is that Malaysia emerged as the only team from Southeast Asia to succeed in advancing to the Tier B stage, thereby proving the capability of the national youth lineup to compete on the international stage," he said in an FAM statement yesterday.

Ab Ghani said this achievement deserves recognition as it reflects the effort, commitment, discipline, and high fighting spirit shown by the players throughout facing challenges against teams from various countries.

The Young Tigers is scheduled to face South Africa in the Tier B Round of 32 today. - Bernama

Herry hits the winning formula

MALAYSIA'S quest for stronger and more competitive men's doubles combinations is beginning to bear fruit, with head coach Herry Iman Pierngadi's willingness to experiment yielding encouraging results on the European tour.

The approach has seen Aaron Tai-Yap Roy King capture the Arctic Open title, while Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun emerged champions at the French Open, providing a timely boost to Malaysia's men's doubles campaign.

Herry said building successful partnerships was a process that required patience, as the coaching team needed time to assess players' compatibility, understand their strengths and identify combinations capable of delivering consistently at the highest level.

"As a coach, I work with the players every day and, of course, I want to bring out the best in them. "However, this is a process that takes time. We cannot expect results overnight," he told reporters

at Akademi Badminton Malaysia (ABM) in Bukit Kiara yesterday.

He said the assessment went beyond performances in training, with players' personalities, individual roles and understanding on court also playing crucial roles in determining whether a partnership could succeed.

Herry stressed that revamping the men's doubles pairs was never intended to break up existing partnerships permanently, but rather to give the coaching team a clearer picture of the potential offered by different combinations.

"We never said they would be split up permanently because it was only an experiment. Now, we are beginning to see the results, with some of them reaching the finals," he added.

Meanwhile, Herry believes that Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik still have the ingredients to remain a formidable partnership after producing encouraging results since reuniting, including finishing runners-up at the World Championships in India and the Denmark Open.

He said their performances demonstrated that the pair remained competitive and capable of challenging the world's best, reinforcing the rationale behind the temporary changes to the national doubles lineup.

"They have certainly proved their ability by reaching the World Championships final, even though they did not win the title. We split them up earlier only to experiment, and it wasn't meant to be permanent," he said. - Bernama



Sarawak golfer Mirabel Ting in a press conference at KLGCC yesterday.

MALAYSIAN GOLFER Mirabel Ting (*pic*) is learning to trust herself and play for the love of the game, rather than the expectations of others, as she prepares to tee off at the LPGA Maybank Championship at the Kuala Lumpur Golf and Country Club (KLGCC) this week.

Having emerged as Malaysia's best-performing golfer in last year's edition, the 21-year-old Sarawakian is returning with a refreshed mindset, determined to enjoy the game and let her performance do the talking.

The experience of competing on different tours has helped her realise that golf is a personal journey, one in which her focus should be on her own game rather than the pressure to meet other people's expectations.

"I think after half of the season, I kind of realised that I don't play golf for people, I play golf for myself. I love the game of golf.

"So this year, I'm just going to go out there and play. I'm not going to think about things, still going to be the same," she told reporters at a press conference yesterday.

That change in outlook could prove important as Ting takes on a strong field at the tournament, where she will also be looking to make the most of familiar surroundings without allowing expectations to weigh her down.

On the course conditions, she believes players could be in for a low-scoring week, with wetter fairways and softer, more receptive greens offering greater opportunities to attack the pins.

"I think the conditions this year are a little bit different from the past two years that I played. It's a lot wetter than the previous year

Mirabel hopes a renewed focus on enjoying golf will help her shine again on home soil at KLGCC

that I played, and the greens are very receptive and you can spin the ball on the green.

"So, this year is a little bit different, and I think we'll see a couple of low scores this year," she said.

She finished joint 49th in last year's edition, while her best result at the tournament came in 2024, when she finished joint 12th.

Meanwhile, defending champion Miyu Yamashita of Japan is relishing the opportunity to defend her title and insists she is unfazed by the pressure.

The world No. 4, who has enjoyed an impressive season with multiple victories, said she was excited to return to the tournament after claiming the title last year.

The 25-year-old also hopes to put on another strong showing for Malaysian golf fans.

"I don't really feel much pressure, and I've been really looking forward to playing here as the defending champion. So, I hope a lot of fans come out to watch us play in the tournament," she told reporters yesterday.

On the challenges posed by the KLGCC course, Yamashita said consistency would be crucial if she were to reproduce last year's winning performance.

