



Delays in Malaysia's emergency response systems

Study shows below 5% of cardiac arrest patients are brought to hospital alive by ambulances.

Report on
page 5

SG4 a sleeping giant: Tun M

Report on > page 2

Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis can become a major economic powerhouse by pooling resources, says former PM.



A researcher says the high annual arrests related to drug offences clearly suggest that the anti-drug offensive has not yet reached a plateau. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

Report on
page 3

Country's drug problem increasingly difficult to detect: Expert

Lower urine screening figures may point to consumption moving deeper underground.

M40 households may soon qualify for govt assistance

Shift to net disposable income to fairly assess financial aid eligibility mullied: Deputy minister

Report on
page 4

A TRANQUIL ESCAPE
redangislandresort.comRedang Island
RESORT

SG4 could become major economic powerhouse: Tun M

BY HARITH KAMAL
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis could together become a major economic powerhouse if they pool their resources, develop downstream industries and turn their untapped potential into value-added economic activity, said former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"From the very beginning I felt that the SG4, as a collective entity with a population of 5.7 million and spread over a land mass of over 38,000sq km, is indeed a sleeping giant.

"If these states can get their act together, pool their resources and complement one another, the saying 'the sky is the limit' does not sound too cliched anymore."

As Mahathir was unable to attend the SG4 Business and Economic Forum 2026 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday due to

► 'Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis must pool resources, develop downstream industries, turn untapped potential into value-added economic activity'

health reasons, his speech was read by his son Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir.

Mahathir said the four states are already exploring opportunities to diversify their economies, with Kedah positioning itself as a manufacturing hub, Kelantan seeking to commercialise its agricultural sector, Terengganu exploring downstream petroleum activities to reduce its reliance on oil royalties and Perlis looking to expand cross-border trade.

He also cited the rapid growth of cafes and homestays in Perlis as evidence of changing

entrepreneurial attitudes but cautioned that businesses need to guard against market saturation and develop more sustainable business models.

He said the region's rare earth element deposits also present an opportunity to generate greater economic returns.

"The issue now is not merely about retrieving and selling them, which will then immediately provide the SG4 states with a substantial source of income for the state coffers, but also about how to work on value adding on these elements, which will increase their income

multiple folds."

Mahathir cautioned that natural resources alone would not guarantee prosperity, stressing that the region's people remain its greatest asset.

He said the SG4 needs to move away from attitudes that favour shortcuts and quick profits while tackling corruption and promoting entrepreneurship, integrity and sustainable business practices.

Acknowledging that the four states had lagged behind their west coast counterparts for decades, he said stronger commitment from leaders and communities is needed to narrow the economic gap.

Recalling the "Malaysia Boleh" spirit that accompanied the country's economic rise in the 1990s, Mahathir urged the four states to embrace a similar determination to drive their development.

"It is time for the SG4 states to dig deep into their reserves and declare 'Boleh' as well."

Small-scale nuclear reactors potential energy source for nation: MB

KUALA LUMPUR: The SG4 states are open to exploring small-scale nuclear reactors as a potential source of electricity to support Malaysia's future energy needs and industrial development, said Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar.

He said the focus would be on small, portable reactors rather than large-scale nuclear power plants as Malaysia explores alternative energy sources.

"We are not talking about a big scale plant like Fukuyama Nuclear Energy," he said at a media conference following the SG4 Powering Malaysia's Next Economic Frontier programme yesterday.

"I think what we are going to look at for Malaysia is the one which is what we call portable, the small-scale nuclear reactor which can produce a small amount of energy," he said when asked whether the SG4 had discussed with the federal government about potential sites for Malaysia's first nuclear reactor.

He said the four states (Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis) are open to examining the technology but have not identified any proposed sites.

On infrastructure, Samsuri called for closer coordination between federal and state governments to ensure that projects reflect local development priorities.

"Sometimes our priority is not its priority," he said, adding that states should have greater flexibility in determining their infrastructure needs.

He said the arrangement could be reviewed if the Opposition forms the federal government after GE16.

On the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), Samsuri said freight transportation should take priority to support industrial activity along the route, and suggested a 70:30 ratio between freight and passenger services.

He said Terengganu had allocated areas near ECRL stations for small-scale industries to improve access to freight services.

Samsuri also welcomed the prospect of extending rail connectivity to southern Thailand, saying that it could give businesses in the SG4 states access to larger markets. — By **Harith Kamal**

Mahathir said the region's rare earth element deposits present an opportunity to generate greater economic returns.
— **HARITH KAMAL/THESUN**



Move to turn rare earth elements into high-value industries

KUALA LUMPUR: The SG4 is seeking to turn its estimated 70% share of Malaysia's rare earth element (REE) resources into high-value industries instead of remaining suppliers of raw minerals, said Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar.

He said Terengganu, Kelantan, Kedah and Perlis together have considerable potential to attract investments in mineral processing, advanced materials and downstream manufacturing, strengthening Malaysia's position in the global rare earth supply chain.

"With about 70% of the country's REE resources in the four states,

according to the latest data by the Minerals and Geoscience Department, the region has considerable potential to attract investments and develop high-value industries," he said in his keynote address at the SG4 Powering Malaysia's Next Economic Frontier programme at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre.

He said the priority is not simply to extract the minerals and export them but to build local industrial capabilities that would create greater value.

Samsuri said the states should explore opportunities in mineral processing, advanced materials and

technology transfer while encouraging greater participation from local companies.

He stressed that any development of rare earth resources must be guided by scientific evidence, clear regulations and stringent environmental safeguards, particularly to protect water resources and surrounding communities.

"The objective is to develop industrial capabilities, not just extracting raw materials and sending them out, while meeting our responsibility to the people and, most importantly, to our environment."

He added that the SG4 is also

exploring the establishment of a green and clean energy industrial hub to capitalise on the four states' complementary economic strengths.

Samsuri said the initiative could support higher-value industries such as green hydrogen and green ammonia, provided the necessary technology, infrastructure and market conditions are commercially viable.

He said the states are also considering an integrated economic corridor linking industrial development with energy, logistics, technology and workforce preparation.

He added that the states have complementary strengths that could support the initiative, such as Terengganu's petroleum and petrochemical industries, Kelantan's agro-industry and cross-border trade, Kedah's semiconductor manufacturing capabilities and Perlis' strategic location near Thailand."

He also stressed the SG4's economic ambitions are not intended to compete with other states but to contribute to a stronger and more equitable Malaysian economy. — By **Harith Kamal**

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's drug problem may be becoming harder to detect despite a 2.6% drop in positive urine tests last year, with emerging substances and changing consumption patterns complicating enforcement efforts, a researcher said.

Universiti Sains Malaysia Centre for Drug Research senior researcher Assoc Prof Dr Darshan Singh Mahinder said urine screening alone could not reliably measure the scale of illicit drug use, as the results largely reflected the number of individuals detected by enforcement agencies.

He added that 152,856 positive urine tests were recorded in 2025, down from 157,014 in 2024, but the figures still represented more than 150,000 individuals suspected of self-administering drugs.

"This category often combines people with substance use disorders (SUD) and drug (abusers), although the breakdown of individuals with SUD is not being reported."

Darshan said police figures showed that 251,476 offenders had been arrested for various drug-related offences under the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952 as of 2025, with most involving offences under Sections 6, 9, 12(2) and 15(1).

He added that drug offences extended beyond self-administration to include possession and trafficking, with the high number of arrests indicating that enforcement efforts had yet to reach a plateau.

"Indeed, drug-related offences are not confined to drug self-administration offences alone. In fact, they also encompass drug possession and trafficking offences."

"These high annual arrest figures clearly suggest that the anti-drug offensive has not yet reached a plateau."

However, he also said the decline in positive urine tests could indicate that drug purchasing and consumption were moving further underground, making users harder to detect at conventional drug hotspots.

Darshan said enforcement operations commonly targeted drug dens, entertainment venues and drivers suspected of having used

'Urine tests insufficient to measure scale of drug abuse'

➤ Recent drop in positive results could indicate evolving consumption patterns that defy conventional detection: Academic

drugs.

He added that as drug markets and consumption patterns evolved, users could increasingly avoid traditional locations and methods of consumption, complicating detection through conventional operations.

He also said routine urine screening also tended to focus on morphine, amphetamine-type stimulants and *ganja*, which

remained widely misused in Malaysia.

He said although authorities had seized substances including cocaine, fentanyl, ketamine and new psychoactive substances, including synthetic cannabinoids, these were not frequently detected through routine screening.

"Little emphasis has been given to screening individuals for these novel substances."

Darshan said the relatively short

detection window of some synthetic drugs in urine could further hamper efforts to identify recreational users, creating a gap between the substances being consumed and those detected through standard screening procedures.

"Drug detection is becoming more complex with the emergence of novel or synthetic drugs such as synthetic cannabinoids or new psychoactive substances compared to traditional drugs such as morphine, cannabis and amphetamine."

He added that enforcement agencies needed to continually adapt their testing capabilities to keep pace with emerging substances rather than rely predominantly on established screening methods.

He also said the factors driving drug use among youth were also evolving, with social media platforms and vaping products adding new dimensions to the problem.

Darshan said the easy availability and sale of illicit drugs through social media could fuel misuse among youth, while stimulants such as crystal methamphetamine might appeal to some users because of their perceived energy-boosting and mood-enhancing effects.

He added that the mistaken belief that stimulant-based drugs were less addictive or harmful could also encourage experimentation.

He also said more concerning was the emergence of liquid narcotics and drug-containing vaping products, which could make consumption less obvious to people around the user.

Darshan said peer influence, curiosity and the perception that drug use was fashionable, enjoyable or harmless remained important factors.

He added that while traditional street-based drug markets continued to exist, online platforms had added another channel for drugs to be marketed and distributed.

He also cautioned that limitations in prison and rehabilitation capacity could potentially affect the pace of enforcement and drug-control efforts.

He said Malaysia needed to assess its drug problem using a broader range of indicators rather than relying on positive urine tests alone.

"The scale of drug misuse problem cannot be determined solely through urine drug screening."

Darshan said future assessments should also examine arrest patterns, repeat offences, treatment outcomes, relapse rates, emerging substances and changes in drug markets to provide a more accurate picture of the country's drug situation.



KETUM HAUL ... Darshan said enforcement agencies needed to continually adapt their testing capabilities to keep pace with emerging substances rather than rely predominantly on established screening methods. – ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Assess mitigation efforts based on recovery, rehabilitation: Expert

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia must measure its anti-drug efforts by whether users recover, stay off drugs and avoid repeat offences, rather than relying on arrest and seizure figures that remain high despite substantial government spending, a researcher said.

Universiti Sains Malaysia Centre for Drug Research senior researcher Assoc Prof Dr Darshan Singh Mahinder said the persistent numbers raised questions about whether existing enforcement, prevention and rehabilitation measures were achieving a sustained reduction in drug demand and supply.

"The success of anti-drug campaigns should not be measured solely by the number of successful drug busts or seizures and arrests. Annual drug arrest and seizure figures remain considerably high."

Darshan said increased funding for enforcement, prisons and rehabilitation facilities had yet to ease the challenges faced by authorities, particularly in combating international drug trafficking.

He added that police also sought RM80 million last year to strengthen their ability to detect synthetic drugs.

He said million-dollar drug seizures showed that authorities were disrupting major operations, but syndicates continued to adapt, with large shipments passing through Malaysia highlighting the country's role in regional trafficking networks.

Darshan said Malaysia's proximity to the Golden Triangle, a major drug-producing and trafficking region, continued to expose the country to cross-border drug flows.

He added that despite severe penalties, including the death penalty and caning for certain trafficking offences, the measures had not significantly curbed the trade.

He also said syndicates were increasingly operating clandestinely, including through large-scale drug processing laboratories. Darshan said Malaysians detained overseas for trafficking could also represent only the lower levels of wider international networks.

He added that while enforcement

agencies deserved recognition for disrupting drug distribution pipelines, arrests and seizures alone could not establish whether Malaysia was winning the longer-term battle against drug dependence.

He called for greater emphasis on treatment and reintegration after arrest to prevent relapse and reoffending.

"Policymakers should place greater emphasis on community-based aftercare interventions rather than mandating drug offenders to undergo rigid rehabilitation programmes in institutional settings."

Darshan said community-based programmes could reduce costs while helping recovering users access treatment, maintain family ties and secure employment.

He added that such programmes could also reduce the stigma surrounding drug dependence, which could otherwise contribute to social marginalisation and potentially push individuals towards more serious offending.

He also said policymakers should

consider diverting individuals arrested for minor drug offences to community-based rehabilitation instead of keeping them in prison for prolonged periods.

Darshan said this would allow them to address their substance use problems while remaining connected to their families and communities.

He also called for drug treatment and rehabilitation programmes to be more voluntary and tailored to different groups, including adolescents and women.

He added that prevention programmes should move away from fear-based messaging and instead encourage individuals struggling with drug use to seek treatment.

"Drug prevention programmes are not specifically designed or curated for high-risk populations. It is prosaically designed for everyone."

Darshan said treatment providers should also consider shorter or day-care rehabilitation models that would allow recovering individuals to maintain closer contact with their families and communities.

He urged policymakers to review provisions imposing serious punishment on those who breached rehabilitation supervision conditions, adding that a more health-focused approach was needed.

He also called for stricter oversight of private rehabilitation centres, saying repeat offences should be used to assess treatment outcomes.

Darshan said worsening drug dependence could result in individuals initially arrested for self-administration later facing more serious possession charges.

"The success of future drug-related interventions and programmes may be reflected in a sustained and more substantial decline in the number of individuals detained for repeat drug offences and serious drug-related offences, particularly possession and trafficking."

He added that Malaysia needed a more streamlined, evidence-based and outcome-oriented drug rehabilitation framework that measured recovery and reintegration, rather than enforcement activity alone. – By Kirtinee Ramesh



Net disposable income plan to assess M40 aid eligibility

➤ Approach would take into account group's household spending, providing more accurate assessment than gross monthly earnings, says deputy minister

BY HARITH KAMAL
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: Middle-income (M40) households could qualify for government assistance based on how much money they have left after meeting essential expenses, under a proposed shift away from using gross income as the main measure of eligibility.

Deputy Economy Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shahar Abdullah said the government was studying the use of net disposable income (NDI) to assess eligibility for assistance, as nearly 70% of M40 households' income goes towards basic necessities.

He said the proposed approach would factor in household spending based on demographics and location, providing a more accurate assessment of financial circumstances than gross monthly income alone.

"The government recognises that policies cannot rely solely on gross income figures. Moving forward, we are examining the use of net disposable income in providing assistance."

"NDI is fairer because it takes into account essential expenditure according to demographics and locality," he told the Dewan Rakyat during question time yesterday.



Mohd Sahar said the ministry was discussing a pilot project with relevant agencies to assess the proposed system's implications for government finances before finalising the new assessment method.

— ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Mohd Shahar was responding to Jelebu MP Datuk Seri Jalaluddin Alias, who raised concerns about middle-income households facing mounting housing, education, healthcare and family expenses despite being ineligible for certain forms of government assistance.

He said the ministry was discussing a pilot project with relevant agencies to assess the proposed system's implications for government finances before finalising the new assessment method.

Citing the Statistics Department 2024 Household Income Survey, Mohd Shahar

AT THE
DEWAN
RAKYAT

said M40 households earned between RM5,860 and RM12,679 a month, with an average gross monthly income of RM8,744.

However, he said almost 70% of their income went towards essential expenses, including food (34.1%), housing and utilities (22.7%) and transportation (10.6%).

"After deducting education and medical commitments, very little income remains at the end of the month."

"This is the phenomenon of the 'middle-class squeeze' that the government is paying attention to," he said.

Lynas permanent radioactive waste disposal facility 77% completed

KUALA LUMPUR: Lynas Malaysia's permanent radioactive waste disposal facility in Bukit Ketam, Pahang, is 77% complete, with four disposal cells operational and 1.43 million metric tonnes of radioactive residue already transferred there, Parliament was told yesterday.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Chang Lih Kang said the facility was receiving Water Leach Purification (WLP) residue generated by rare earth processing at the company's plant in Gebeng, Kuantan.

As of August, Lynas had generated approximately 1.67 million metric tonnes of WLP residue, of which about 1.43 million metric

tonnes had been transferred to the permanent disposal facility.

Chang said four disposal cells, designated A, B, C and D, had been completed, with the transfer of accumulated radioactive waste continuing.

He said radiation monitoring by the Atomic Energy Department showed that readings outside the facility remained below regulatory limits.

"Based on monitoring by the Atomic Energy Department, radiation dose readings outside the permanent disposal facility were below 20 millisieverts per year, complying with the dose

limit stipulated under the Atomic Energy Licensing Act 1984 for radiation workers," he said.

Chang was responding to Raub MP Chow Yu Hui, who sought clarification on the government's decision to renew Lynas' operating licence for another 10 years, the facility's progress and safeguards against radioactive waste leakage.

He said Lynas must cease generating radioactive WLP residue by March 2031 under stricter conditions imposed when its operating licence was renewed in March this year.

— By Harith Kamal

'Corporate mafia probe findings will be made public'

KUALA LUMPUR: The findings of an investigation into alleged "corporate mafia" activities will be made public, with an Attorney-General-led task force given three months to complete a comprehensive report, said Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said.

The Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) said the task force would bring together key enforcement and regulatory agencies, including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, Bank Negara Malaysia, Securities Commission Malaysia, Inland Revenue Board and police.

She said the investigation was intended to address allegations of corporate mafia activities while ensuring transparency and maintaining public confidence in the country's enforcement institutions.

Azalina was responding to concerns raised by the Hulu Terengganu and Machang MPs during her winding-up speech on Budget 2027 at the policy stage in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

She said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had addressed the matter during Prime Minister's Question Time on Oct 20, when he announced the formation of the task force.

"The prime minister has also committed to making the report public to ensure transparency and preserve public confidence in the integrity of the country's enforcement institutions."

Azalina added that further clarification would be provided to MPs in writing if necessary.

On the proposed separation of the roles of the Attorney-General (AG) and public prosecutor, she said the Parliamentary Special Select Committee (PSSC) would reconvene after receiving a response from the Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC).

She said the AGC had been given two weeks to refine its response to matters raised by the Conference of Rulers over the proposed constitutional amendments.

"Given that the PSSC comprises members from both the government and the opposition, the AGC has been given two weeks to provide its response."

"Next week, once we receive its answers, I will convene another PSSC meeting," she said.

Azalina said the proposed framework would give Parliament a role in the appointment of the public prosecutor, with candidates put forward by the Dewan Rakyat before being presented to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

The Constitution (Amendment) (No. 2) Bill 2026, which seeks to separate the two roles, was referred to the PSSC on March 3 for further scrutiny.

Under the proposed reform, the public prosecutor would oversee criminal prosecutions, while the A-G would remain the government's principal legal adviser. The changes are intended to strengthen prosecutorial independence and address longstanding concerns over the concentration of advisory and prosecutorial powers in a single office.

— By Harith Kamal

Govt mulls amending Syariah Court laws over maintenance defaulters

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is proposing amendments to Syariah Court laws to strengthen enforcement against individuals who fail to pay court-ordered maintenance, including those who deliberately disregard payment orders.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Marhamah Rosli said the Syariah Judiciary Department Malaysia and the Federal Territories Syariah Court were working on amendments to the Syariah Court Civil Procedure (Federal Territories) Act 1998 (Act 585).

She said the proposed changes would address weaknesses in existing enforcement provisions and procedures to improve action against maintenance defaulters.

"The proposed amendments will also address

non-compliance with maintenance orders issued by the Syariah Court, including examining areas where existing provisions and enforcement procedures can be improved," she told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

She was responding to Jasin MP Zulkifli Ismail, who asked about efforts to address prolonged Syariah Court proceedings, particularly cases involving outstanding spousal and child maintenance claims.

Marhamah said existing enforcement mechanisms included judgment debtor summonses, seizure and sale of assets, *hiwalah* (transfer) proceedings, which allow debts owed to defaulters by third parties to be redirected towards settling unpaid maintenance, and court orders requiring employers to deduct payments directly from defaulters' salaries.

Imprisonment was also possible in serious cases of non-compliance, but only after judicial proceedings and with court authorisation, she said.

"Any action, including imprisonment, cannot be carried out automatically by the Family Support Division."

"It must go through the judicial process and be based on a court order after considering the facts and circumstances of each case," she said.

Meanwhile, Syariah Judiciary Department was reviewing improvements to its maintenance advance scheme, including financial assistance that eligible recipients would not have to repay.

However, Marhamah stressed that the assistance would not absolve those legally responsible for maintenance payments of

their obligations.

As a preventive measure, the department had also proposed introducing a screening mechanism through the Family Support Division to check prospective spouses' records of neglecting maintenance obligations before marriage.

She said the proposal aimed to protect those entering marriage from potential financial hardship and prevent spouses and children from being neglected.

Marhamah added that applications for polygamous marriages must be approved by the Syariah Court, which assesses applicants' financial capabilities and ability to fulfil maintenance responsibilities towards existing wives, children and prospective spouses.

— By Harith Kamal

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Fewer than five in every 100 cardiac arrest patients in a study of urban emergency ambulance services survived to hospital admission.

The median wait for an ambulance was 17 minutes, raising concerns about whether emergency services help reaches patients quickly enough.

The findings came from a 2025 study published in the Medical Journal of Malaysia, which examined 2,435 cardiac arrest cases between 2010 and 2019.

Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz UKM assistant medical officer and prehospital care researcher Dr Abdul Karim Mustafa said placing Health Ministry ambulances at hospitals and health clinics did not necessarily put them close to where emergencies occurred.

"Most of the emergency ambulances are based at hospitals and health clinics. That places them where the buildings are, not necessarily where emergencies happen," he told *theSun*.

Rural patients could face long travel distances, narrow roads, unclear addresses and patchy mobile coverage.

In urban areas, traffic congestion, high-rise buildings and heavy call volumes could delay crews.

"When a district's only available unit is already attending another case or transferring a patient

Ambulance **delays** place cardiac patients at risk

► Study records a median 17-minute wait, while fewer than 5% survived to hospital admission

between hospitals, the next emergency call may have no ambulance nearby at all."

Abdul Karim said the lack of publicly reported response times broken down by urban and rural areas made it difficult to assess differences in access to emergency care.

"As far as I am aware, Malaysia does not publicly report response times by urban and rural area, and that gap is itself part of the problem."

"When we accept long response times in some areas, we are in effect accepting that where a person lives may decide whether they survive. That is a question of equity, not only of efficiency."

His doctoral research, involving 400 ambulance users and 230 frontline personnel, found strong public confidence in ambulance crews but lower satisfaction with response times, alongside concerns about staffing levels.

"The public trusts the people; what they are less satisfied with is the system around them," he added.

Abdul Karim proposed placing ambulance standby points according to emergency call patterns, including at fire stations and Civil Defence posts, to improve coverage in areas with high demand.

He also called for community first-responder training, more publicly accessible defibrillators and emergency dispatchers equipped to guide callers through cardiopulmonary resuscitation while help was on the way.

Malaysia needed district-level response statistics that distinguished between urban and rural areas and linked response times to patient outcomes.

He also proposed a national cardiac arrest registry and dedicated oversight of prehospital care.

"Response time is an outcome. It

cannot be improved simply by asking crews to drive faster, which also puts them and the public at risk," he said.

Official figures point to difficulties in meeting the country's ambulance response targets.

On Oct 12, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad told the Dewan Rakyat that only 34.1% of priority one ambulance responses nationwide met the 15-minute target in 2025, below the Health Ministry's 50% benchmark.

Dzulkefly said emergency call coordination and ambulance capacity were being strengthened, with 400 additional ambulances planned under Budget 2027.

Public health specialist and Malaysian Society for Harm Reduction president Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said delays could occur when nearby ambulances were attending other emergencies, deployed to disasters or undergoing maintenance.

During public holidays or when several emergencies happened at once, responders might have to "pass the case to other nearby

areas", increasing the distance crews had to travel.

"Medics may be busy attending local patients especially in busy hospital, where many cases are triaged and waiting at the ED itself," she said.

Sharifa, a retired professor of hospital and health management at UKM's Faculty of Medicine, said shortages of trained personnel could also require neighbouring districts to provide support.

Traffic congestion, poor road conditions and bad weather could add to delays.

She added that heavy call volumes could slow the processing of emergency calls at the Malaysian Emergency Response Services centre, while inaccurate addresses could make patients harder to locate.

"Also if there is improper address or different address than actual, then this can impede response time."

"This can occur in very populated areas or rural areas, where it is very difficult to pinpoint exact address due to using shared lots."

Seizures surge to over RM322m as crackdown intensifies

■ BY THESUN TEAM
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

SEPANG: The Malaysian Border Control and Protection Agency (AKPS) seized goods worth RM322.74 million as of October, nearly four times last year's value, as it stepped up efforts to dismantle smuggling networks and strengthen border controls.

Its deputy director-general (management) Ismail Mokhtar said the increase reflected enforcement progress, but stressed that the value of seizures alone was not a measure of success.

"Based on the operational figures for 2026, the value of goods seized up to October reached RM322.74 million, preventing potential losses in national revenue and marking a nearly fourfold increase compared to the previous year."

"These figures are not merely statistics. Behind them are attempts to exploit weaknesses in controls, evade legal obligations and make illicit profits, with the country and its people ultimately bearing the risks."

"We do not merely want to seize goods. We want to close smuggling routes, identify those responsible and dismantle the systems that allow smuggling to recur," he said in an address delivered on behalf of AKPS director-general Datuk Seri Mohd Shuhaily Mohd Zain at the agency's second-anniversary celebration yesterday.

Ismail said the agency was moving from routine inspections towards risk-based checks and coordinated operations guided by intelligence.

Its effectiveness would also be measured by its ability to prevent smuggling and identify syndicates.

Among its priorities was stopping illegal imports of electronic waste, or e-waste, following a blanket government ban that took effect on Feb 4.

"For the first time this year, the government, through a task force led by AKPS, has successfully exported containers carrying e-waste out of the country."

"AKPS will ensure that all 1,259 containers are exported by the end of this year."



Ismail said the agency was moving from routine inspections towards risk-based checks and coordinated operations guided by intelligence. — MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN

"AKPS has consolidated border control and protection functions from six core agencies. From just 22 entry points last year, AKPS is now operating at 123 entry points this year," he said.

Despite the expansion, staffing remained inadequate.

Ismail said AKPS continued to rely on personnel from the original agencies while assessing manpower needs at each entry point.

As of Oct 20, 4,190 personnel had joined AKPS's new service scheme, introduced on July 1, out of 7,199 positions offered.

Ismail said 408 pioneer officers completed basic training on Sept 27 and were assigned to the Johor Bahru-Singapore Rapid Transit System link.

Passenger operations are targeted to begin in February 2027, subject to regulatory approvals.

He said Budget 2027 increased AKPS's allocation from RM37 million to RM490 million, largely to cover the salaries of 8,403 officers, some of whom were still being paid by their

original agencies.

Meanwhile, Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Dr Awang Alik Jeman said AKPS had been appointed the lead agency for the National and Border Security component of a security improvement and mitigation action plan.

Delivering an address on behalf of Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail, Awang Alik said the plan followed the arrest of a Malaysian pilot in Jakarta on July 28 and the government's approval of 17 recommendations to strengthen security at KL International Airport.

Under the plan, AKPS would oversee targeted, risk-based screening of flights, passengers, crew and baggage; strengthen canine detection capabilities; and coordinate intelligence-sharing among enforcement agencies.

Awang Alik said AKPS had also begun coordinating joint operations under Op Sundang with police, the Customs Department, the Wildlife and National Parks Department and Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd.

Prosecution rejects Akmal's bid to drop charge

BUKIT MERTAJAM: The prosecution has rejected Umno Youth chief Datuk Dr Muhamad Akmal Saleh's request to have a charge of issuing a statement likely to cause public alarm withdrawn. His lawyers intend to submit a second representation.

Penang state prosecution director Muna Mohamed Jaafar informed the Magistrate's Court of the decision during proceedings before Magistrate Roshayati Radallah today.

Lawyer Aizat Azam, who represented Dr Muhamad Akmal alongside 10 other lawyers, said the defence would submit a fresh representation following the rejection.

Muna said the prosecution had no objection and would forward it to the Attorney-General's Chambers.

"We have no objection if the lawyers wish to submit another representation," she said.

The court fixed Jan 4, 2027, for mention to receive an update on the second representation.

In August 2025, Dr Muhamad Akmal pleaded not guilty to a charge of issuing a statement likely to cause public alarm and unrest.

He was accused of making the statement in a social media post at about 3pm on Aug 11 that year.

The charge, under Section 505(b) of the Penal Code, carries a maximum sentence of two years' imprisonment, a fine, or both upon conviction. — Bernama



Five cruise ships to make maiden calls in Penang

Visits expected to foster opportunities for local businesses: Port commission

BY T.C KHOR
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

GEORGE TOWN: Five international cruise ships with a combined capacity of 11,012 passengers will make their maiden calls at Penang between this month and December, as the state's cruise industry shows signs of recovery after a decline in passenger movements last year.

The vessels will call at the Swettenham Pier Cruise Terminal, with *Navigator of the Seas* scheduled to arrive first on Oct 30 at 2.30pm, Penang Port Commission chairman Datuk Yeoh Soon Hin said.

He added that the other vessels are *Villa Vie Odyssey*, *Adora Mediterranea*, *Star Seeker* and *Celebrity Solstice*.

Penang recorded 750,093 cruise passenger movements in 2025, down from 1,046,165 in 2024.

However, the industry rebounded in the first quarter of 2026, recording 372,903 passenger movements, a 39.55% increase from the

corresponding period last year.

Yeoh, who is also Tourism Malaysia deputy chairman, said the maiden calls would create opportunities for local businesses to benefit from cruise tourism.

"The arrival of vessels from different cruise brands creates opportunities for Penang to reach a diverse range of international visitors.

"We hope passengers will explore our streets, savour Penang's cuisine and experience our multicultural heritage, allowing businesses in food and beverage, retail, transport, tour guiding and tourism services to share in the opportunities generated."

He also said Penang's multicultural heritage, rich history and internationally renowned cuisine were key attractions, alongside the George Town Unesco World Heritage Site and its traditional neighbourhoods.

Yeoh said the Penang Port Commission and Tourism Malaysia are organising welcoming activities, including local cultural performances, Penang-themed souvenirs and tourism promotions, to showcase Malaysian hospitality and the state's cultural character.

He also credited Transport Minister Anthony Loke and Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing for supporting port development, tourism promotion and efforts to improve the visitor experience.

"Loke recognises the development potential

of Swettenham Pier and has outlined a direction that includes upgrading the surrounding waterfront, enhancing terminal facilities and improving connections with George Town's tourism areas, with the vision of developing Penang into an international cruise homeport."

Yeoh said the improvements would enable port development and urban tourism to complement each other while generating wider economic benefits.

He added that the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry was enhancing visitor experiences through Visit Malaysia 2026 and the Mesra Malaysia hospitality programme, while Tourism Malaysia had extended its matching grant programme to the cruise sector to attract more visitors by sea.

He also said the Penang Port Commission would strengthen coordination with Penang Port Sdn Bhd, Tourism Malaysia and tourism industry players to maximise the benefits of the visits.

"The long-term value of cruise tourism lies in turning every visit into an opportunity for travellers to discover Penang and develop an affinity for Malaysia.

"Positive experiences ashore and favourable word of mouth could encourage return visits, bringing sustained benefits to Penang's tourism industry and local communities."

State airports see international passenger growth

KUALA LUMPUR: Subang, Ipoh and Penang airports recorded growth in international passenger traffic in September, bucking a nationwide decline in passenger movements across Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd's (MAHB) local network.

MAHB said its Malaysian network handled 7.8 million passengers during the month, down 12% year-on-year, as domestic traffic fell 21.8% to 3.4 million and international traffic slipped 2.2% to 4.3 million.

However, international passenger movements rose 24.1% year-on-year to 59,000 at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Airport in Subang and 16.6% to 31,000 at the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport in Ipoh.

The Penang International Airport recorded a 5.3% increase to 348,000 international passengers, accounting for about 57% of its total passenger movements in September.

MAHB said the Sultan Ismail Petra Airport in Kota Bharu handled 5,000 international passengers during the month, following the introduction of new international services in June.

It added that the airport's expanded terminal, which opened in April, has increased its annual handling capacity from 1.5 million to four million passengers.

Meanwhile, the KL International Airport (KLIA) handled about 4.9 million passengers in September.

MAHB said its international network expanded with Sun PhuQuoc Airways beginning services to Phu Quoc on Sept 1, while Gulf Air introduced direct flights from Bahrain on Sept 30, becoming the 10th West Asian carrier to serve KLIA.

It added that for the first nine months of 2026, its Malaysian operations handled 75.2 million passengers, down 2.4% year-on-year, although international passenger traffic rose 4.5% to 41.3 million.

MAHB managing director Datuk Mohd Izani Ghani said the results highlighted the importance of strengthening regional connectivity while maintaining reliable airport services.

"Airports such as Subang, Ipoh and Penang have an important role in expanding Malaysia's international connectivity.

"We want to build on the momentum by working closely with airlines and tourism stakeholders to develop routes that create more travel opportunities and support the country's tourism ambitions."

He added that expanding the network must go hand in hand with improving the passenger experience.

According to KLIA's September monthly performance report, passenger satisfaction stood at 98.8% at Terminal 1 and 99.4% at Terminal 2, while satisfaction with terminal cleanliness exceeded 99% at both terminals.

"The monthly report will provide a consistent view of performance across key passenger touchpoints and help focus further service improvements at both terminals," MAHB said. – Bernama



Yeoh said the Penang Port Commission and Tourism Malaysia are organising welcoming activities, including local cultural performances, Penang-themed souvenirs and tourism promotions, to showcase Malaysian hospitality and the state's cultural character. – PIC COURTESY OF YEOH SOON HIN

'Food passport' launched in Teluk Intan to boost tourism

IPOH: Teluk Intan is using its food heritage to draw more visitors and boost local businesses through a new food passport initiative featuring more than 18 participating establishments.

Teluk Intan MP Nga Kor Ming said the 20-page Teluk Intan Food Passport allows visitors to collect stamps from participating food outlets, offering an interactive way to explore the lower Perak town's traditional favourites, cafes and other culinary attractions.

Nga, who is also Housing and Local Government minister, said visitors who collected

all the required stamps across the 20 pages could redeem exclusive merchandise at Teck Kee Foodstuff Enterprise.

"To date, the initiative has received encouraging support from local businesses, with more than 18 participating establishments joining the effort to showcase Teluk Intan's food scene and attract more visitors to the town."

Nga officiated at the launch in Teluk Intan on Saturday, together with Pasir Bedamar assemblyman Woo Kah Leong.

Participating outlets and attractions include

Kopi Cap Arnab, BSH Enak, Seng Hoe Biscuit, Kafe Xin Asia, Teck Kee Foodstuff Enterprise, Teluk Intan Firefly Marvels River Cruise Park, AHMA Kopi, Hokkaido Puff, Super Gadget Teluk, Anson Hainan Kopitiam, Poh Loong Seafood Restaurant, Zero Bistro, Wang Kee Bah Kut Teh, Uncle Don's, December Bake & Coffee, Anson Sport Centre, Tech Lab Studio and Kedai Biskut GL.

Nga said the initiative aims to encourage visitors to venture beyond familiar tourist spots, discover local businesses and spend more time exploring the town.

"By bringing food operators, cafes, restaurants and local attractions together under one initiative, Teluk Intan is positioning its food culture as a valuable tourism asset while creating opportunities for small businesses to gain greater visibility and attract new customers."

"The Teluk Intan Food Passport reflects how creative, community-driven initiatives can transform everyday experiences, such as enjoying a cup of coffee or sampling a local delicacy, into meaningful tourism experiences that benefit both visitors and the local economy." – Bernama

Indonesia meets gas terms

► Singapore prepared with diversified supply

JAKARTA: Indonesia's energy minister said yesterday that the amount of natural gas it is supplying to Singapore is still meeting the minimum level stipulated under a contract, despite reducing the amount to divert supply to its domestic power sector.

Singapore Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said on Sunday that he expected all parties in commercial contracts to honour their commitments after Indonesia cut 31 million standard cu ft of gas per day from its pipelined exports to Singapore.

"Our nation is a nation that honours contracts, rules. So don't teach Indonesia on how to honour contracts," Energy Minister Bahlil Lahadalia told a press conference.

Bahlil said the cut represented 8% of Indonesia's gas supply to Singapore through pipelines, adding that Indonesia had also exported around 149 cargoes of liquefied natural gas this year.

The cut represents 2% of Singapore's daily gas demand and is unlikely to have a significant impact on its energy security now, said Rystad Energy analyst Prateek Pandey, but the bigger test will come when existing contracts start expiring in 2028.

Bahlil said the cut was due to a shutdown for maintenance and higher domestic

demand in Indonesia, where earlier this month Batam and several cities in its Riau Islands province suffered a blackout lasting 16 hours.

Last week, Bahlil said he would prioritise natural resources for domestic needs and review contracts to maintain energy security. He has also said he will review Indonesia's existing electricity export deal.

"Indonesia has good reason to prioritise its own energy needs, but redirecting more gas domestically will require investment in infrastructure," Pandey said.

"Singapore has been preparing for this by diversifying its gas supply, so the current reductions should be manageable unless the cuts deepen or production at the fields is affected." – Reuters



DRY DAYS ... A drone view shows the remnants of houses and a mosque in Somang village, Lebak, Banten province in Java that have reemerged after water levels in Karian reservoir, which supplies water to surrounding areas including Jakarta, dropped amid a prolonged drought. – REUTERSPIC

Xi opens party plenum

BEIJING: China's Communist Party began a four-day meeting of its highest-ranking members yesterday targeting concrete measures for "full and rigorous party self-governance", as President Xi Jinping seeks to reinforce his authority and enforce ideological uniformity.

Xi briefed the party's Central Committee on a draft document that state news agency Xinhua said addressed the challenges the party faced, including growing its governing capacity, as well as guarding against complacency and combating corruption, the president's signature campaign.

The implementation of major decisions and plans of the Central Committee, the largest of its top decision-making bodies, must not be empty rhetoric, the commentary wrote.

"It is essential to both refine institutional rules to close loopholes and strengthen safeguards, and ensure their effective implementation," it said.

The Central Committee will convene in the closed-door meeting until Thursday – the fifth since the current cohort was formed in 2022 and therefore known as the fifth plenum.

Analysts say this could be the last major party gathering before its 2027 leadership reshuffle, when Xi is expected to hold on to the top job for a fourth term.

Xi has overseen a vast anti-corruption campaign in recent years which has led to the purge of hundreds of senior officials and top generals, even the president's one-time allies.

While critics argue the purges – particularly those targeting the highest ranks of the armed

forces – are destabilising and undermine combat readiness, the party has portrayed the campaign as both necessary and regenerative, saying the military must undergo a phoenix-like rebirth and "bathe in flames and be forged anew".

The Xinhua commentary propped up the anti-corruption drive as a demonstration of "sustained and systemic" self-governance to "ensure officials dare not, cannot and do not want to commit corruption".

"For global investors and policymakers, this signals greater predictability," it said.

The commentary argued that China was also creating a more transparent environment for international cooperation as merit and the rule of law prevail over connections and bribery. – Reuters

Philippines defends bounty for senator

MANILA: The Philippine presidential palace defended a 50 million peso (RM3.2 million) bounty for information leading to the arrest of Senator Ronald "Bato" dela Rosa, saying it was part of a legitimate move by the Interior Department and police.

Its Communications Undersecretary Claire Castro said the bounty was an operational strategy of the interior minister and the police, when asked whether it had been ordered or approved by President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Castro said confidential and intelligence funds allocated to the department and police could be used for such operations, provided authorities could substantiate the operation and show results.

Dela Rosa is wanted by the International Criminal Court for alleged crimes against humanity.

He was last seen in May when he took refuge at the Senate for several days following six months spent in hiding.