"I think consistency with my shots is really important because there are a lot of tricky holes out there. So, I'll focus on hitting good second shots," she added. - Bernama

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Draw No: 441/26 Date: 27/10/2026

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1st Prize **2974**

2nd Prize **9329**

3rd Prize **2493**

SPECIAL		CONSOLATION	
6295	6737	6376	0171
6550	3120	8991	0453
0708	0873	0068	9464
0001	4629	6153	2581
3285	9765	3088	5394

4D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 **RM23,090,442.46**

WON

2974 + 9329 2974 + 2493

9329 + 2974 9329 + 2493

2493 + 2974 2493 + 9329

Jackpot 2 **RM386,043.80**

WON

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Jackpot 1 **RM14,295,415.47**

Jackpot 1 - Group 1 + Golden Number

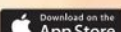
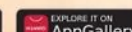
Jackpot 2 **RM104,217.20**

Jackpot 2 - Group 2 + Golden Number

GROUP 1	7 4 2 9 9 3	
GROUP 2	7 4 2 9 9	OR 4 2 9 9 3
GROUP 3	7 4 2 9	OR 2 9 9 3
GROUP 4	7 4 2	OR 9 9 3
GROUP 5	7 4	OR 9 3
	OR 2 9	
GOLDEN NUMBER	0 9	

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Golden Kane!

Bayern striker beats Mbappe and Yamal to end England's 25-year wait for a Ballon d'Or winner

HARRY KANE became England's first *Ballon d'Or* winner in 25 years in his native city of London yesterday, beating Kylian Mbappe and Lamine Yamal.

The first ever *Ballon d'Or* ceremony on English soil got off to an inauspicious start as the London traffic caused a delay of nearly an hour, with many of the star names arriving late.

But there was a happy ending for the hometown hero as Kane collected the crowning glory of his career to date, becoming the first Englishman to win the award since Michael Owen in 2001.

The 33-year-old Bayern Munich forward struck a remarkable 73 goals in 65 games for club and country last season, propelling the German giants to a league and cup double.

He also scored six times as England finished third at the World Cup.

"I love to represent my country and to bring this trophy back to them and have an English winner I think is something that's really, really special, especially here in London," Kane told *AFP*. "What a crazy night and I'm really, really happy."

Despite being England and Tottenham's all-time record goalscorer, Kane's medal collection is limited to German domestic triumphs.

He was on the losing side for Spurs in the 2019 Champions League final against Liverpool and twice tasted bitter defeat in the final of the European Championship with England.

But joining Bayern in 2023 and his remarkable goalscoring consistency have earned him the highest individual award in football.

"Making the move to Bayern Munich was a big step in my career," Kane told *AFP* earlier. "Some people saw it as a risk but for me it was always about improving and seeing if I could get better around the teammates, the team, the club and it has pushed me onto another level."

"Being a number nine for Bayern and England you are expected to score goals and to do that the number of times I did last year is something I'm really proud of," he added.

Thomas Tuchel says he has "run out of superlatives" to describe Kane after the England captain won the *Ballon d'Or*.

Under Tuchel, he led his country to the last four of the World Cup, where they suffered a devastating loss to Argentina. England nevertheless achieved their best World Cup finish since 1966, coming home with bronze after victory over France in the third-place play-off.

Following Kane's triumph, Tuchel said: "Congratulations Harry on a deserved *Ballon D'Or*!"

"I ran out of superlatives to describe your per-

formances a long time ago, but I'm delighted to see that you have now been formally recognised by the football world."

"To become the first Englishman to win this huge honour in 25 years makes it extra special and we are lucky to have you as our leader."

"I know you will enjoy this moment with your loved ones and then get back to doing what you do best - scoring goals and winning football matches."

The FA also honoured Kane's *Ballon d'Or* win by illuminating the Wembley arch in gold yesterday.

Yamal scooped up the first award of the night for young talent of the year for the third consecutive time but the 19-year-old fell short of becoming the youngest ever *Ballon d'Or* winner, finishing third, after he failed to produce his best form during Spain's World Cup success.

Mbappe finished second but his wait to win the *Ballon d'Or* goes on despite being the top scorer in the World Cup, Champions League and La Liga as his goals did not lead to collective triumphs for France or Real Madrid.

Luis de la Fuente beat out Paris Saint-Germain's Luis Enrique and Arsenal boss Mikel Arteta to be named men's coach of the year after leading Spain to World Cup glory.