Amid claims that his arrest was imminent, he appealed for help from his supporters and slipped away from the Senate in the early hours of May 14 following hours of chaos that included gunfire.

In a Facebook post yesterday, Dela Rosa's lawyer, Israelito Torreon, questioned the legal basis for the bounty, arguing that authorities should produce an arrest warrant issued by a Philippine court. – Reuters

Hotspots fall by more than half to 147

JAKARTA: Indonesia recorded a sharp decline in forest and land fire hotspots on Sunday, with the tally falling by more than half to 147 as rainfall brought some relief.

The Forestry Ministry said yesterday satellite monitoring data recorded on Sunday night showed high-confidence hotspots in six priority provinces had plunged from 226 to just 26.

"The decline continues the positive trend over the past several days. However, we must reiterate that hotspots are indications of surface temperature anomalies detected by Nasa Terra/Aqua, SNPP and NOAA-20 satellites," the ministry said yesterday.

West Kalimantan recorded 15 hotspots, Central Kalimantan five and South Kalimantan four. Two hotspots were recorded in South Sumatra, while Jambi and Riau reported none.

The ministry said rainfall in parts of South Sumatra, Central Kalimantan and South Kalimantan on Sunday helped dampen fire-affected areas and support firefighting.

However, it stressed the need for continued monitoring, particularly in peatland areas where underground embers could persist despite rainfall. – Bernama

Gandhi acquitted in defamation case

MUMBAI: Rahul Gandhi, the leader of India's main opposition Congress party, was acquitted in a defamation case by a court in Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh yesterday.

The acquittal comes at a time when Gandhi is leading a united opposition campaign against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the chief election commissioner over a controversial revision of voter lists.

Gandhi, 56, the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi political dynasty and top leader of Congress was in court in the northern town of Sultanpur when the verdict was pronounced.

His supporters burst crackers, beat drums and waved party flags as he left the court after the acquittal, images on TV showed.

Gandhi was accused of calling Home Minister Amit Shah, who was then head of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), a "murder accused", during a campaign speech in 2018. – Reuters

Brazil heads back to the future

Bolsonaro seeks annulment

SAO PAULO: Senator Flavio Bolsonaro has followed his imprisoned father's lead by refusing to concede defeat to President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, who won a historic fourth term in Sunday's presidential election.

Bolsonaro, the son of former president Jair Bolsonaro, called into question a late-Sunday decision by a Lula-appointed Supreme Court justice that extended voting by two hours over alleged voter transport irregularities. He said he would ask for the result to be annulled.

"It is impossible to recognise the election results, given the circumstances under which things unfolded," Bolsonaro told journalists.

Yet the scale of the loss, with Bolsonaro trailing Lula by over 4 million votes, makes it unlikely his efforts to annul the vote will succeed, analysts said. His petition is also undermined by the fact that his campaign also sought a voting extension due to heavy rains in the conservative-leaning south.

Still, Bolsonaro's refusal to concede could spark a wave of protests in a country where faith in the electoral system, and in judicial independence, has been strained in recent years, observers say.

Jair Bolsonaro plunged Brazil into a deep democratic crisis after the election in 2022, when his supporters stormed government buildings in protest against the result. He later received a 27-year sentence for plotting a coup.

Lula's victory defied polls, precedent and global anti-incumbent sentiment to put the brakes on a wave of right-wing election victories across Latin America. The result will disappoint



Luiz celebrating with his wife, Rosangela 'Janja' da Silva (left), and Vice-President Geraldo Alckmin in Sao Paulo on Sunday. – REUTERS/PI

the administration of US President Donald Trump, whose State Department led a campaign to return the Bolsonaros to power.

Lula had trailed Bolsonaro in the first round, but managed to convince voters to come out for him in the runoff.

Speaking at a hotel in Sao Paulo late on Sunday, he took a conciliatory tone.

"I won't speak of national unity, because that doesn't always fit the reality of this country. No one is obliged to like the elected president, but he was put in place to govern for everyone," Lula said.

During the campaign, Lula pointed to his track record of cutting poverty and inequality while also highlighting record low unemployment, illiteracy and

deforestation, but his fourth term may prove challenging.

He will have to work alongside a Congress packed full of Bolsonaro allies after a surge of right-wing voting recast Brazil's legislature in favour of the president's enemies.

"The challenges are countless," said Carlos Melo, a political science professor at Insper in Sao Paulo. – Reuters

Early voting opens in New Zealand

WELLINGTON: Prime Minister Christopher Luxon said the national election on Nov 7 would be decided on economic issues, as early voting opened yesterday.

Luxon said his National Party had "the best plan" to help the economy to grow and improve affordability.

"We've worked incredibly hard over the last three years ... the plan is working, but we need more time,"

Luxon said after casting his vote.

Opposition leader Chris Hipkins said he hoped to form a Labour-led government before Christmas and would move swiftly to ease cost-of-living pressures.

Ballot boxes will be open for nearly two weeks at shopping centres, transport hubs and community halls.

Polls show no clear frontrunner

under New Zealand's mixed-member proportional system, where coalition deals are often needed to form governments.

A 1News-Verian poll published on Oct 20 put the ruling centre-right National Party at 32% and opposition Labour at 27%, while a Post/Freshwater Strategy poll had Labour narrowly ahead at 28.7% to the National Party's 27.6%.

In both surveys, the smaller Opportunity Party was polling around or above the 5% threshold needed to enter Parliament, making it a potential kingmaker.

New Zealand's Electoral Commission said 207 voting places were open yesterday, with that number rising to more than 2,300 on election day. Overseas voting opened earlier, on Oct 21. – Reuters

Australian politicians pay tribute to wounded lawmaker

SYDNEY: Australia's prime minister and fellow parliamentarians led sombre tributes yesterday to colleague Helen Haines, who remains in hospital after being struck by a car a week ago.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese pointed to her empty seat while paying tribute to the lawmaker's "empathy, kindness and compassion" as Australia's parliament met for the first time since the incident.

"The shock from what happened

last Monday is like a stone in our hearts," Albanese said.

"Right now, our friend and colleague is in hospital, grievously injured. The shape of her life and her family's lives changed forever," he said.

He paid tribute to the bystanders who offered help to Haines, describing it as "the best of the Australian character".

And he bemoaned a rise in public anger "that distorts and corrodes our public discourse".

"We are seeing a normalisation of the language of grievance and violence," Albanese said.

Deputy Prime Minister Richard Marles described her as a "beacon of decency".

Haines remains in a serious but stable condition in a Melbourne hospital.

Her husband, Phil, has said that surgeons had been forced to amputate both her legs in an effort to save her.

Haines's alleged attacker – 43-year-old Brendan Nugent – fronted court for the first time on Wednesday.

He has been charged with dangerous driving causing serious injury and intentionally causing serious injury, as well as the federal crime of harming a public official, which carries a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison.

His motive remains unknown. Police said last week they were examining all possible leads.

They have documented a surge in threats against Australian lawmakers in recent years, with 1,067 incidents reported to police last year.

Federal police chief Krissy Barrett said on Sunday there was a correlation between intense political rhetoric and threats against lawmakers.

"Sometimes it's very immediate," she told national broadcaster ABC.

"Words matter, and we do see the flow on impact from that." – AFP

BRIEFS

JAPAN INDICTS U.S. MARINE

TOKYO: Japanese prosecutors have indicted a US Marine on charges of robbery and murder of a Japanese woman in Okinawa. Lance Corporal Devin Jacob Ballard, stationed at Marine Corps Air Station Futenma in Okinawa, is suspected of killing Anna Yagi, 39, in a hotel in Naha, the capital of the prefecture, earlier this month. Ballard has denied the allegations. Public broadcaster NHK reported prosecutors indicted Ballard on Sunday, adding he allegedly strangled the victim with a telephone cord and stole a backpack containing a wallet, citing the Naha District Public Prosecutors' Office. The Prosecutors' Office could not be reached for comment outside business hours. – Reuters

NO TIBET EARTHQUAKE AFTERMATH

HONG KONG: China said yesterday there had been no secondary geological disasters and no further casualties from a magnitude-7 earthquake that struck Tibet last Friday, killing 16 people and injuring 76. The Ministry of Natural Resources said in a statement that the "impact of this earthquake on glacier lakes and glaciers within the affected area was generally minimal". Since the earthquake there have been a total of 2,054 aftershocks, including two of at least 5.0 magnitude. Authorities completed inspections of secondary geological disasters within a 50km radius of the epicentre. The quake struck Nagqu and was the strongest to hit the country since January 2024. – Reuters

CYCLONE ARNAB NEARS EASTERN INDIA

BHUBANESWAR: Two states along India's eastern coast were preparing to evacuate thousands of people ahead of Cyclone Arnab, which is expected to make landfall tomorrow, as one of them said it would close schools in some districts for two days. Arnab, which formed over the Bay of Bengal before intensifying into a cyclonic storm, is expected to make landfall in Andhra Pradesh state by tomorrow morning, with gusts of as much as 140 kph, India's weather office said. Odisha's government announced the closure of schools and colleges in five districts today and tomorrow, and said it was preparing to move residents of low-lying areas to cyclone shelters. The Bay of Bengal is one of the world's major regions for tropical cyclones. – Reuters



Israeli strike in Gaza kills three

GAZA CITY: Three Palestinians, including a young girl, were killed yesterday in an Israeli airstrike on a camp for displaced people in the southern Gaza Strip.

Civil defence spokesman Mahmoud Bassal said a total of 11 people had been killed and 50 wounded by Israeli fire and airstrikes in Gaza over the past 24 hours.

"We transported three martyrs, including a child, following an Israeli airstrike targeting a camp for displaced people in the Al-Mawasi area, west of Khan Younis," Bassal said.

Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis confirmed the three deaths.

"Their bodies were torn apart by direct hits from shrapnel from the Israeli missile," the hospital said, adding that several wounded people, including a child and a woman, had also come in for treatment.

The hospital identified the deceased as Hossam al-Zamli, Tamer Abu Sneima, and Jouri al-Soufi, a young girl. The Gaza Education Ministry gave her age as seven.

A security source in Gaza said "several tanks and military vehicles, accompanied by a military bulldozer, advanced yesterday morning into the area west of the Yellow Line in the eastern part of Deir al-Balah", in central Gaza.

After a US-brokered ceasefire took hold in Gaza in October 2025, the so-called Yellow Line was established to divide the areas under Israeli control, more than 60% of the territory, from those under Hamas control.

The military advance yesterday coincided with "heavy gunfire by the occupation forces towards the eastern and northern areas" of Deir al-Balah, home to hundreds of displaced families, the source added. – AFP

Pakistan army chief in Tehran

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's powerful army chief Asim Munir travelled to Iran yesterday, the Pakistani military said, after Tehran announced talks in the Islamic republic on regional security.

"Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir ... is visiting Tehran, Iran for an official visit," the Pakistani military's media wing said in a statement without elaborating on the purpose of the trip, one of several made by the army chief to Iran since Pakistan became a mediator in attempts to end this year's Middle East war.

Earlier, an Iranian official said senior officials from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan will visit Tehran for talks over regional security.

"Saudi Defence Minister Khalid bin Salman, Pakistani army chief General Asim Munir and Turkish intelligence chief Ibrahim Kalin will take part in this meeting," said Ali Bagheri Kani, deputy secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council.

He said the meeting will be held with Iran's security chief Mohsen Rezaei.

"This four-party meeting in Tehran could represent an important and effective step towards building lasting regional security, and we hope this initiative will contribute to establishing a stable region," said Kani.

He did not specify when the meeting would take place but said it was proposed during a visit by Asim to Tehran last week.

War has engulfed the Middle East since February when the United States and Israel launched a wave of surprise attacks on Iran, while Washington and Tehran were in the midst of negotiations on Iran's nuclear programme. – AFP

Venezuela opposition head returns home

► Trump signals backing for interim president

CARACAS: Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado was greeted by tens of thousands of cheering supporters as she made her way by car to Caracas on Sunday night, after she arrived home following several failed return attempts which have strained her ties with US President Donald Trump's administration.

"This country is giving lessons to everyone," she shouted as her convoy entered the capital, leaning out of the sunroof to shake hands and hug raucous supporters

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Machado, who was prevented from challenging deposed leader Nicolas Maduro for the presidency in 2024, has been out of the country for 10 months and spent the previous year in hiding following the election.

On Sunday morning, Machado appeared at a church in western Lara state and was greeted by bystanders who sang the national

anthem and shouted "liberty!" as she left in an SUV.

She then travelled to the capital in a journey that took eight hours because of crowds. By the time she neared Caracas, festooned in rosaries handed to her by followers, the highway was all but blocked by cheering supporters.

"For the reunion of every family, for freedom of every political prisoner, for the freedom of Venezuela," she wrote on social media.

Machado's return was coordinated with the US, Panamanian and Colombian governments, according to a person briefed directly on her movements, who added Trump approved her return and was kept informed.

At the White House on Sunday, Trump said he did not know anything about Machado's return and suggested the US would continue to back Venezuelan

interim President Delcy Rodriguez.

"She's a very nice woman," he said, referring to Machado. "But we're doing really well in Venezuela."

The White House and the State Department did not respond to Reuters questions on the matter.

Machado's efforts to return have tested her relationship with the Trump administration, which she sought to cultivate as an ally even before it kidnapped Maduro in January and took him to New York.

Trump has repeatedly expressed support for Rodriguez, a former deputy to Maduro, and hailed deals on oil production and other business ventures by US companies in the South American country. Trump said in September it was too soon to consider democratic elections in Venezuela.

US officials have asked Machado at least once to delay her return, Reuters reported in June, and she has made several failed attempts to enter the country. Her team did not disclose details of how she returned.

Machado travelled in a private plane from Panama to Colombia and crossed overland on Sunday to Venezuela, four people familiar with her trip told Reuters.

One person briefed on her movements said the flight took place late last week and US security contractors guarded her during the journey. Rodriguez and the country's authorities were warned by the US not to interfere or threaten her safety, the person said.

"The conditions allowing for the safe return of Machado to Venezuela are the direct result of the US-supported reconciliation talks which have already seen hundreds of political prisoners freed and hundreds of political opposition figures return from exile," US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in a statement.

"We expect all political actors to support these talks which represent the best chance Venezuela has had in 30 years to peacefully achieve not just a free and fair election but an enduring democracy."

A faction of the opposition and the interim government held a round of talks this month, with the aim of remaking the top court and electoral council, among other goals, ahead of eventual elections. The talks have not included Machado's political movement.

The Communications Ministry, which handles press queries for the government, did not immediately respond to requests for comment on Machado's return. – Reuters



Machado greets supporters upon her arrival in Caracas after almost a year in exile. – AFP/IC

Jordan arrests three gunmen over church attack

AL-JUDAYYDA: Jordanian security forces arrested three armed suspects after a shootout yesterday in connection with an attack on a church that killed nine people, state television reported.

Friday's attack during a funeral at a Greek Orthodox church in the village of Hamoud, about 120km southwest of the capital, Amman, also wounded 40 others, alarming a Christian community.

Witnesses said the shooting lasted several minutes. Reuters video footage showed a building

pockmarked by the exchange of fire in the village of al-Judayyda, in Karak governorate.

Jordan's Public Security Directorate said the suspects were located while hiding in an abandoned house in Karak. They refused to surrender and attacked security forces, who returned fire and arrested all three after wounding them, the directorate said in a statement published on state media.

No security personnel were injured, and a number of firearms

and ammunition were found in the suspects' possession.

Jordanian authorities have said the violence was carried out by "extremist terrorists". There has been no claim of responsibility.

"Terrorism has no place among us," the directorate said, adding that the suspects had met their "just fate".

King Abdullah, a US partner in the fight against militant groups, has ordered security forces to respond with an "iron fist" to the rare attack on the Christian minority.

Such violence is highly unusual in Jordan, a relatively stable state in the Middle East, though authorities say they have foiled several plots over the years.

The Public Security Directorate did not name the suspects or publicly identify possible affiliations with any groups.

Interior Minister Mazen al-Faraya said authorities were reviewing the circumstances that led young people towards extremism and would hold accountable any participants in the attack. – Reuters



PERFECT FOR
 TRAVELLING FOODIES
berjyahotel.com/penang

BERJAYA
 PENANG HOTEL
 MALAYSIA

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

ECRL: Welcome aboard but fairness must travel with it



The ECRL's success will not be measured by the speed of its trains or the size of its investment. It will be measured by whether ordinary Malaysians can use it with ease and dignity.
 – SUNPIX

ANYONE who has crawled along the Karak Highway on the eve of Hari Raya, stuck for 12 hours or more, will understand why the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) is such welcome news.

When services begin in December, Malaysians will have another safe, convenient and affordable way to reach the East Coast, alongside the bus, the car and the plane.

With only two stops on the express service instead of 16 on the transit service, Gombak to Kota Bharu takes about four hours, compared to seven or eight on the road.

This is more than a new train; it is a step in the right direction for how Malaysia moves. The ECRL supports the government's policy of shifting people from private cars to public transport, and above all to rail.

Fewer cars mean less congestion during festive peaks, lower fuel consumption and a smaller carbon footprint. Rail travel is also safer. Long-distance night driving, with fatigue and the risk of microsleep, has claimed many lives during festive seasons.

The ECRL should strengthen, not weaken, our integrated transport network. Express buses, with fares of about RM25 to RM45, will remain an option for price-sensitive travellers and those travelling beyond the rail corridor. However, those willing to pay a little more for comfort, safety and predictability may gradually switch to rail.

Air travel, costing RM200 to RM300 during normal periods and far more during festive seasons, now faces a credible competitor. A healthy transport ecosystem requires all modes to play their part.

The economic spillover may be the ECRL's greatest legacy. As the project's chief executive has said, its success should not be measured by passenger revenue alone.

Stations and corridors from Bentong to Kuala Terengganu and Kota Bharu can attract new businesses, boost tourism and create jobs. More visitors will also generate demand for homestays, hotels and eateries, so local communities must be ready to seize these opportunities.

A promising start, however, deserves honest scrutiny. Several issues need attention before the first ticket is sold.

➔ **Dynamic pricing:** Fares that fluctuate with demand may work for airlines but rail is also a public service. Although an intervention mechanism has been promised to prevent excessive increases, no maximum fare has been announced.

The RM125 and RM147 figures are merely starting fares. Families planning their Hari Raya journeys and retirees on fixed incomes need certainty, not a guessing game. The safeguards

must be clearly spelt out and made public.

➔ **The family equation:** For the solo traveller, the fares are reasonable. For families, the arithmetic is less appealing. A motorist driving his family shares the cost among four while a family taking the train pays four individual fares. Return tickets for a family of four at the starting fare cost about RM1,000, compared with an estimated RM156 in petrol and tolls for the same trip by car.

Few families would leave the car at home at that price difference. Family fares, group bundles or off-peak discounts are essential if the ECRL is to meet its policy objectives rather than simply carry passengers who would have travelled anyway.

➔ **The digital divide:** Tickets will be sold through the official website, with the lowest fares going to early bookers. However, many senior citizens are uncomfortable using online platforms. A discount of up to 50% is of little value to those who cannot navigate the booking process. Counter sales, telephone

reservations and assisted booking at stations and post offices must be available from day one, ensuring the best fares are accessible to all, not just the young and digitally connected.

➔ **Viability:** The discounts for seniors, pensioners, children, persons with disabilities and students are welcome and socially just. But with no operating subsidy at present, Malaysians are entitled to know how these concessions will be balanced against the line's long-term financial sustainability. Transparency now will help prevent controversy later.

➔ **The last mile:** Rail travel is not door-to-door. Without feeder buses, e-hailing access, adequate parking and connecting schedules, time saved on the rails may be lost travelling to and from stations. If services run only from about 6am to midnight, passengers arriving late will need safe, affordable onward transport. Terminals must also cater to the elderly, families with young children and persons with disabilities.

➔ **Operational confidence:** The authorities have cited 50,000km of test runs and detailed emergency response plans. Public confidence will grow if trial operations and readiness reviews are communicated openly.

The ECRL's success will not be measured by the speed of its trains or investment size. It will be measured by whether ordinary Malaysians can use it with ease and dignity: the retired civil servant, the young family heading home for the festive season, the student on a tight budget.

The railway has been built. The harder task now is creating the ecosystem around it: fair pricing, inclusive booking, integrated transport and local readiness.

Let us welcome the train and ensure no one is left standing on the platform.

Pola Singh
 Former Secretary-General
 Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport Malaysia

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.



theSun
 Malaysian Paper

Contact us now for special deals on digital, video and print advertising.

☎ 03-7784 6688

✉ advertise@thesundaily.com

thesun.my

Go hug your mum, while you still can

THERE are some deaths that make a nation pause. And then there are deaths that quietly reach inside you and disturb something you thought you had packed away neatly.

The passing of Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali last month did that for many of us. For some, there was the sadness of losing a remarkable woman, a pioneering doctor and a figure who had touched generations of Malaysians.

For those who had lost their own mothers, however, it could feel strangely personal. For this *Makcik*, it brought back my own mother, whom I lost when she was only 53.

And suddenly, you remember. Not just the big things – but also the little things, especially the ridiculous little things.

Mum was never perfect

Mothers are human – they nag, they worry, they repeat themselves and they can remember something you did 20 years ago with the forensic precision of a national investigation. And yet, when they are gone, somehow you miss even the things that once drove you slightly bonkers.

You miss that voice asking whether you have eaten. You miss being told “*jangan suka sangat*” when you went for an outing with your friends.

You miss being fed with home-cooked meals prepared by mum because nothing on this earthly plane could outdo her.

And you miss the kitchen. Oh yes, the kitchen. Most of us did not become decent cooks through some magical transfer of maternal culinary DNA. We learned through trial, error and the occasional death stare.

Mum would stand beside you while you attempted to fry something, watching the pan with the concentration of a bomb-disposal expert.

You would proudly present your creation. She would take one bite. Silence. You looked at her. She looked at you. Then came either the tiniest approving thumb – okay, maybe there is hope for this child – or that look. That devastating maternal look that said: Are you seriously serving this to human beings?

And somehow, you tried again. Years later, you can laugh about it.

But when Mum is gone, you realise those ordinary moments were never ordinary at all. They were life.

Then something brings her back

People say time heals. It does. But time also has a rather wicked sense of humour. You can go about your life for years – work, travel, laugh, raise children, get irritated by traffic, lose your phone while holding it in your hand and yet carry on.

Then one day you smell a dish. Hear a familiar song. See a mother fussing over her grown child. And suddenly, there she is – Mum. For a few seconds, you are no longer an adult with a thousand responsibilities. You are simply her child again. And you wish you could

pick up the phone.

“*Mak...*” Just to tell her something completely mundane.

That is the peculiar cruelty of losing your mother. You don’t only miss her on the big days; you miss her on ordinary Tuesdays.

When something wonderful happens and you instinctively want to tell her. When something terrible happens and you want her voice. When you cook something and wonder whether she would have given you the thumbs up or the death stare. Or when you simply want to hear: “Have you eaten?”

So go hug your mum

Tomorrow marks one month since Siti Hasmah’s passing. Her death has reminded many of us of the fragility of the people we quietly assume will always be there.

She lived a remarkable century. She served her country, raised a family and left behind a legacy far larger than any title could contain. But beyond the doctor, public figure and national icon was something even more universal – she was someone’s wife, mother, grandmother and home.

And that is perhaps why her passing has touched so many people. Because eventually, behind every public story about a mother, there is a private story about our own.

For those of us who have already lost our mothers, the memories will remain. The longing will come and go. The pain will soften but it doesn’t disappear completely. And perhaps that is not such a terrible thing. Maybe the ache is simply love that has nowhere physical left to go.

So if your mother is still here, please don’t wait for a special occasion. Don’t wait for Mother’s Day. Don’t wait until she is ill. Don’t wait until you have more time. Give her a hug. For goodness sake, call her; sit beside her; eat her cooking and tell her you love her.

If she gets embarrassed and says, “What is wrong with you?” Just laugh. Because one day, you may give anything in the world to hear her say that again.

For those whose mothers have already gone, we know. We know that particular silence. We know the longing. We know the sudden tears that arrive years after we thought we were done crying.

And we know that sometimes, in the middle of an ordinary day, we would happily trade everything we have for one more ordinary conversation with Mum.

One more “Have you eaten?”
One more scolding.
One more plate of her cooking.
One more hug.
Just one more.

Until then, we carry them in our stories, in our habits, in the food we cook, in the things they taught us and in the little pieces of ourselves that – no matter how old we become – will always belong to Mum.

Because when Mum leaves this world, she may leave our sight. But she never quite leaves our lives. And perhaps that is the most beautiful – and painful – thing about being someone’s child.

*Azura Abas is the executive editor of theSun.
Comments: letters@thesundaily.com*

Cameras won’t fix school violence: Address root causes

LETTERS

letters@thesundaily.com

IN recent months, news reports across Southeast Asia have given us a serious wake-up call.

From dangerous stabbing incidents in Malaysian schools to fatal attacks in the Philippines, a dark reality is clear: our schools are no longer safe from the global problem of violence.

These incidents have left parents terrified, teachers overwhelmed and students anxious in the very places they should feel most protected.

Whenever a shocking school attack occurs, the public reaction is usually immediate and predictable. Citizens and authorities call for quick fixes, such as erecting higher perimeter fences, installing metal detectors at every entrance, hiring armed security guards and subjecting students to strict bag checks at the school gates.

While basic security measures are necessary, turning our educational institutions into prison-like compounds merely masks the problem without addressing its root causes.

To genuinely protect our children, we must look beyond reactive measures and build a complete, long-term safety net. True security requires a balance of sensible rules, digital awareness, active family involvement and early intervention.

First, we can no longer talk about youth violence without addressing what children are exposed to online. Many teenagers spend hours immersed in video games, social media and unmonitored digital forums.

Video gaming has become a hobby for millions of young people. However, unregulated exposure to violent content, toxic gaming chat rooms and radical online communities can slowly desensitise developing minds to real-world harm.

In some extreme cases, vulnerable and isolated teenagers are actively targeted on private gaming servers and encrypted messaging platforms. In these hidden digital



When a young person spends more time in toxic virtual environments than in supportive real-world relationships, their emotional growth suffers and their threshold for violence drops. – **AI-GENERATED IMAGE/SUNPIC**

spaces, extreme hostility is normalised and violent acts are sometimes gamified or encouraged just to earn online clout.

When a young person spends more time in toxic virtual environments than in supportive real-world relationships, their emotional growth suffers and their threshold for violence drops.

If we fail to address how gaming culture and digital exposure shape youth behaviour, we

leave a massive loophole in our school safety strategies.

At the same time, real-world violence rarely happens without warning. Long before a student makes the tragic decision to bring a weapon to school, there are often clear warning signs.

These red flags include severe and chronic bullying, deep social isolation, troubled home

environments, sudden drop in academic performance and severe emotional distress.

The fundamental problem today is that we expect overburdened teachers to spot every subtle psychosocial red flag. It is unrealistic to ask educators to be full-time mental health experts on top of their teaching duties.

This is where professional school social workers can make a significant difference. While school guidance counsellors primarily focus on academic pathways, exam performance and routine discipline, social workers are trained to look at the broader circumstances of a student’s life.

School social workers serve as a vital human bridge connecting the classroom, the family, social welfare agencies and community support services.

When a student shows early signs of severe distress, digital addiction, aggressive outbursts or extreme withdrawal, a school social worker can step in before a crisis occurs.

They conduct home visits, work through family conflicts, lead anti-bullying mediation and provide structured emotional support for at-risk teenagers.

Social workers offer early intervention that addresses the root causes of bad behaviour.

School safety cannot be bought with security cameras alone, nor can it be achieved by simply suspending troubled students and pushing them further to the margins.

Creating a safe learning environment requires a shared responsibility among parents, teachers, cyber-safety regulators and mental health professionals.

Parents need to stay engaged with their children’s online habits, schools must maintain practical access controls and governments must invest in real human support systems within school walls.

If we want our classrooms to remain places of growth, curiosity and learning rather than environments of fear, we must move past short-term panic and invest in sustainable solutions.

**Thanaselan Punichelvana
Desa Petaling
Kuala Lumpur**

KUALA LUMPUR: The Education Ministry (MOE) will focus on rolling out the new curriculum and the Malaysia Education Plan 2026-2035 next year, using the Budget 2027 allocation to drive improvements in the quality of education.

Minister Datuk Seri Fadhlina Sidek said the main challenge was ensuring the ministry could implement announced plans and initiatives effectively in the interests of students and educators.

"This allocation enables us to implement the Malaysia Education Plan 2026-2035, particularly next year's key focus, the new curriculum.

"Indeed, this budget clearly prioritises the quality of education," she said after appearing as a guest on Bernama TV's Ruang Bicara programme "Belanjawan 2027: Memperkukuh Pendidikan, Melakar Masa Depan" at Wisma Bernama on Oct 23.

Fadhlina said Budget 2027 also prioritised easing schooling costs for families through various aid and allowances, including the Form Six allowance, Early Schooling Aid (BAP), the allowance for Students with Special Educational Needs and incentives for special education teachers.

She added that special attention will also be given to development aspects, such as building new schools, upgrading dilapidated schools and school sports facilities.

Meanwhile, when asked about safety measures and improvements to standard operating procedures to address bullying in schools, Fadhlina stressed that the MOE takes a holistic and consistent approach, including

'Budget 2027 to drive improved quality of education'

» Minister says priorities include easing schooling costs through various aids and allowances

empowering students.

"Among the measures we are consistently taking are conducting safety audits of dormitories, installing additional CCTV cameras, and providing warden assistants, which are crucial for student control and safety," she said.

She said guidance and counselling teachers are also being trained to identify early signs of bullying, and that avenues for students to voice their views directly are being expanded.

"Schools belong to the community. So the community also has a responsibility to work together with us," she said.

Earlier in the programme, Fadhlina said multi-storey construction methods and the



Fadhlina (right) stressed that MOE takes a holistic and consistent approach in providing safety for pupils. - BERNAMAPIC

modular Industrialised Building System would be a game-changer in speeding up solutions for overcrowded and dilapidated schools.

Beyond physical aspects, she stressed that student welfare, particularly for those with special needs and children from low-income (B40) families, remained a key priority.

"The BAP must be understood in

context: the allocation goes to all students regardless of background so that no child is left behind.

"The increase in the BAP rate from RM150 to RM200 per student is certainly a reason for gratitude, as it eases the financial burden on many families," she said.

Fadhlina said the ministry is strengthening schools to prepare for climate change, including heatwaves and floods, through infrastructure

and facility improvements.

"Ahead of the El Niño phenomenon, expected to bring hot weather throughout next year, the ministry and the secretary-general have discussed measures to create a more conducive learning environment," she said.

Fadhlina said the ministry is also examining whether schools at risk of repeated flooding, need to be relocated or upgraded. - Bernama

New school building for flood-prone S'wak district

SONG: After years of grappling with flooding, the community of Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Nanga Temalat now has a safer and more comfortable school building, offering renewed hope to its 94 pupils as they pursue their education.

Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi said the redevelopment project not only provided better facilities but also gave parents peace of mind by ensuring their children could learn in a safe and conducive environment.

"For parents, seeing their children learn in a safe and comfortable setting means a great deal.

"This is the hope we wish to fulfil for the Nanga Temalat community — ensuring their children have a strong start in building their future," he said in a Facebook post on Sunday.



Nantha Linggi (left) inaugurating the impressive four-storey block. ALEXANDER NANTA LINGGI FACEBOOK PICS.



The building with modern facilities will provide for the educational needs of the district's children.

Students join junior anti-drug squad launch

KOTA KINABALU: A total of 150 students took part in the launch of the Semporna Junior Anti-Drug Squad at the As-Syafie Hall, MARA Junior Science College (MRSM) Semporna, on Oct 22, in an initiative to raise awareness on the dangers of drug abuse and bullying among young people.

The programme was officiated by Semporna District Police Chief Superintendent Tan Hiap Wah and organised through a collaborative effort involving the Semporna District Police Headquarters, the National Anti-Drugs Agency (AADK) Tawau, the Semporna Anti-Drug Squad and MRSM Semporna.

Also in attendance were Dr Noor Fadilah Ambo, deputy principal (Student Development) at MRSM Semporna; Rosmah Nasir, head of AADK Tawau; Malik Abdul Mulok, head of the Prevention Unit at AADK Tawau; and Mohd Faizal Haji Mohd Fadzil, chairman of the Semporna Anti-Drug Squad cum squad captain, accompanied by their respective delegations.

The programme featured an exhibition organised by AADK, alongside awareness talks on the dangers of drug abuse and bullying. These activities aimed to educate students about the risks associated with drug abuse and bullying while fostering discipline, personal responsibility and exemplary character among young people.

The launch of the Junior Anti-Drug Squad reflects a concerted effort by law enforcement agencies, anti-drug organisations and educational institutions to strengthen preventive measures among students.

The initiative is expected to contribute to the development of a generation that upholds integrity, rejects drug abuse and stands firmly against bullying, ultimately supporting the well-being of the wider community. - JOSHUA CHANG



■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KLANG: Port of Tanjung Pelepas (PTP), a joint venture between MMC Corporation Bhd and APM Terminals, is stepping up efforts to improve energy efficiency and reduce emissions amid capacity expansion after recording a 21% reduction in energy use per twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) in 2025.

PTP head of health, safety, security, environment and sustainability Khairul Amalin Abd Rahman said the port was pursuing a combination of electrification, renewable electricity and digital optimisation to ensure that higher container throughput would not come at the expense of energy efficiency and emissions reduction.

"Our objective at PTP is very simple. We want to make sure that whenever we grow in terms of throughput, we will be able to reduce emissions as well," he said in an interview with *SunBiz*.

The port is targeting a 45% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 against a 2021 baseline, followed by carbon neutrality by 2040 and net zero emissions by 2050, while expanding its annual handling capacity to 16.3 million TEUs by 2029.

Khairul Amalin said the reduction in energy use per TEU reflected the combined effect of the port's decarbonisation initiatives, although energy intensity needed to be considered alongside absolute emissions to assess the overall environmental impact of its operations.

Energy intensity measures the energy consumed relative to an output measure, such as the number of containers handled, while absolute emissions track the total greenhouse gases generated by operations.

A reduction in energy intensity indicates that less energy is being used for each unit of throughput, but it does not necessarily mean total energy consumption or emissions have declined if container volumes increase.

Khairul Amalin said PTP monitored both absolute emissions and emissions intensity as it worked towards its decarbonisation targets.

"PTP's approach to electrification was guided by three considerations, namely economics, efficiency and resilience, rather than sustainability alone.

"Electrification is imperative and critical for our operation and also for our economic strategy," he said.

PTP began its electrification journey in 2011, with its quay cranes and rubber-tyred gantry (RTG) cranes now operating on electricity.

The port is extending the approach to its terminal trucks, also known as prime movers, which transport con-

PTP steps up energy efficiency measures as capacity expands

➤ Port of Tanjung Pelepas combines electrification, renewable electricity and digital optimisation to ensure that higher container throughput does not come at expense of emissions reduction

tainers between operational areas within the terminal.

The move is intended to reduce reliance on diesel-powered equipment while improving operating cost predictability as the port handles growing cargo volumes.

Khairul Amalin cited results from PTP's electric prime mover proof-of-concept programme, which recorded 48% lower emissions and 57% lower monthly operating costs per unit compared with conventional diesel-powered vehicles.

PTP's trial, conducted between 2023 and 2024, recorded monthly emissions of about 4,000kg of carbon dioxide equivalent per electric prime mover, against 7,600kg for a conventional unit.

The port operates more than 600 prime movers, making the potential cost avoidance from lower operating costs significant if comparable savings can be achieved across a larger proportion of its fleet.

"If you multiply that with more than 600 prime movers, then that will be the potential cost avoidance," Khairul Amalin said.

PTP completed the deployment of 52 electric prime movers on Oct 8, following the introduction of its first 21 units in August. The 52 units form part of a 94-unit procurement, with the remaining 42 powered by conventional fuel.

Khairul Amalin said electrification also offered resilience benefits by reducing exposure to fluctuations in con-

ventional fuel prices.

With its RTGs already electrified, PTP is less exposed to conventional fuel-price volatility for those assets, helping improve cost predictability while supporting emissions-reduction objectives.

"For us, electrification is not just about reducing emissions. We need that electrification because we want our assets to be more efficient and more predictable, and I think by having those two, we will be able to make sure that we remain competitive," he said.

Khairul Amalin said electrification alone would not be sufficient to achieve PTP's emissions-reduction targets, as the environmental benefits also depended on the source of electricity used to power its operations.

The port is pursuing renewable electricity through its collaboration with Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) under the Green Electricity Tariff (GET), while assessing the feasibility of the Corporate Renewable Energy Supply Scheme (CRESS).

It is also exploring biodiesel for its remaining diesel-powered equipment and pursuing energy-efficiency measures, including greater utilisation of solar panels.

These initiatives are intended to address emissions associated with electricity consumption and the operation of equipment that has yet to be fully electrified.

Khairul Amalin said improving the efficiency of existing equipment was as important as changing the source of electricity, particularly as electrification increases the port's electricity requirements.

PTP subscribed to 16,000 GET blocks, equivalent to 16 gigawatt-hours of certified green electricity a month, for the period from May 2026 to December 2027, according to a TNB announcement on Oct 19.

The subscription enables PTP to account for its electricity supply as 100% renewable under the GET arrangement, making it the largest GET subscriber among Malaysian ports to date, TNB said.

Khairul Amalin said PTP was assessing CRESS as a possible next step in its renewable-energy procurement strategy, with the longer-

term objective of securing green electricity from a renewable-energy source under a direct supply arrangement.

"GET is a transition towards CRESS. Ultimately, CRESS is the next strategy because we want that green energy to be connected directly to PTP," he said.

The assessment would form part of PTP's wider efforts to ensure that the electricity needed to support higher throughput and more electrified equipment was sourced more sustainably.

"We track both market-based and location-based emissions accounting in our sustainability reporting, which we have published since 2022.

"Market-based accounting takes into consideration our electricity procurement arrangements, including renewable-energy tariffs and associated certificates, while location-based accounting reflects the emissions intensity of the electricity grid supplying our facility," Khairul Amalin said.

He added that PTP was complementing its electrification and renewable energy initiatives with digital solutions to optimise terminal truck operations and reduce fuel use.

Khairul Amalin said the port's terminal truck optimisation module had reduced truck cycle time by 13%, truck deployment by 11% and fuel consumption by 7%.

The improvements are significant given the scale of PTP's terminal truck operations, with the system enabling the port to make better use of its existing fleet.

"Just by using digitalisation, we are able to reduce terminal truck cycle time, terminal truck deployment and ultimately achieve fuel reduction."

Khairul Amalin said digital optimisation allowed PTP to improve the movement of containers around the terminal while reducing the fuel required for operations. The approach demonstrated how operational improvements could complement capital investment in new equipment, helping the port extract greater productivity from its existing assets.

He said efficiency improvements, renewable electricity and other decarbonisation measures needed to work together to support PTP's long-term targets.

As the port expands its use of automation, artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT) and predictive maintenance, Khairul Amalin said, technology investments must be tied to clearly defined operational needs.

Turn to
page 14

Singapore, Malaysia renew partnership to boost power sector cooperation

SINGAPORE: Singapore's Energy Market Authority (EMA) and Malaysia's Energy Commission (ST) yesterday renewed their partnership to strengthen bilateral cooperation in the energy sector during the 19th Singapore International Energy Week (SIEW).

In a joint statement, the regulators said the renewed memorandum of understanding (MoU) provides a framework for both regulators to strengthen technical cooperation, regulatory exchanges and knowledge sharing.

"The areas of cooperation include the planning and reliability of electricity and piped

gas systems, regulation of wholesale and retail electricity markets, implementation of cross-border electricity trading projects, Renewable Energy Certificates, and interconnection capacity.

"The MoU will also strengthen collaboration on solar and energy storage systems," they said.