"This is recognition for a job very well done over many years," De la Fuente told *AFP*. "I believe Spanish football, both in terms of coaching and the game itself, serves as an example of excellent youth development, which ultimately paves the way for future success."

Barcelona's Pere Romeu scooped the prize for women's coach of the year.

Paris Saint-Germain missed out on any of the main individual awards despite winning a second consecutive Champions League, but did have the consolation of men's club of the year.

Spanish duo Unai Simon and Cata Coll were named best men's and women's goalkeeper. - *AFP/The Independent*



England and Bayern Munich forward Harry Kane kisses the trophy on stage after winning the best male footballer during the 2026 *Ballon d'Or* France Football award ceremony at the Palladium Theatre in London yesterday. - *AFPPIC*



Godts stars

Story on **pg 29**



Carrick fights on

Story on **pg 30**



Trust, enjoy, deliver

Story on **pg 31**

List of *Ballon d'Or* winners

1956 - **Stanley Matthews** (England)
1957 - **Alfredo Di Stefano** (Spain)
1958 - **Raymond Kopa** (France)
1959 - **Alfredo Di Stefano** (Spain)
1960 - **Luis Suarez** (Spain)
1961 - **Omar Sivori** (Italy)
1962 - **Josef Masopust** (Czechoslovakia)
1963 - **Lev Yashin** (Soviet Union)
1964 - **Denis Law** (Scotland)
1965 - **Eusebio** (Portugal)
1966 - **Bobby Charlton** (England)
1967 - **Florian Albert** (Hungary)
1968 - **George Best** (Northern Ireland)
1969 - **Gianni Rivera** (Italy)
1970 - **Gerd Mueller** (West Germany)

1971 - **Johan Cruyff** (Netherlands)
1972 - **Franz Beckenbauer** (W.Germany)
1973 - **Johan Cruyff** (Netherlands)
1974 - **Johan Cruyff** (Netherlands)
1975 - **Oleg Blokhin** (Soviet Union)
1976 - **Franz Beckenbauer** (W.Germany)
1977 - **Allan Simonsen** (Denmark)
1978 - **Kevin Keegan** (England)
1979 - **Kevin Keegan** (England)
1980 - **K-H Rummenigge** (W. Germany)
1981 - **K-H Rummenigge** (W. Germany)
1982 - **Paolo Rossi** (Italy)
1983 - **Michel Platini** (France)
1984 - **Michel Platini** (France)
1985 - **Michel Platini** (France)

1986 - **Igor Belanov** (Soviet Union)
1987 - **Ruud Gullit** (Netherlands)
1988 - **Marco van Basten** (Netherlands)
1989 - **Marco van Basten** (Netherlands)
1990 - **Lothar Matthaus** (Germany)
1991 - **Jean-Pierre Papin** (France)
1992 - **Marco van Basten** (Netherlands)
1993 - **Roberto Baggio** (Italy)
1994 - **Hristo Stoichkov** (Bulgaria)
1995 - **George Weah** (Liberia)
1996 - **Matthias Sammer** (Germany)
1997 - **Ronaldo** (Brazil)
1998 - **Zinedine Zidane** (France)
1999 - **Rivaldo** (Brazil)
2000 - **Luis Figo** (Portugal)

2001 - MICHAEL OWEN (ENGLAND)
2002 - **Ronaldo** (Brazil)
2003 - **Pavel Nedved** (Czech Republic)
2004 - **Andriy Shevchenko** (Ukraine)
2005 - **Ronaldinho** (Brazil)
2006 - **Fabio Cannavaro** (Italy)
2007 - **Kaka** (Brazil)
2008 - **Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal)
2009 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
2010 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
* 2011 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
* 2012 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
* 2013 - **Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal)
* 2014 - **Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal)
* 2015 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)

* 2016 - **Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal)
2017 - **Cristiano Ronaldo** (Portugal)
2018 - **Luka Modric** (Croatia)
2019 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
2020 - **Cancelled** (COVID-19 pandemic)
2021 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
2022 - **Karim Benzema** (France)
2023 - **Lionel Messi** (Argentina)
2024 - **Rodri** (Spain)
2025 - **Ousmane Dembele** (France)
2026 - HARRY KANE (England)

* From 2010-2015 the *Ballon d'Or* was merged with the *Fifa World Player of the Year* to create the *Fifa Ballon d'Or* award.