The exchange of the MoU between EMA and ST was witnessed by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof, who is also Energy Transition and Water Transformation Minister, and Singapore Energy, Trade and Industry Minister (Energy and Industry) Dr Tan See Leng at the opening of SIEW 2026.

Meanwhile, EMA has granted conditional approval to Sembcorp Utilities Pte Ltd to import 1.3 gigawatts of electricity to Singapore with its consortium partners, MY Energy Consortium, comprising Petrolim Nasional Bhd, Tenaga Nasional Bhd and PetroVietnam Technical Services Corporation.

The approval came following a joint development agreement signed on the sidelines of the 46th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur in May 2025.

The approval will allow Singapore to source and integrate low-carbon electricity from

regional and domestic resources, including offshore wind from Vietnam and solar power from Malaysia.

"Sembcorp Utilities is working towards commencing import of electricity from the project by 2035.

"Over the next few years, the consortium will continue to develop the project, including to obtain all requisite approvals from relevant jurisdictions, conclude power purchase agreements with buyers, and secure sufficient financing," EMA said in a separate statement. — Bernama

Step 1

Download Starbucks Malaysia Mobile App and scan the QR code

Step 2

Place your order on the app

Step 3

Pick up at your nearest store and enjoy!

STARBUCKS REWARDS

ORDER AHEAD IN THE APP, PICK UP IN STORE | SEE YOU AT STARBUCKS®

© 2026 Starbucks Coffee Company. All rights reserved.

Latest contract win boosts Kerjaya Prospek's order book momentum: Berjaya Research

PETALING JAYA: Berjaya Research Sdn Bhd views Kerjaya Prospek Group Bhd's RM142.1 million contract win through a Jati Tinggi Group Bhd-led consortium positively, as the Tenaga Nasional Bhd-related project could create opportunities for Kerjaya Prospek to secure more power infrastructure jobs in the future while also expanding its geographical presence.

"We assume Kerjaya will primarily undertake the core and shell construction works under the consortium arrangement.

"Assuming the project commences in Q1 of FY27 and fetches a profit after tax (PAT) margin of 10%, the project potentially contributes to an estimated PAT of RM14.2 million over FY27-FY28," the research firm said in a note.

The group's estimated outstanding construction order book of RM5.7 billion as at the end of October 2026 is expected to provide revenue visibility over multiple years, Berjaya Research said.

To recap, a consortium led by Jati Tinggi has secured a RM568.2 million contract from TNB for the establishment of the Paka GIS transmission main intake substation in Terengganu.

Kerjaya Prospek subsidiary Kerjaya Prospek (M) Sdn Bhd will undertake 25% of the contract value, equivalent to RM142.1 million.

The project is scheduled for completion within two years from its commencement date.

Berjaya Research maintains its earnings forecast, as the latest win brings Kerjaya Prospek's year-to-date newly secured order book to RM3.4 billion, which represents 97.4% of the firm's FY26 order book replenishment assumption of RM3.5 billion.

The research firm upgraded Kerjaya Prospek to Buy from Hold following its recent share price pullback, with an unchanged target price of RM3.85, based on sum-of-the-parts valuation.

"We continue to like Kerjaya Prospek for its expansion into higher value-added mechanical and engineering and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing works in the data centre space.

"Key risks are rising input costs, slower-than-expected project recognition, and inability to meet in-house order book replenishment assumptions," Berjaya Research said.

MyDCD eyes RM1b market value on ACE Market debut

➤ Company launches prospectus for IPO, expects to raise RM268.8 m gross proceeds

BY HAYATUN RAZAK
sunbiz@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: MyDCD Bhd, an engineering services provider specialising in the integration of mechanical, electrical, plumbing and fire protection (MEPF) systems for critical infrastructure, particularly data centres, is raising RM187.6 million from its initial public offering (IPO) for its listing on the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia.

The IPO comprises a public issue of 335 million new ordinary shares and an offer for sale of 145 million existing shares, at an IPO price of 56 sen per share.

The offering is expected to raise gross proceeds of RM268.8 million, of which RM81.2 million will accrue to the selling shareholders.

Based on its enlarged share capital of 1.794 billion shares, MyDCD is expected to have a market capitalisation of about RM1 billion upon listing.

Of the RM187.6 million gross

proceeds from the public issue, 71.43%, or RM134 million, has been earmarked for working capital, primarily to support project execution and fund performance bonds.

A further RM39.90 million, or 21.27%, will be used to expand business operations while RM5 million will be allocated to enhance its IT systems.

The balance will be used to defray listing expenses.

MyDCD CEO Chris Ow Yong said the proceeds would strengthen the group's capacity to execute projects as demand for digital infrastructure grows.

"As project requirements become more demanding, having the right technical capabilities, experienced personnel and working capital is essential.

The IPO proceeds will help us meet these needs by supporting project execution, including performance bonds, as well as strengthening our teams and enhancing our systems to support our continued growth," he said at the

prospectus launch yesterday.

For the financial year ended June 30, 2026 (FY26), MyDCD recorded revenue of RM666.03 million and profit after tax of RM66.80 million, representing three-year compound annual growth rates of 52.80% and 58.48%, respectively, from FY23 to FY26.

As at Sept 30, 2026, the group had an outstanding order book of RM1.32 billion, equivalent to about 1.98 times its FY26 revenue. This comprised RM1.27 billion from data centre MEPF integration projects and RM53.08 million from maintenance services, with the balance expected to be progressively recognised as revenue up to FY32.

The group also provides maintenance services and parts for completed data centres.

As at Sept 30, 2026, it had 76 active maintenance contracts, typically lasting between one and five years.

Ow Yong said maintenance contributed about 2.9% of turnover in the latest financial year but expected the business to grow as more completed projects move into the maintenance phase.

The group typically secures maintenance work around one to two years after project completion, while some of its maintenance engagements involve data centres it completed as long as 15 years ago.

The company said maintenance work generally carries higher margins than project construction, providing an opportunity to strengthen the group's earnings profile as its installed base expands.

MyDCD's operations remain concentrated in the Klang Valley, with its projects largely involving enterprise and colocation data centres rather than large hyperscale facilities, which are more prevalent in Johor.

Ow Yong said the group would explore opportunities in other parts of Malaysia after its listing but had no immediate plans for overseas expansion.

Ow Yong said MyDCD remained optimistic about the data centre market, citing continued digitali-

sation and the growing adoption of artificial intelligence (AI) as drivers of demand for digital infrastructure.

"Over the last 15 years, we have always been in data centres, and the industry has been growing year on year. We see data centres continuing to grow as the digital economy expands," he added.

The group's experience across data centre projects, from Tier I to Tier IV classifications, had enabled it to develop technical capabilities and establish long-standing relationships with customers, Ow Yong said.

"For MyDCD, this is an industry we have been working in for years, and our experience covers data centre projects across Tier I to Tier IV classifications. Our work spans the MEPF integration process, from engineering support, supply and installation to testing and commissioning."

Ow Yong said the group's experience across different industries and project types had helped it build relationships with key customers, some of which had lasted about 15 years.

MyDCD expected opportunities to emerge as enterprises increasingly adopted AI and required more sophisticated digital infrastructure, although the extent of demand would depend on how quickly businesses adopted the technology, Ow Yong said.

"As artificial intelligence adoption grows, data centres face increasing demands for computing power, cooling and energy management, making MEPF systems increasingly important.

"For MyDCD, we remain focused on building on our experience and strengthening our execution capabilities to meet evolving customer requirements and pursue opportunities as the industry develops," he added.

The company's shares are classified as syariah-compliant by the Syariah Advisory Council of the Securities Commission Malaysia.

TA Securities is the principal adviser, sponsor, underwriter and placement agent for the IPO.



Ow Yong (fifth from left) with other directors and senior executives of MyDCD and TA Securities at the company's IPO prospectus launch.

PTP: Cyber resilience and operational resilience inseparable

"It is never about the AI itself. It is about the problem, what is the real problem that we want to solve, and how AI or any other solution will be able to support us in solving that problem."

He said technology adoption needed to support business requirements, economic considerations, terminal efficiency, productivity and decarbonisation goals.

Khairul Amalin also highlighted data quality as an important consideration as more operational decisions were supported by digital systems and analytics.

He said AI was only as effective as the information fed into it, making accurate and representative data essential to identifying appropriate

From page 13

solutions. "If the data is not right, then we will go in a different direction. Analytics is important, but it is only as good as the input."

The port also needed to assess the risk profile of each technology or alternative fuel before implementation, including the implications for workforce capabilities, operating procedures and emergency preparedness.

Khairul Amalin said employees needed the necessary training and capabilities, while operational procedures and safety frameworks had to be in place before new technologies or fuels were introduced.

"Without really understanding the risk profile, we will face issues later on in the future. This is particularly

important when evaluating alternative fuels, as different fuels present different risks that we need to understand before adopting them in port operations," he said.

With digitalisation becoming more deeply embedded in port operations, Khairul Amalin said PTP needed to place greater emphasis on operational resilience.

The cyber incident that disrupted the port's terminal operations in September had reinforced the relationship between cybersecurity and the continuity of physical port operations.

"The biggest lesson learned from the recent cyber incident is that cyber resilience and operational resilience are inseparable," Khairul Amalin said.

The incident was detected on Sept 9 and led to a temporary suspension of container terminal operations while affected systems were isolated and recovery efforts began.

PTP subsequently resumed operations through a phased process, although the full restoration of its systems and services was completed on Sept 17, according to updates circulated to industry stakeholders.

Khairul Amalin said the port resumed operations in less than 24 hours following the incident and restored its systems and productivity thereafter.

He said the experience highlighted the need for resilience measures to extend beyond preventing cyber incidents to include the

ability to contain disruption, maintain essential operations and recover securely.

For Khairul Amalin, the incident did not mean PTP should become less reliant on digitalisation, which he described as a critical pathway for the port's development.

Instead, resilience needed to be incorporated into operational design so that the port could manage disruptions safely while recovering quickly.

"The lesson is not to become less digital because of the incident. We want to make sure that as we become more digital, resilience is designed into the operation so that when things happen, we will be able to manage them safely and recover quickly," Khairul Amalin said.



UZMA BERHAD
Registration No. 200701011861 (769866-V)
(Incorporated in Malaysia)

NOTICE OF 19TH ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (AGM)

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the Nineteenth Annual General Meeting ("19th AGM") of UZMA BERHAD will be held at Theatre, Damansara Performing Arts Centre, G Floor, Uzma Tower, No. 2, Jalan PJU 8/8A, Damansara Perdana, 47820 Petaling Jaya, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia on Wednesday, 25 November 2026 at 10.00 a.m. or at any adjournment thereof, for the purpose of considering and if thought fit, passing with or without modifications, the following resolutions set out in this Notice

AGENDA

As Ordinary Business

- To receive the Audited Financial Statements of the Company and the Group for the financial year ended 30 June 2026 together with the Reports of the Directors and Auditors thereon.
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 1)
- To approve the Directors' fees payable to the Non-Executive Directors of up to an aggregate amount of RM1,392,055.00 for the period from 26 November 2026 until the next Annual General Meeting of the Company and the payment thereof.
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 2)
- To approve the payment of Meeting Allowances of up to an aggregate amount of RM118,500.00 for the period from 26 November 2026 until the next Annual General Meeting of the Company and the payment thereof.
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 2)
- To re-elect the following Directors who are retiring by rotation in accordance with Clause 98 of the Constitution of the Company: -
(i) Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah binti Musa
(ii) Ikhlas bin Abdul Rahman
(iii) Y.M. Tengku Ezuan Ismara bin Tengku Nun Ahmad
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 3)
- To re-elect Karel Avni Doshi a/p Jitendrakumar who is retiring by rotation in accordance with Clause 106 of the Constitution of the Company.
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 3)
- To re-appoint Messrs Morison LC PLT as Auditors of the Company for the financial year ending 30 June 2027 and to authorise the Board of Directors to fix their remuneration.
(Please refer to Explanatory Note 4)

As Special Business

To consider and, if thought fit, to pass the following resolutions: -

7. AUTHORITY FOR THE DIRECTORS TO ALLOT AND ISSUE SHARES PURSUANT TO SECTIONS 75 AND 76 OF THE COMPANIES ACT 2016

"THAT pursuant to Sections 75 and 76 of the Companies Act 2016 ("Act"), the Directors be and are hereby authorised to allot and issue new Shares in the Company, grant rights to subscribe for Shares in the Company, convert any security into Shares in the Company, or allot Shares under an agreement or option or offer at any time in the Company, and upon such terms and conditions and for such purposes as the Directors may, in their absolute discretion, deem fit, provided that the aggregate number of Shares to be issued and allotted, to be subscribed under any rights granted, to be issued from conversion of any security, or to be issued and allotted under an agreement or option or offer, does not exceed ten per centum (10%) of the total number of issued Shares of the Company (excluding treasury shares) for the time being and that the Directors be and are also hereby empowered to obtain approval for the listing of and quotation for the additional Shares so allotted on Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad ("Bursa Securities") and that such authority shall continue in force until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company, subject always to the approval of all relevant regulatory authorities (if any) being obtained for such allotment and issuance."

8. PROPOSED RENEWAL OF AUTHORITY FOR THE COMPANY TO PURCHASE ITS OWN ORDINARY SHARES ("PROPOSED RENEWAL OF SHARE BUYS-BACK MANDATE")

"THAT subject to the Companies Act 2016 ("Act"), the Constitution of the Company, the Main Market Listing Requirements of Bursa Securities ("MMLR") and the approvals of all other relevant governmental and/or regulatory authorities (if any), the Company be and is hereby authorised to make purchases of the Company's ordinary shares ("Proposed Share Buy-Back") as may be determined by the Directors of the Company from time to time through Bursa Securities upon such terms and conditions as the Directors may deem fit, necessary and expedient in the interest of the Company provided that the aggregate number of shares purchased and/or held as treasury shares pursuant to this resolution does not exceed ten per centum (10%) of the total number of issued shares of the Company;

THAT an amount not exceeding the retained profits account be allocated by the Company for the Proposed Share Buy-Back;

THAT the authority conferred by this resolution will be effective immediately upon the passing of this resolution and will expire at :-

- The conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting ("AGM") of the Company (being the Twentieth AGM ("20th AGM") of the Company), at which time the said authority will lapse unless by an ordinary resolution passed at a general meeting of the Company, the authority is renewed, either unconditionally or subject to conditions;
- The expiration of the period within which the 20th AGM of the Company is required by law to be held; or
- The authority is revoked or varied by an ordinary resolution passed by the shareholders in a general meeting.

whichever occurs first but not so as to prejudice the completion of the purchase(s) by the Company before the aforesaid expiry date and in any event, in accordance with the provisions of the guidelines issued by Bursa Securities and/or any other relevant governmental and/or regulatory authorities (if any);

THAT authority be and is hereby given to the Directors of the Company to decide at their absolute discretion to either cancel and/or retain the shares so purchased as treasury shares to deal with such treasury shares in the manner as set out in Section 127(7) of the Act.

AND THAT the Directors of the Company be authorised to take all steps necessary to implement, complete and do all such acts and things (including executing all such documents as may be required) as they may consider expedient or necessary to give effect to the Proposed Share Buy-Back as may be agreed or allowed by any relevant governmental and/or regulatory authority."

(Please refer to Explanatory Note 6)

9. RETENTION OF INDEPENDENT NON-EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, DATUK ABDULLAH BIN KARIM

"THAT approval be and is hereby given to Datuk Abdullah bin Karim, whose tenure as an Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the Company for a cumulative term of more than nine (9) years, to continue to act as an Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the Company until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company"

(Please refer to Explanatory Note 7)

10. RETENTION OF INDEPENDENT NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, DATUK SERI DR. ZURAINAH BINTI MUSA

"THAT approval be and is hereby given to Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah binti Musa, whose tenure as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company for a cumulative term of more than nine (9) years, to continue to act as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company until 13 May 2027."

(Please refer to Explanatory Note 9)

11. RETENTION OF INDEPENDENT NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IKHLAS BIN ABDUL RAHMAN

"THAT approval be and is hereby given to Ikhlas bin Abdul Rahman, whose tenure as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company for a cumulative term of more than nine (9) years, to continue to act as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company until the conclusion of the next Annual General Meeting of the Company."

(Please refer to Explanatory Note 9)

BY ORDER OF THE BOARD

KHOO MING SIANG
Membership No.: MAICSA 7034037
SSM PC No.: 202208000150

CHIN WAI LENG
Membership No.: LS0009738
SSM PC No.: 201908000658

Company Secretaries

Selangor Darul Ehsan
Date: 27 October 2026

NOTES:

- A member [other than an exempt authorized nominee as defined under the Securities Industry (Central Depositories) Act, 1991] of the Company who is entitled to participate and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint not more than two (2) proxies to participate and vote in his stead at the same meeting. A proxy may but need not be a member of the Company, an advocate, an approved company auditor or a person approved by the Registrar. There shall be no restriction as to the qualification of the proxy.
- Where a member of the Company appoints two (2) proxies, the member shall specify the proportions of his/her shareholdings to be represented by each proxy, failing which the appointments shall be invalid.
- Where a member of the Company is an exempt authorized nominee which holds ordinary shares in the Company for multiple beneficial owners in one securities account ("omnibus account"), there is no limit to the number of proxies which the exempt authorized nominee may appoint in respect of each omnibus account it holds.
An exempt authorized nominee refers to an authorized nominee defined under the Securities Industry (Central Depositories) Act 1991 ("SICDA") which is exempted from compliance with the provisions of subsection 25A (1) of SICDA
- The instrument appointing a proxy, in the case of an individual, shall be signed by the appointor or by his attorney duly authorised in writing and in the case of corporation shall be given under its common seal or signed on its behalf by an attorney of the corporation so authorised.
- The instrument appointing a proxy ("Proxy Form") must be deposited at the office of the Poll Facilitator office at S-4-04, The Garnuda Biz Suites, Jalan Anggerik Vanilla 31/99, Kota Kemuning, 40460 Shah Alam, Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia not less than forty-eight (48) hours before the time for holding the AGM or at any adjournment thereof.
- Pursuant to Paragraph 8.29A(1) of the MMLR, all resolutions set out in the Notice of AGM will be put to vote by way of poll.
- For the purpose of determining who shall be entitled to participate in this meeting, the Company will be requesting from Bursa Malaysia Depository Sdn. Bhd. to make available a Record of Depositors as at 18 November 2026. Only a Depositor whose name appears on such Record of Depositors shall be entitled to participate and vote at this meeting and be entitled to appoint a proxy or proxies.

Explanatory Notes on Ordinary Business and Special Business

1. Audited Financial Statements for the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2026

The Audited Financial Statements in Agenda 1 is meant for discussion only, as approval from the shareholders is not required pursuant to the provision of Section 340(1)(a) of the Companies Act 2016. Hence, this Agenda is not put forward for voting by shareholders of the Company.

2. Payment of Directors' Fees and Benefits

Section 230(1) of the Companies Act 2016 provides amongst others that the fees of the Directors and any benefits payable to the Directors of the Company and its subsidiaries shall be approved at a general meeting.

i) Ordinary Resolution 1 – Payment of Directors' Fees to the Non-Executive Directors for the period from 26 November 2026 until the next AGM to be held in 2027

The proposed fees payable by the Company to each of the NEDs are detailed as follows:

Board/Committees	Position	Fee per Annum (RM)
Board	Chairman	180,000
	Member	120,000
Committees	Chairman	30,000
	Member	15,000

The proposed Resolution 1 is to facilitate the payment of Directors' fees on a current financial year basis, calculated based on the current board size. In the event the Directors' fees proposed are insufficient (due to enlarged Board size), approval will be sought at the next AGM for additional fees to meet the shortfall.

ii) Ordinary Resolution 2 – Payment of Meeting Allowances

Payment of Meeting Allowances for the period from 26 November 2026 until the next AGM to be held in 2027 is RM1,500 per meeting for the Chairman and RM1,000 per meeting for each Member. In the event the proposed amount is insufficient (due to more meetings/ enlarged board size), approval will be sought at the next AGM for the shortfall.

3. Ordinary Resolutions 3, 4, 5 and 6 – Re-election of Directors

For the purpose of determining the eligibility of the Directors to stand for re-election at the 19th Annual General Meeting of the Company, the Board through its NRC undertook a formal evaluation to determine the eligibility of each retiring Director in line with the Malaysian Code on Corporate Governance, which included the following: -

- Commitment and time to serve the Company;
- The fit and proper assessment;
- Past contribution and performance.

Based on the outcome of the annual performance evaluation, the NRC and the Board are satisfied that the retiring Directors, namely Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah binti Musa, Ikhlas bin Abdul Rahman, Y.M. Tengku Ezuan Ismara bin Tengku Nun Ahmad and Karel Avni Doshi a/p Jitendrakumar (collectively, "the retiring Directors") standing for re-election, have performed their duties as per the Board Charter. In addition, the NRC and the Board are confident that the retiring Directors will continue to bring their knowledge, experience and skills, and will contribute effectively to the Board's discussions, deliberations and decisions. In view thereof, the Board recommends that the retiring Directors be re-elected as Directors of the Company.

The retiring Directors, being eligible, have offered themselves for re-election at the 19th AGM.

The retiring Directors do not have conflict of interest with the Company and had abstained from deliberations and decisions on their own re-election at the relevant Board meeting.

All Directors standing for re-election have abstained from deliberations and decisions on their own eligibility to stand for re-election at the NRC and/or Board Meetings and they will continue to abstain from deliberations and decisions on their own eligibility to stand for re-election at the 19th AGM of the Company

The profiles of the Directors who are standing for re-election under Ordinary Resolutions 3, 4, 5 and 6 are set out in the Directors' Profile on pages [70 to 82] of the Annual Report 2026.

4. Ordinary Resolution 7 – Re-appointment of Auditors

Messrs Morison LC PLT, the auditors of the Company, have expressed their willingness to continue in office as auditors of the Company for the financial year ending 30 June 2027. The Board has approved the Audit Committee's recommendation that their office be retained after taking into account the relevant feedback on their experience, performance and independence following a formal assessment.

5. Ordinary Resolution 8 – Authority for the Directors to Allot and Issue Shares

The Ordinary Resolution 8 proposed under item 7 of the Agenda is a renewal of the general mandate for issuance of ordinary shares ("Shares") by the Company under Sections 75 and 76 of the Act. The Company, however, did not issue any new shares pursuant to this mandate obtained as at the date of this Notice.

The mandate, if passed, will provide flexibility for the Company and empower the Directors to allot and issue new Shares speedily in the Company from time to time and expand the mandate to grant rights to subscribe for Shares in the Company, convert any security into Shares in the Company, or allot Shares under an agreement or option or offer, provided that the aggregate number of Shares issued and allotted, to be subscribed under any rights granted, to be issued from conversion of any security, or to be issued and allotted under an agreement or option or offer, pursuant to this resolution does not exceed 10% of the total number of issued Shares (excluding treasury shares, if any) of the Company for the time being for such purposes as the Directors consider would be in the interest of the Company.

This would eliminate any delay arising from and cost involved in convening a general meeting to obtain the approval of the shareholders for such issuance of shares and provide flexibility to the Company for any possible fund-raising activities, including but not limited to, further placing of shares, for purpose of funding investment project(s), working capital and/or acquisitions.

This authority, unless revoked or varied by the Company at a general meeting, will expire at the next AGM.

6. Ordinary Resolution 9 – Proposed Renewal of Share Buy-Back Mandate

Ordinary Resolution 9 proposed under item 8 of the Agenda, if passed, will give the Directors of the Company the authority to take all such steps, as are necessary or expedient, to implement, finalise, complete and/or to affect the purchase(s) of ordinary shares by the Company as the Directors may deem fit and expedient in the best interest of the Company. The authority will, unless revoked or varied by the Company in a general meeting, continue to be in force until the conclusion of the next AGM of the Company or the expiry of the period within which the next AGM of the Company following the 19th AGM is required by law to be held.

Please refer to the Statement to Shareholders dated 27 October 2026 for further information.

7. Ordinary Resolution 10 – Retention of Independent Non-Executive Chairman, Datuk Abdullah bin Karim

Ordinary resolution 10, if passed, will allow Datuk Abdullah bin Karim ("Datuk Abdullah") to continue in office as an Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the Company.

Datuk Abdullah was appointed as an Independent Non-Executive Director on 25 August 2016 and subsequently assumed the role of Chairman of the Board of Directors on 30 August 2018. The Board, through the Nomination and Remuneration Committee ("NRC"), has conducted a performance evaluation and assessment on Datuk Abdullah, who has served the Company for more than nine (9) years as at the date of the notice of this 19th AGM. The Board and NRC (save for Datuk Abdullah), who has declared his interest and abstained from deliberation and voting) recommended his retention as Independent Non-Executive Chairman of the Company, based on the following justifications:-

- he has met the independence guidelines set out in the Main Market Listing Requirements ("MMLR");
- he continues to be independent, as there are no circumstances or relationships that create threats to his independence;
- he has demonstrated strong leadership in his capacity as Chairman of the Board, actively facilitating constructive discussions and ensuring effective Board oversight;
- he has contributed sufficient time and effort in discharging his responsibilities, exercised due care in all undertakings of the Company, and carried out his fiduciary duties in the best interest of the Company throughout his tenure.

Datuk Abdullah has abstained from deliberations and decisions on this matter at the Board Meeting and he will continue to abstain from deliberations and decisions at the 19th AGM of the Company. The profile of Datuk Abdullah is set out in the Directors' Profile on page [72] of the Annual Report 2026.

8. Ordinary Resolution 11 – Retention of Independent Non-Executive Director, Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah binti Musa

Ordinary Resolution 11, if passed, will allow ("Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah") to continue in office as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company.

Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah was appointed as an Independent Non-Executive Director on 13 May 2015. The Board has via the Nomination and Remuneration Committee ("NRC") conducted a performance evaluation and assessment on Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah, who has served the Company for more than nine (9) years as at the date of the notice of this 19th AGM. The Board and NRC (save for Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah who has declared her interest and abstained from deliberation and voting) recommended her to continue to act as Independent Director of the Company based on the following justifications:-

- she has met the independence guidelines set out in the MMLR,
- she continues to be independent as she has no circumstances and relationships that create threats to her independence,
- she has actively participated in the board meetings and possesses the appropriate competencies to enable her to apply professional judgment, and
- she has contributed sufficient time and efforts and exercised due care in all undertakings of the Company and has acted and carried out her fiduciary duties in the interest of the Company during her tenure as an Independent Non-Executive Director.

Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah will reach the maximum tenure of twelve (12) years as an Independent Director on 13 May 2027. In accordance with the MMLR, which provides that the tenure of an independent Director shall not exceed a cumulative period of twelve (12) years, she will be redesignated as a Non-Independent Non-Executive Director upon completion of her twelve (12) year tenure.

Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah has abstained from deliberations and decisions on this matter at the NRC and/or Board Meetings and she will continue to abstain from deliberations and decisions at the 19th AGM of the Company. The profile of Datuk Seri Dr. Zurainah is set out in the Directors' Profile on page [76] of the Annual Report 2026.

9. Ordinary Resolution 12 – Retention of Independent Non-Executive Director, Ikhlas Bin Abdul Rahman

Ordinary Resolution 12, if passed, will allow Ikhlas bin Abdul Rahman ("Ikhlas") to continue in office as an Independent Non-Executive Director of the Company.

Ikhlas was appointed as an Independent Non-Executive Director on 1 February 2017. The Board has via the Nomination and Remuneration Committee ("NRC") conducted a performance evaluation and assessment on Ikhlas, who has served the Company for more than nine (9) years as at the date of the notice of this 19th AGM. The Board and NRC (save for Ikhlas who has declared his interest and abstained from deliberation and voting) recommended him to continue to act as Independent Director of the Company based on the following justifications:-

- he has met the independence guidelines set out in the MMLR,
- he continues to be independent as she has no circumstances and relationships that create threats to her independence,
- he has actively participated in the board meetings and possesses the appropriate competencies to enable him to apply professional judgment, and
- he has contributed sufficient time and efforts and exercised due care in all undertakings of the Company and has acted and carried out his fiduciary duties in the interest of the Company during his tenure as an Independent Non-Executive Director.

Ikhlas has abstained from deliberations and decisions on this matter at the Board Meetings and he will continue to abstain from deliberations and decisions at the 19th AGM of the Company. The profile of Ikhlas is set out in the Directors' Profile on page [77] of the Annual Report 2026

STATEMENT ACCOMPANYING NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING (Pursuant to Paragraph 8.27(2) of the Main Market Listing Requirements of Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad)

- There were no Directors standing for election (excluding Directors standing for a re-election) at the 19th AGM.
- Please refer to Explanatory Note 5 for information relating to general mandate for issue of securities.

Personal Data Privacy:

By submitting an instrument appointing a proxy(ies) and/or representative(s) to participated and vote at the AGM and/or any adjournment thereof, a member of the Company (i) consents to the collection, use and disclosure of the member's personal data by the Company (or its agents) for the purpose of the processing and administration by the Company (or its agents) of proxies and representatives appointed for the AGM (including any adjournment thereof) and the preparation and compilation of the attendance lists, minutes and other documents relating to the AGM (including any adjournment thereof), and in order for the Company (or its agents) to comply with any applicable laws, listing rules, regulations and/or guidelines (collectively, the "Purposes"), (ii) warrants that where the member discloses the personal data of the member's proxy(ies) and/or representative(s) to the Company (or its agents) , the member has obtained the prior consent of such proxy(ies) and/or representative(s) for the collection, use and disclosure by the Company (or its agents) of the personal data of such proxy(ies) and/or representative(s) for the Purposes, and (iii) agrees that the member will indemnify the Company in respect of any penalties, liabilities, claims, demands, losses and damages as a result of the member's breach of warranty.

Indonesia boosts measures against stock manipulation

► High shareholding concentration list committee to include independents, possible coordinated trading to trigger immediate investigation, says exchange

JAKARTA: Indonesia yesterday introduced more measures to address stock market manipulation, including adding independent parties to a committee determining stocks with concentrated ownership structures, after MSCI said the country could be demoted due to concerns about opaque trading.

The measures came after MSCI announced earlier this month that it could demote Indonesia's stock exchange to "standalone" market status, saying not enough had been done to arrest coordinated trading practices in its stock market.

That was more severe than the global index provider's January warning that it could downgrade the country to "frontier" status. At present, MSCI still classifies Indonesia as an "emerging" market.

The Indonesia Stock Exchange (IDX) plans to expand the membership of a committee that comes up with a list of stocks with high shareholder concentration to include independent parties like Indonesian academics

and F. Chapman Taylor as a representative of foreign investors, chief Jeffrey Hendrik said at a press conference.

Previously, the committee members were officials from capital market authorities. Taylor is a former partner with investment company the Capital Group and is currently an adviser to Indonesia's sovereign wealth fund, Danantara.

"We encourage the IDX to strengthen the mechanism and methodology of trading supervision, including its capacity to identify patterns of irregular transactions, detect coordinated trading and strengthen the mechanism to respond to such events," said Hasan Fawzi, the financial regulator's capital market supervisor.

Last week, the IDX said it would exclude stocks with high shareholding concentrations from its main Jakarta index starting on Nov 2. The current list includes 80 companies.

The MSCI downgrade warning spurred Indonesia's deepest-ever two-day stock selloff

on Oct 16 and 19, sending the main index to its lowest point since 2020. It has since rebounded.

The exchange also plans to launch investigations when it detects possible coordinated trading to manipulate share prices and freeze suspicious investor accounts, Hendrik said.

The new measure, to take effect in November, is more proactive than the IDX's previous response. The IDX previously warned public investors of unusual market activities when a stock price moved sharply and requested an explanation from the company. The process could also lead to a temporary freeze in share trading.

A policy that allows share buybacks without requiring approval from a general shareholders meeting has also been extended until June 2027, Hasan said, adding that any buyback must consider rules about the minimum free float, or shares available to trade in the market.

Hasan said Indonesia has been communicating with MSCI and other global index providers like FTSE Russell to reiterate its regulators' commitment to market reforms.

The market showed resilience following MSCI's recent announcement, Hasan said, describing local investors as "mature" and "wise" for buying stocks in companies with good fundamentals. – Reuters

SpaceX raised US\$40b in debt financing for GPU deals, says Musk

BENGALURU: Elon Musk said on Sunday that SpaceX had closed US\$40 billion (RM163.3 billion) in debt financing for graphics processing units (GPU), underscoring the soaring cost of building artificial intelligence (AI) computing capacity.

Musk, in a post on X, attributed the successful debt raise to the company's investment-grade status and revenue from its Starlink satellite internet and launch businesses.

It was not immediately clear from Musk's post what he meant by the deal being "closed" or whether investors had agreed to pricing for the debt.

"This is primarily callable debt for GPU purchases that will arrive in Q1 and Q2. Not a major factor this quarter," Musk said in the post.

For the fourth quarter, the company expects US\$35 billion to US\$40 billion in capital expenditure, according to CFO Bret Johnsen.

Reuters reported earlier this month that SpaceX was in talks with banks and asset managers to raise US\$40 billion for the purchase of Nvidia AI chips.

The funding highlights the enormous capital requirement of the AI boom, as technology companies race to secure advanced processors and build out the computing infrastructure needed to support AI development.

Musk said debt markets "have almost entirely shut off access to money for any company that doesn't have substantial revenue independent of AI data centre".

As a result, he predicted neocloud companies would face significant consolidation and failures, and later said SpaceX won't buy any neoclouds, calling it "pointless".

Unlike larger cloud firms that serve a broad range of industries, neoclouds such as Nebius and CoreWeave mostly focus on tech customers and offer capacity tailored for AI technology.

Investors have started betting against US neocloud and data centre companies, after fears that their debt-fuelled AI buildout was becoming unsustainable sparked a selloff. – Reuters

SK Hynix to announce shareholder return details tomorrow

SEOUL: SK Hynix said it will announce shareholder return measures tomorrow when the South Korean chipmaker releases quarterly results, responding to a report that it is considering a special dividend of about 16 trillion won (RM49.4 billion).

South Korean newspaper Dong-A Ilbo reported yesterday that SK Hynix is considering the special dividend, which will be funded by gains from selling its stake in Japanese memory chipmaker Kioxia.

SK Hynix has not publicly disclosed details of the stake sale, which was completed earlier this year, and analysts estimate that it recognised hefty cumulative investment gains.

SK Hynix invested about 4 trillion won in Kioxia in 2018 through a Bain Capital-led consortium of US, Japanese and South Korean investors.

When asked about the media report by the stock exchange operator, SK Hynix said that it is "reviewing various shareholder return measures" and plans to announce them alongside third-quarter earnings tomorrow. It did not elaborate.

Nvidia suppliers SK Hynix and Samsung Electronics have faced growing pressure from investors to return a bigger share of excess cash through dividends or share buybacks after record profits fuelled by booming demand for AI memory chips.

The pressure increased especially after their shares plunged from record highs hit in June, partly on investor concerns over the durability of AI spending by US technology companies. – Reuters



NEW AIRPORT ... An exterior view of the newly opened Western Sydney International Airport. The first international flight took off from the multi-billion-dollar airport yesterday. An Air New Zealand plane from Auckland landed and soon afterwards flew out of the airport in the morning. The single-runway airport, Australia's first new major aviation hub in over five decades, began domestic flights on Sunday, and freight operations in July. – AFP/PIIC

Vietnam's first chip plant unlikely to meet 2027 target

HANOI/AMSTERDAM: Vietnam is unlikely to meet a 2027 target for its first semiconductor plant to embark on a trial production run, with people saying that a deal to buy chipmaking equipment from ASML has yet to be reached.

The site of the plant on the outskirts of Hanoi remains covered in wild vegetation, a Reuters visit there last week showed. Satellite images taken in January by Planet Labs PBC and by Airbus in October also confirm that no buildings have been constructed.

A person with direct knowledge of the project said the 2027 target would probably not be achieved due to delays stemming from developer Viettel's lack of experience in building chip factories and administrative hurdles in quickly securing government funding.

The government-mandated project is

ongoing but the timeline is unclear, said the person, who was not authorised to speak to media and declined to be identified.

The project's lack of progress and Viettel's talks with the Dutch equipment maker are being reported here for the first time.

Viettel, a military-run telecoms and defence group, said in a statement to Reuters that the project was "progressing in line with the established plan and schedule".

"Project activities are being carried out in phases, in accordance with the project's technical and implementation requirements. We will provide further updates at an appropriate time," it said.

Vietnam's finance ministry did not respond to requests for comment. A representative for ASML declined to comment on the talks with Viettel.

The project is part of the ruling Communist Party's plans for Vietnam to move up the semiconductor value chain. It wants the country to become a high-income economy by 2045, with growth of at least 10% through 2030.

Viettel, which broke ground on the site in January, said at the time it wanted the plant to be fully operational by 2030 and that it intended to supply its chips to the aerospace, telecom and auto sectors.

Talks with ASML have been underway for months, said three separate people familiar with the matter, who declined to be identified because the discussions were private.

Authorities have estimated the cost of the plant at about US\$1.3 billion (RM5.3 billion). – Reuters

Japanese firms compensate users as cyberattacks spike

► Cybersecurity incidents this year outpace those in 2025 and 2024, raise concerns about economic security

TOKYO: Japanese companies are moving to pay compensation to users following waves of cyberattacks that have disrupted internet services and raised concerns about economic stability.

GMO Internet Group, a leading provider of online financial services, said customers would be compensated for losses stemming from unauthorised access following a cyberattack on its foreign exchange trading service, and all customers would receive ¥5,000 (RM132) as a gesture of goodwill, CEO Masatoshi Kumagai said in a blog post on Sunday.

"The internet itself is now starting to break down," said Kumagai, whose sprawling group includes internet infrastructure and cryptocurrency trading.

Japan said on Friday it would set up a team to simulate cyberattacks using artificial intelligence (AI) to identify weaknesses in technology systems as organisations scrambled to curtail risks from flaws in the PHP programming language that underpins much of the internet.

More broadly, Japanese companies are being roiled by attacks with experts saying AI is helping

automate tasks from scanning for software vulnerabilities to crafting phishing campaigns, making cybercrime faster, cheaper and harder to detect.

"The internet is increasingly being transformed into a tool that malicious actors use to threaten and rob people," said Kumagai.

Shares of GMO, which had a market value of US\$2.6 billion as of Friday's close, slumped almost 16% to a four-month low against a 0.2% rise in Tokyo's benchmark index.

Government and company websites in Japan, Europe and elsewhere went offline last week after the disclosure of critical vulnerabilities in the PHP programming language prompted millions of hacking attempts.

Kumagai has urged the Japanese government to apply cyberdefence measures in response to the cyberattack, after the introduction of a cyberdefence system this month.

The system could involve steps such as attacking hostile servers to neutralise threats.

"Now is the time for the public and private sectors to work together to protect Japan," wrote Kumagai.

GMO said it received a demand for money from a party believed to be behind the attack, along with a threat to disclose company and customer information if it did not comply.

GMO said it would not comply with the demand and would respond to the incident in coordination with police and other authorities. It did not mention any connection to PHP flaws.

The company, which will provide a free alternative service to its customers for six months, said it could not currently calculate the impact on earnings from the goodwill payments and compensation for losses.

White-hat hackers working for the company had identified security issues but the depth and speed of the response were insufficient, Kumagai wrote.

The scale of recent cyberattacks has exposed weaknesses in Japanese companies' ability to protect their wealth of customer data and raised the prospect of surging costs to beef up defences.

"Companies already have standard security measures in place, so if they want to strengthen them further, there is a possibility that the additional cost burden could be quite substantial," said Shoichi Arisawa, an analyst at IwaiCosmo Securities.

There have been 723 cybersecurity incidents in the year to Oct 20, according to data from TrendAI, exceeding the annual totals in 2025 and 2024. – Reuters

Saudi Arabia to store oil in Singapore to bolster Asia supply security

SINGAPORE: Saudi Arabia plans to store crude oil at Singapore's Jurong Rock Caverns from the second half of 2027 to strengthen supply security in the region, energy ministers from both countries said yesterday.

The move comes after the US-Israeli war with Iran severely disrupted energy supplies to Asia shipped through the Strait of Hormuz, prompting countries to draw down inventories and raising concerns about stockpile levels globally. Asia imported two-thirds of its oil supplies from the Middle East before the war.

"Saudi Arabia and Singapore are announcing our joint intent to establish an arrangement for Saudi crude oil to be stored at the Jurong Rock Caverns from the second half of 2027," Tan See Leng, minister for energy, trade and industry, told the Singapore International Energy Week conference.

"This arrangement enhances the resilience of the Saudi crude oil supply chain in Southeast Asia, as well as contributes to Singapore's energy security and resilience in the event of supply disruptions."

Tan said Saudi Aramco would sign a memorandum of understanding with the Energy Market Authority and JTC Corp and aimed to conclude negotiations in a few months' time.

"Bringing supply closer to key Asian markets would strengthen the flexibility of our supply network and support Singapore's security of supply and preparedness," Saudi Arabia's Energy Minister Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman Al-Saud said in a video recording at the conference.

Located at a depth of 150 metres below the ground, the rock caverns at Jurong Island can store up to 1.47 million cubic metres, or roughly 9 million barrels of liquid hydrocarbons such as crude oil and condensate.

Saudi Aramco currently stores crude in Japan and South Korea where local governments have priority to buy the supplies in the tanks in the event of an unexpected shortage.

The crude storage capacity in Okinawa was expanded to 8.2 million barrels in September 2017 in an agreement with Japan Oil, Gas and Metals National Corp, Aramco Japan said on its website.

In 2023, Aramco inked a deal with Korea National Oil Corp to store 5.3 million barrels of oil in South Korea's reserve facilities in the port of Ulsan for five years.

Elsewhere, Japan is in talks with Asian countries to boost crude reserves across the region. – Reuters

Thai September exports rise 24% on year, above forecast

BANGKOK: Thailand's customs-cleared exports rose 24% in September from a year earlier, the commerce ministry said yesterday, higher than analysts expected.

Exports rose for the 27th consecutive month, the ministry said, led by electronics, which was supported by global demand for artificial intelligence products, as well as a rise in agricultural commodity and food shipments.

The September reading compared with a forecast rise of 17.85% in a Reuters poll and followed an increase of 24.3% in the previous month.

In the January-September period, exports rose 19.6% year on year.

Exports may rise 19% this year, the ministry said, up from 15% forecast last month.

Exports next year were expected to rise 2% to 4%, Nantapong Chiralerspong, the head of the Commerce Ministry's Trade Policy and Strategy Office, told a news briefing.

September exports to the United States, Thailand's largest market, rose 50.1% from a year earlier, while shipments to China increased 18.4%, the ministry said.

Imports increased 50.4% in September from a year earlier, the fastest growth in just over five years, higher than the forecast rise of 31.25% in the poll. The ministry had earlier said the September increase was a record.

Thailand recorded a trade deficit of US\$5.86 billion (RM23.9 billion) in September, compared with a forecast deficit of US\$1.83 billion. – Reuters



HALLOWEEN DRAW ... Tens of thousands of revellers in costumes, ranging from evil bartenders to Donald Trump impersonators, zombies and Taoist priests, pack an entertainment zone as Hong Kong lights up for Halloween celebrations set to stretch over three weekends. Hong Kong's first citywide Halloween Month is aimed at boosting tourism, and is estimated to bump up food and beverage sales by 20%-25%. – REUTERS/SPIC

IEA head doesn't expect energy markets to return to pre-war levels in 2027

SINGAPORE: The head of the International Energy Agency (IEA) said yesterday that he does not expect energy markets in 2027 to return to where they were before the Iran war, which began in late February.

The conflict sharply tightened a market that had been projected to be in surplus this year, significantly disrupting global energy flows and pushing up oil benchmarks and refined product prices.

"I am afraid I don't see any credible pathway that the markets will go next year, where we were before this war has started," IEA executive director Fatih Birol told the Singapore International Energy Week conference.

"So therefore, we all need to get prepared, taking the energy security as a number one

priority in our government, business world, but without forgetting what is the next chapter for the countries and for companies that are all here today," he said.

More Houthi attacks in Saudi Arabia sent Brent crude futures as high as US\$117 (RM477.82) a barrel on Friday, the highest level in nearly six months.

The contract eased yesterday but was still trading about 59% above its pre-war level.

"Oil prices are flirting with US\$120 a barrel and the prices for products are even much higher," Birol told a press conference.

He declined to give a forecast for oil prices, but added: "I can tell you that the current price of oil is, for some countries, for example in Europe, maybe not so high and affordable. But in many parts of

the world, having almost US\$120 oil prices is having a major impact on trade deficits."

Birol also raised concern about winter demand for some fuels, especially diesel, which is used in parts of the West for heating.

"I am worried on top of that for refined products because we are entering ... winter season. Some parts of the world, where typically diesel demand goes high and several refineries are going through maintenance period."

Birol expects a "strong comeback" for the nuclear sector as a result of the current crisis.

The IEA's recent survey showed that 90 gigawatts of nuclear power plants are under construction and this is the highest in the last four decades, he added. – Reuters

AI wealth could reshape philanthropy

WASHINGTON: A wave of American wealth created by artificial intelligence companies could produce some of the largest charitable sums since the era of Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller, raising questions about where the money goes.

Anthropic, the maker of the Claude chatbot, has said it would commit 5 per cent of its shares to a new Anthropic Public Benefit Fund, a stake that could be worth around US\$100 billion if the company reaches the US\$2 trillion valuation investors are eyeing for a stock market debut expected as early as November.

Combined with pledges by its seven co-founders to give away 80 per cent of their equity and a programme matching employees' donations, Anthropic says roughly a fifth of its shares will be dedicated to public-benefit purposes.

"This might be one of the biggest stories in corporate philanthropy ever," said Michael Moody, a professor of philanthropic studies at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy.

The OpenAI Foundation, the nonprofit that controls ChatGPT maker OpenAI, holds a 26 per cent stake in the company that was valued at about US\$130 billion when it was restructured a year ago, more than the endowment of the Gates Foundation.

► Charities best placed to benefit are those that already have relationships with newly wealthy

Nan Ransohoff of payments firm Stripe has described the moment as a "third wave" of American philanthropy, after the industrial fortunes of the late 19th century and the internet billionaires of recent decades.

Carnegie argued in his 1889 essay *The Gospel of Wealth* that "the man who dies thus rich dies disgraced", and by his death had given away the bulk of his fortune, about US\$350 million.

Carnegie transferred what remained into a trust, which has continued to make grants for more than a century.

Rockefeller's money built universities and funded medical research and public health campaigns around the world.

Railroad magnate Cornelius Vanderbilt gave comparatively little, apart from the US\$1 million that founded the university bearing his name.

Anthropic is setting up its fund as a limited liability company that it wholly owns, rather than as a nonprofit foundation, which must pay out a minimum share of its assets each year and file public tax returns.

"The trade-off is that decision-making stays with the company and transparency is voluntary," said Sarah Wolfolds, who studies nonprofit organisations at Cornell University's SC Johnson College of Business.

Anthropic has said the fund's equity will not be used for lobbying or political giving and that it will report on its activities.

Many Anthropic founders and staff have close ties to effective altruism, a movement that favours causes such as AI safety and global health because of their measurable impact.

"Nonprofits tend to reorient their programmes toward where the money is," Wolfolds said, warning that other causes can become neglected.

Moody said the philanthropic world would be "looking closely at which causes they support", including whether research funding is limited to AI.

Laura McGarry, of fundraising consultancy Graham-Pelton, said the charities best placed to benefit are those that already have relationships with the newly wealthy.

"It's really about values alignment," she said, adding that charities that court the newly rich only after their big payday risk looking transactional.

Effective altruism has shaped some donors' giving but has not "dramatically upset the apple cart," she said.

Anthropic has said the fund could make payments directly to groups affected by AI's impact on jobs, without giving details.

Research on cash transfers is encouraging, Wolfolds said, but "the harder challenge may be identifying who has been affected by AI".

Such payments should complement, not replace, unemployment insurance and retraining programmes, she said.

Elon Musk, the world's richest person, whose SpaceX owns rival AI developer xAI, criticised Anthropic's approach.

"I recommend giving the shares directly to the public," he wrote on X.

As an alternative, Musk pledged one of his SpaceX shares to every American child next year, a gift worth about US\$10.5 billion.

US President Donald Trump praised the move as fitting the philosophy behind his "Trump Accounts", government-backed investment accounts for children born between 2025 and 2028. Billionaires Michael and Susan Dell have pledged billions to the programme. — AFP

Canada-EU summit seeks deepened alliance as US ties fray

MONTREAL: Canadian and European Union leaders meet in Montreal this week for a summit aimed at deepening their alliance as both sides navigate tumultuous relations with the United States.

Prime Minister Mark Carney said "Europe and Canada are stronger together," in an address to the EU Parliament last month, after EU chief Ursula von der Leyen suggested Canada could become the 27-nation bloc's first "associate member".

Leaders at the two-day Montreal meeting will try to hammer out specifics for closer ties in areas including defence, artificial intelligence and critical minerals.

Beyond specifics, the push for new levels of Canada-EU closeness has highlighted the shifting geopolitical realities triggered by US President Donald Trump.

Punished by US tariffs, Canada is seeking new economic opportunities overseas to reduce its dependence on the United States.

Carney says the EU is a logical partner, quipping that his country is "the most European of non-European countries".

For Timothy Snyder, the chair in modern European history at Toronto's Munk School of Global Affairs, Carney's outreach to Europe in response to US hostility is tactically sound.

"If you can be arbitrarily, at any moment, cut off from the American market, then it makes sense to have as much in your back pocket as you can," he told AFP.

"You look for something else, and that something else is Europe," Snyder said, adding that if the US trade war ultimately subsides, Canada will be in a stronger, more diversified position.

The EU, repeatedly ridiculed by Trump and his top domestic allies, is also looking for reliable partnerships in a world dominated by China and the United States.

The bloc has let Canada into its defence procurement alliance and invited Carney and Canadian officials to attend key EU meetings.

The goal must now be to "move from writing each other love letters to real commitments," said Tobias Cremer, a German member of the European Parliament who has backed deeper EU-Canada cooperation.

The contours of the "associate member" status are not fully clear. EU treaties do not outline such a possibility.



Road signs for the bridge to Canada, as Trump's motorcade travels to an entertainment complex in Port Huron, Michigan. — REUTERS/PIC

A draft joint declaration that could emerge from the summit, seen by AFP, indicates Canada could join the Erasmus student mobility programme, the Galileo satellite navigation programme or sit on a proposed European security council, a conceptual idea backed by the EU chief.

Trump threatened to cut off EU trade after the bloc proposed associate member status to Canada, calling the idea both "laughable" and "a hostile act".

And Trump is not the only one to view the notion with scorn.

Angeline Furet, a member of the European Parliament from France's far-right National Rally party, argued the current free trade with Canada is "ruining our agriculture sector".

The Canada-European Union Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, signed in 2016, eliminates import duties on 98 per cent of products but has not been fully implemented.

It is hugely unpopular among French livestock

farmers and has not been implemented by several members of the bloc, including France.

The idea of closer EU ties has also riled conservatives in Canada, stirring accusations that ordinary Canadians will become subject to onerous European bureaucracy.

"We will never be the 51st state of the US, but we will also never be the 28th state of the European Union," Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre said, connecting EU ties with Trump's annexation threats. — AFP

MARKET ROUND-UP: OCT 26

26-Oct-2026

Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million): Participation

Retail

+18.52

29.74%

Local Institution

-1.20

41.77%

Foreign Institution

-17.32

28.49%

QR Code to register for 1-to-1 Coaching

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research

Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to www.bursamalaysia.com.

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

Berjaya Securities

(formerly known as Inter-Pacific Securities Sdn Bhd)

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

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

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

DISCLAIMER: The data and reports are provided as a service to investors. Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

Bursa Indices		
INDEX	CHANGE	
FBMEMAS	11,977.00	-16.45
FBMKLCI	1,604.36	-7.20
CONSUMER PRODUCTS	441.41	+2.71
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS	175.41	+0.01
CONSTRUCTION	312.78	+0.59
FINANCIAL SERVICES	18,573.86	-80.46
ENERGY	848.73	+14.06
TELECOMMUNICATIONS	380.31	+5.09
HEALTH CARE	1,555.38	+13.74
TRANSPORTATION	1,025.17	+1.06
PROPERTY	979.52	-1.41
PLANTATION	8,623.97	-53.51
FBMSHA	11,974.79	+31.22
FBMACE	5,393.66	+47.52
TECHNOLOGY	74.52	+1.11
TURNOVER: 2.90 bil		VALUE: RM2.15 bil

Bursa ends lower on selling of utilities, banking stocks

BURSA Malaysia closed lower yesterday, weighed down by selling pressure in selected heavyweights, mainly utilities and banking stocks, alongside weaker performances across regional markets.

At 5pm, the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI dropped 7.20 points, or 0.45 per cent, to 1,604.36 from last Friday's close of 1,611.56.

The benchmark index opened 0.44 of a point firmer at 1,612.00, its highest level yesterday, before hitting its lowest level of 1,600.45 during the late afternoon session.

However, the broader market was slightly positive, with gainers edging losers 549 to 514, while 508 counters were unchanged, 1,330 untraded, and 59 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd vice-president of equity research Thong Pak Leng said selling pressure persisted in utility and banking heavyweights amid thin trading volume.

He noted that regional markets ended broadly lower, weighed down by weakness in technology stocks as investors questioned the sustainability of substantial spending on artificial intelligence infrastructure and the potential returns on such investments.

"Back home, buying interest shifted towards energy stocks, supported by persistently high crude oil prices. We believe bargain hunting will emerge given the recent weakness, particularly in stocks that have corrected sharply despite having sound fundamentals.

"Nevertheless, subdued liquidity, elevated oil prices and uncertainty ahead of the US Federal Reserve's policy decision this week could limit any rebound. We expect the FBM KLCI to trade within 1,590-1,620 for the week," he told Bernama.

Among the heavyweight stocks, Maybank fell eight sen to RM9.98, Public Bank and Tenaga Nasional each trimmed two sen to RM4.73 and RM13.28, respectively, CIMB lost five sen to RM7.10, and IHH Healthcare gave up six sen to RM7.84.

Top 20 Actives				
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
HSI-CWU4	0.085	-	-	1,610,204
ZETRIX	0.075	-	-	1,565,525
AXTERIA	0.195	+0.055	+39.29	842,182
HSI-CWWP	0.125	-	-	625,192
NIHSIN	0.475	-0.015	-3.06	560,427
NEXGRAM	0.060	+0.005	+9.09	550,275
HSI-PWXN	0.145	-	-	495,051
JAKS	0.150	-0.015	-9.09	471,452
YTLPOWR	4.960	-0.360	-6.77	432,195
HSI-CWWL	0.190	+0.010	+5.56	350,310
TOPGLOV	0.930	+0.010	+1.09	348,511
CYPARK-WA	0.160	-	-	342,505
MAG	0.155	-0.005	-3.13	295,271
REVENUE	0.085	-	-	292,312
VS	0.335	+0.005	+1.52	280,341
YTL	1.960	-0.110	-5.31	257,838
VINVEST	0.030	-	-	242,181
HSI-PWVO	0.260	-0.040	-13.33	234,239
SUPERMX	0.475	+0.020	+4.40	229,218
DATAPRP	0.045	-0.010	-18.18	215,962



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
NESTLE	90.260	+0.720	202
MPI	40.580	+0.580	312
CARLSBG	12.980	+0.340	5,619
STRATUS	2.600	+0.260	83,150
VITROX	10.720	+0.260	21,462
PPB	9.020	+0.240	3,805
SLVEST	4.230	+0.230	95,963
ALLIANZ	19.280	+0.220	1,386
HLIND	16.500	+0.200	563
MNHLDG-WA	3.700	+0.200	556
SAMAIDEN	3.000	+0.180	25,830
MNHLDG	3.880	+0.150	39,390
SCGBHD-WA	2.650	+0.150	841
BAT	4.310	+0.140	1,331
MI	6.650	+0.140	22,559
MULPHA	2.700	+0.140	17
GESHEN	1.370	+0.120	9,510
PENTA	5.620	+0.120	24,771
SCGBHD	2.900	+0.120	46,756
APOLLO	5.840	+0.110	1

Top 20 Gainers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
DIALOG-C2X	0.030	+200.00	7,436
ZETRIX-CDE	0.015	+200.00	5
DIALOG-C2W	0.040	+166.67	1,100
CTOS-C41	0.010	+100.00	40,250
DRBHCOMC4H	0.010	+100.00	200
FFB-C48	0.010	+100.00	500
GENTINGC4P	0.010	+100.00	5,000
HARTA-C3N	0.010	+100.00	3,066
HUAHONG-C2	0.030	+100.00	1,502
SCBUILD	0.010	+100.00	20,463
VITROX-C23	0.250	+61.29	8,936
CMSB-C86	0.015	+50.00	36,094
D&O-C30	0.015	+50.00	1,000
HUAHONG-C1	0.060	+50.00	802
STRATUS-CA	0.060	+50.00	5,410
ZETRIX-CDK	0.015	+50.00	120
STRATUS-CD	0.065	+44.44	1,798
DAYANG-C70	0.050	+42.86	12,484
CMSB-C89	0.035	+40.00	9,986
STRATUS-CC	0.140	+40.00	840

World Stocks/Commodities			
INDEX	CLOSING	DAILY CHANGE	DAILY CHANGE (%)
DJIA (US)	52,215.16	-652.82	-1.23
S&P 500 (US)	7,623.68	-39.75	-0.52
NASDAQ (US)	25,955.34	-53.52	-0.21
NYSE (US)	24,117.27	-158.26	-0.65
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	6,068.22	-18.79	-0.31
FTSE 100 (UK)	10,690.36	-34.67	-0.32
DAX (GER)	25,181.65	-190.10	-0.75
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	62,189.65	-503.51	-0.80
TOPIX (JPN)	3,972.98	+7.17	+0.18
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	23,211.81	+118.44	+0.51
CSI 300 (CHN)	4,103.54	-1.79	-0.04
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	258.82	+0.13	+0.05
SH SE COM (CHN)	3,697.52	+7.05	+0.19
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	5,469.47	-80.83	-1.46
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	73,123.83	-125.56	-0.17
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,795.23	+1.98	+0.02
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	8,905.79	-11.29	-0.13
FBM KLCI	1,604.36	-7.20	-0.45
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	5,415.91	-6.25	-0.12
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	101.34	-1.93	-1.87
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	115.08	-1.64	-1.41
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	4,029.50	+21.60	+0.54
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	54.08	+0.13	+0.23
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	1,553.31	-15.23	-0.97
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	650.75	+10.95	+1.71
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	14,322.50	+244.50	+1.74
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	456.00	-4.50	-0.98
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	625.00	+0.25	+0.04
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	66.83	+0.09	+0.13
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	5,592.00	+10.00	+0.18
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	250.50	-0.80	-0.32

As at 6pm, Oct 26.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
UTDPLT	29.900	-0.500	1,569
YTLPOWR	4.960	-0.360	432,195
CVIEW	2.660	-0.200	147
EG-CO	0.290	-0.185	266
FAREAST	3.950	-0.140	62
SWKPLNT	4.150	-0.140	3,862
KGB	8.400	-0.130	17,690
YTLPOWR-C1R	0.445	-0.130	97,919
KLK	20.400	-0.120	17,761
YTL	1.960	-0.110	257,838
APM	2.420	-0.100	80
BKAWAN	19.180	-0.100	162
BNASTRA	2.650	-0.100	5,018
UMSINT	7.200	-0.100	10
YTLPOWR-C2C	0.325	-0.100	141,419
DUFU-C16	0.340	-0.085	900
GOHUB	1.010	-0.080	1,882
MAYBANK	9.980	-0.080	34,623
PCHEM	4.570	-0.080	23,707
HSI-PWVX	0.455	-0.075	15,000

Top 20 Losers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
YTL-C2T	0.025	-68.75	11,200
IJM-C2E	0.040	-65.22	5,814
HSI-CWSP	0.020	-63.64	751
YTLPOWR-C2J	0.020	-60.00	2,300
KPJ-C41	0.005	-50.00	3,700
SINARAN-WB	0.005	-50.00	1,669
TAWIN	0.005	-50.00	2,000
YTL-C2S	0.010	-50.00	31,604
HSI-PWVJ	0.080	-44.83	89,300
EG-CO	0.290	-38.95	266
MNRB-CR	0.040	-38.46	3,100
99SMART-C41	0.010	-33.33	774
AEON-C54	0.010	-33.33	2,675
FBMKLCI-CRV	0.010	-33.33	1,000
HIBISCS-C96	0.020	-33.33	20
JPG-CU	0.010	-33.33	1,000
MNRB-CU	0.020	-33.33	9,000
MRDIY-C67	0.010	-33.33	200
PBBANK-C2K	0.020	-33.33	10,000
PCHEM-C2L	0.010	-33.33	2,501

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**

Chan: Crop insurance scheme expansion needs further study

KUALA LUMPUR: The government will undertake a comprehensive study before expanding the crop insurance scheme to other agricultural sectors affected by natural disasters and extreme weather, said Deputy Agriculture and Food Security Minister Datuk Chan Foong Hin.

He said several constraints required careful consideration, including how insurance premiums would be paid and how losses would be assessed.

"There are several challenges in extending the programme. The first is that *padi* farmers or other farmers would normally be expected to pay the insurance premiums. However, when the programme was introduced, the government also covered the premiums.

"If the insurance scheme is to be expanded to other agricultural sectors, we need to consider several important factors, including extreme weather events and the estimated losses that can be covered," he said during a question-and-answer session in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was responding to a supplementary question from Syed Saddiq Syed Abdul Rahman (Muda-Muar), who asked whether the government planned to extend the crop insurance scheme to vegetable and fruit farmers, in addition to rice farmers.

The Paddy Crop Takaful Scheme, introduced by the government in 2024, has paid out RM24.6 million in compensation to 10,726 paddy farmers nationwide.

The scheme provides coverage of up to RM3,000 per hectare for losses caused by natural disasters.

Chan said the ministry, through Mardi, was also stepping up research-based climate change adaptation programmes and promoting the use of appropriate agricultural technologies.

Malaysia Strategy Possible benefit by flows



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

MSCI'S proposal to reclassify Indonesia from Emerging Market (EM) to Standalone status, with a final decision expected by June 2027, could have implications extending beyond Indonesia's borders. The implications, while sparking a sell-down in Indonesia-listed stocks, were also quite pronounced for some of the Malaysian-listed companies holding stakes in Indonesian-listed companies. As we understand, Indonesian operations are not affected, though there are emerging policy risks eg Agrarian Law for the plantation companies.

We believe Malaysia could be a potential beneficiary, given its existing MSCI representation, established institutional market and comparable sector exposure, particularly in banking. However, Indonesia's relatively small weight in MSCI Asia ex-Japan suggests that any direct passive inflows into Malaysia could be modest. A possible reallocation of Indonesia equity exposure could present an opportunity for Malaysia, in our view.

We tracked the top 10 stocks for both the MSCI Malaysia (21 companies in total) and MSCI Indonesia (9 companies) indices. Banking is a common sector across the constituents, making it a natural starting point for investors seeking comparable exposure. These include liquid Malaysian large caps, particularly domestic-centric banks such as Public Bank, and AMMB Holdings. Other large-cap laggards, Tenaga Nasional and IHH Healthcare, could also attract interest, in our view. In plantations, SD Guthrie offers a sizeable listed proxy. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 26**

Ringgit ends lower vs greenback, higher against most major currencies

THE ringgit closed lower against the American dollar but strengthened against most major and Asean currencies yesterday as investors remained cautious ahead of the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) policy meeting, an analyst said.

At 6pm, the ringgit eased to 4.0855/0895 against the greenback from Friday's close of 4.0835/0875.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said US President Donald Trump's hawkish stance towards Iran also pointed to upside risks to crude oil prices.

"This is a critical backdrop for the US Federal Open Market Committee members as they deliberate their decision on Oct 28, especially their views on the risk of higher inflation going forward," he told Bernama.

Against major currencies, the ringgit strengthened against the British pound to 5.4517/4570 from 5.4633/4687 at Friday's close and the Japanese yen to 2.5961/5988 from 2.6076/6103.

However, it weakened against the euro to 4.5774/5819 from 4.5735/5780 previously.

The ringgit also gained against its Asean peers, strengthening against the Singapore dollar to 3.1920/1954 from 3.1952/1986 at Friday's close, and the Indonesian rupiah to 225.3/225.5 from 225.8/226.1.

It also advanced against the Thai baht to 12.0766/0930 from 12.0985/1154 and the Philippine peso to 6.39/6.40 from 6.42/6.43 previously.

Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd Buy. Target price: RM24.90



Source: FactSet, Maybank Investment Bank

WE visited Coalfields Retail Park (CRP) recently and it beat our expectations considering this is KLK's first ever retail development. To us, CRP is the missing puzzle that complements KLK's integrated township - Bandar Seri Coalfields (BSC). We believe CRP will help boost future property sales at BSC although CRP's earnings contribution itself is likely to be marginal to KLK in the immediate term.

Spanning 21 acres with approx. 360,000 sq ft of NLA (on gross built-up area of approx. 1m sq ft) and 135 retail lots, this 2½-storey hybrid indoor and outdoor concept mall opened on 10 Sep 2026 with near 85% occupancy rate. More shops/ tenants are expected to open for business in the coming months as 95% of its space has been committed. CRP is accessible via Jalan Kuala Selangor, Guthrie Corridor Expressway (GCE) and the Kuala LumpurKuala Selangor Expressway (LATAR). The mall is anchored by an existing residential catchment of >10,000 residents within BSC, and a wider catchment of over 1m population within a 20-minute drive.

CRP is located within BSC, and complements KLK Land's broader portfolio across residential, industrial and commercial developments. BSC is a 1,001-acre freehold master-planned township in Sungai Buloh, Selangor, developed by KLK with an estimated remaining GDV of >MYR3b in the coming years.

While it is unclear what is the average rental psf CRP is deriving now, we believe it is unlikely to be high (likely averaging ~RM5-7psf per month) as (1) the initial years are typically honeymoon period (ie. stabilisation stage), and (2) there are a few anchor tenants which typically pay low rentals to help draw the crowds.

Maintain BUY with TP of RM24.90. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 26**



BLISSFUL ESCAPE
AMIDST NATURE
berjahotel.com/langkawi

BERJAYA
LANGKAWI RESORT
MALAYSIA

DISCLAIMER: The information is extracted from stockbrokers' commentaries and research reports and do not represent the views or opinions of Sun Media Corporation Sdn Bhd. It is not a solicitation, recommendation or an offer to buy or sell the equities featured. Sun Media Corporation shall not be liable or responsible for any consequences resulting from usage of the information.

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.1560	4.0080	3.9980
1 Australian Dollar	2.9310	2.8120	2.7960
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2440	3.1420	3.1340
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9580	2.8740	2.8620
1 Euro	4.6560	4.5030	4.4830
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.3720	2.2830	2.2670
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2440	3.1420	3.1340
1 Sterling Pound	5.5530	5.3740	5.3540
1 Swiss Franc	5.0620	4.8440	4.8290
100 UAE Dirham	114.1800	108.2000	108.0000
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4390	3.1830	2.9830
100 Chinese Renminbi	62.5600	59.8800	N/A
100 Danish Krone	63.8500	58.7100	58.5100
100 Hongkong Dollar	53.4200	50.7200	50.5200
100 Indian Rupee	4.4600	4.1400	3.9400
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0240	0.0212	0.0162
100 Japanese Yen	2.6610	2.5370	2.5270
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	45.6500	41.9700	41.7700
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5600	1.3900	1.1900
100 Philippine Peso	6.6200	6.2200	6.0200
100 Qatar Riyal	114.9400	109.1200	108.9200
100 Saudi Riyal	111.6200	105.9700	105.7700
100 South Africa Rand	25.8500	23.3400	23.1400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.3100	1.1500	0.9500
100 Swedish Krona	43.0700	39.2000	39.0000
100 Thai Baht	12.8200	11.3600	10.9600

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

Binastra Corporation Bhd Buy. Target price: RM3.40



Source: FactSet, Maybank Investment Bank

BNASTRA (previously Comintel Corporation) has a relatively short trading history as a pure play construction group listed on Bursa Malaysia Exchange after Managing Director, Jackson Tan emerged as a major shareholder in Dec 2022. But make no mistake, the Binastra operating franchise itself has >40 years of construction experience and has completed 189 projects with cumulative revenue of >MYR12.0b. Current outstanding orderbook stands at RM6.7b over 30 ongoing projects throughout Malaysia.

BNASTRA evolved from a predominantly Klang Valley high-rise residential property contractor into a multi-segment construction group. Its current portfolio includes data centres, renewable energy infrastructure, sewage treatment plants, and specialised engineering. The latter segments account for c.30% of its outstanding orderbook but BNASTRA aims to raise this percentage to 40-50%. Although these segments yield lower margins, we view them favourably as they are turned around quicker than high-rise residential property and will contribute to group net profit faster.

Assuming RM2.5b annual job wins, we forecast 3-year forward earnings CAGR of 21%. In our view, BNASTRA's net cash balance sheet position also gives it the valuable option to raise its DPR from >50% currently. As the executive directors do not receive salaries but are incentivised by dividends as reward, we believe high DPRs are sustainable, which would also benefit minority shareholders.

Key risks are lower-than-expected job wins, higher building material costs, execution risk and high client concentration.

Initiate coverage with BUY call and RM3.40 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Oct 26**



Blooming motherhood

In theSun's exclusive, Shila Amzah talks about how being happy makes her better mum - P22

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



Happy mum, happy family

► Shila Amzah shares her journey through motherhood

BY **ASHIQIN AHMAD**
lifestyle@thesundaily.com

BEFORE becoming a mother, 36-year-old pop singer Shila Amzah viewed health largely through the lens of appearance. Looking good on television, maintaining a certain figure and fitting into the beauty standards of the time were all part of what she considered being healthy.

"Before motherhood, health meant looking good on TV and maintaining a certain figure because you are constantly in the public eye. I think a lot of millennials also grew up seeing health in a very aesthetic way. We had the low-rise jeans, skinny jeans and tight tops, and you felt like you needed a certain body to wear those things," Shila told *theSun*.

Motherhood changed that perspective completely, and now, as an ambassador for With Ova, Shila sees health less as a way to maintain her appearance and more as a means of staying strong.

"After having children, I realised health is really about being physically and mentally strong for my family. That was a big change for me and

something I had to learn to adapt to. Before, I was mostly thinking about myself. Now, I think about my family," she said.

For Shila, being strong is no longer about chasing a particular body shape. Instead, it is about having the physical ability to keep up with her children and the mental resilience to manage the demands of raising a family while maintaining a career.

The shift reflects a broader change in how she sees herself. Before motherhood, her body was closely tied to her work as a performer and the expectations that came with being in the public eye. Now, it is also the body that carries her through the everyday responsibilities of being a mother.

Strong enough for motherhood

The physical demands of motherhood are often underestimated, Shila said, because being a mother requires much more than simply looking or feeling fit.

"People underestimate how physically demanding being a mother can be. You need strength for everyday things, even something as simple as lifting your children. That is why I focus more on building my muscles, especially my core, because I want to be strong enough to be there for my kids," she said.

That focus became even more important after two emergency Caesarean sections, which left Shila with scars that serve as a physical reminder of what her body went through to bring her children into the world.

Her first C-section also came with complications that affected an unexpected but important part of her life: her voice.

As a singer, her body is not simply something she lives in. It is also her instrument. When the complications affected her core strength and in turn, her ability to sing as she once did, Shila had to relearn how to use her voice.

"I had to relearn how to sing after my first C-section because my core was weaker than it had been before pregnancy. There were complications that affected my singing and that was difficult for me because I did not want to lose such a big part of who

I am," she said. The experience forced her to approach recovery differently. Rather than simply trying to return to her pre-pregnancy body, she had to rebuild her strength in a way that supported her health and career. That recovery is still ongoing after her second C-section but Shila now sees the process less as returning to who she was and more as building a body that can support the life she has now. "I am still recovering after my second C-section, so being able to still be here, work and continue building my career is a huge privilege in itself. The training I have done has benefited me as an artiste but it has also helped me as a mother, so it feels like a win-win for everyone," she said.

For Shila, that connection between her career and motherhood has become increasingly important. Staying physically strong allows her to perform but it also gives her the energy to be present for her children.

In that sense, looking after her health is no longer something she does simply for herself or for the demands of the entertainment industry. It has become part of how she looks after her family.



For Shila, some of life's most meaningful moments happen away from the stage with her family. – **PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @SHAHILAAAMZAH**

I am," she said.

The experience forced her to approach recovery differently. Rather than simply trying to return to her pre-pregnancy body, she had to rebuild her strength in a way that supported her health and career.

That recovery is still ongoing after her second C-section but Shila now sees the process less as returning to who she was and more as building a body that can support the life she has now.

"I am still recovering after my second C-section, so being able to still be here, work and continue building my career is a huge privilege in itself. The training I have done has benefited me as an artiste but it has also helped me as a mother, so it feels like a win-win for everyone," she said.

For Shila, that connection between her career and motherhood has become increasingly important. Staying physically strong allows her to perform but it also gives her the energy to be present for her children.

In that sense, looking after her health is no longer something she does simply for herself or for the demands of the entertainment industry. It has become part of how she looks after her family.

Learning to put herself first

Physical recovery is only one part of motherhood. Balancing her responsibilities as a parent with the

demands of a career has also meant confronting the emotional side of parenting, particularly mum guilt.

Shila admitted the guilt is very real, especially when her work requires her to travel and spend time away from her children.

"It is very real and it is something I am still working on. Because I travel quite a lot, I try to really cherish the time I have with my children whenever I am with them, whether that is cuddling indoors or going out for fun activities," she said.

Rather than allowing guilt to define how she sees herself as a mother, Shila is learning to focus on the quality of the time she has with her children.

For her, that can mean something as simple as spending time together at home or making an effort to enjoy activities as a family when her schedule allows.

It is a reminder parenting does not always have to be measured by how much time a mother spends with her children but also by how present she is during the moments they share.

That has also meant accepting that looking after herself is not selfish. In fact, Shila believes it can ultimately make her a better mother.

"One thing I would share with other mothers is that it is okay to make yourself happy first before giving everything to everyone else. Your children deserve a happy mum

too," she said.

It is a significant shift from the woman who once measured health by how she looked in front of a camera. Today, Shila's priorities are less about fitting into a certain silhouette and more about having the strength, energy and emotional capacity to show up for the people who depend on her.

That does not mean she has stopped caring about her appearance or career. Instead, motherhood has given both a different context. Her body is still part of her identity as a performer but it is also something she needs to care for so she can continue being present for her family.

For a mother who has had to recover from two emergency C-sections while finding her way back to the stage, strength has taken on a much more personal meaning.

It is no longer about being thin enough for the camera or fitting into the clothes she once thought she needed to wear. It is about being able to lift her children, get through demanding days, return to the stage and still have something left for the people waiting for her at home.

Her body may carry the scars of motherhood but to Shila, they are also reminders of what it has allowed her to become a mother, a singer and a woman still learning that caring for herself is part of caring for her family.

Outliving World War II, Albanian dictatorship

► At 117, oldest woman spills secret to long, fulfilling life

AT 117, Qamile Marra is not particularly concerned with proving she may be the world's oldest woman – or even persuading Albanian pension officials that she is not dead. For a woman born under the Ottoman rule, who turned 36 a fortnight before the end of World War II and outlived Albania's communist dictatorship, her focus remains firmly on enjoying life.

"Life is beautiful, like Mount Tomorr in bloom," she told AFP with



The 117-year-old Qamile speaks with her son Hysen, 80, in the garden of her home. – **PICS FROM AFP**

a smile, referring to one of Albania's loftiest peaks as she sat outside her home in Ferras, about 100km south of the capital.

Surrounded by fruit trees, Qamile has spent almost her entire life in the village, growing her own food and tending livestock.

"You live as long as God has decreed," she said, her deeply wrinkled face framed by a traditional white headscarf.

According to her birthdate as listed on several official documents – Aug 19, 1909 – Qamile would be two days older than Britain's Ethel Caterham, recognised by Guinness World Records as the world's oldest living woman.

Definitively proving the age of "supercentenarians" can be difficult. Many of the people famous for living the longest are from places where shoddy recordkeeping and suspected pension fraud are rampant, according to a study that won the 2024 Ig Nobel prize, which awards offbeat scientific research.

But Qamile has extensive records that appear to confirm her age. Her relatives have contacted Guinness and hold a birth certificate issued in 1945, a passport issued in 1978 and a recent identity card, all showing the same date of birth.

Her age even surprised local authorities, who stopped her pension when she turned 100, according to her 80-year-old son Hysen.

"They didn't believe my mother was still alive," he said, recalling how he had to show proof, including witness statements, to resume the



Qamile shows an identity document from Albania's communist era during an interview with AFP.

meagre payments.

Earlier this month, the government issued her a special state pension to mark her age.

What is the secret?

Perhaps the answer lies in Qamile's habits and lifestyle. She rises early to sweep the yard, water her flowers and feed the chickens before settling down with her favourite coffee.

She still enjoys regular walks through her carefully tended orchard with her son, who lives with her, stopping to pick ripe pomegranates along the way. She also slips basil leaves in her pockets to "enjoy the aroma".



Despite losing some relatives over the years, Qamile remains happy to have seen her loved ones live full lives.



Qamile holds up a photograph of her taken during her youth.

Whatever the secret, her son says she has never even visited a doctor. "She is in good health and has never taken any medication."

Five generations

Qamile's husband died 36 years ago, but she still smiles when talking about their decades together – an arranged marriage, but a loving one.

"Otherwise, how could I have had seven children with him?" she said.

She has now seen five generations of her family grow up around her. Tears welled up as she

remembered the family and friends she had lost. But her face brightened when a niece called to chat.

"I've watched them get engaged, marry, and build their own homes and lives.

"When I see people coming and going in the house, I am so happy," she said.

From her own youth, she has kept a single photograph: A near-century-old picture of a young woman wearing a white scarf just like the one she had on.

"I was 18!" she said.

Prince Harry says he wants to reconcile with family after stepping back

PRINCE Harry has said he hoped to reconcile with King Charles and the rest of his family with whom he fell out when he moved to the US six years ago.

Harry, 42, the king's younger son, caused a huge rupture in the British royal family when he and his wife Meghan quit royal duties and moved to California in 2020 from where they were highly critical of the institution.

He has barely spoken to his older brother, heir Prince William, for years, and his family has only recently met up again with his father. In an interview with *GQ* magazine, Harry, who recently relocated back to Britain with Meghan and their two children, said he wanted to patch things up.

'Most important thing is to reconcile'

"With everything else that's going on in the world, the most important thing is to reconcile," he told *GQ*.

He said he could understand the fascination with his family's situation as people could relate to it.

"There's sibling disagreements, there's broken relationships between kids and their parents, kids and one



Harry (centre left) and Meghan (centre right), the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, greet well wishers as they arrive for a visit to Nottingham. – **REUTERSPIC**

parent," he said.

Some people might be inspired by efforts to reconcile and this could help their own relationships.

"And some people don't want it to work out. I want it to work out," he added.

Harry's spokesperson said those latter comments were not meant as a

swipe at William or any other family members.

Harry, the Duke of Sussex, went on to tell *GQ* that while "scars stick around forever", he wanted to encourage everybody to let go of the past.

"For me, there's enough drama in the world and enough drama in

people's lives than to continue with issues with family.

"It's not worth it," he said.

Harry says children 'loving' UK school

In the lengthy interview, Harry also discussed themes he has previously talked about, such as the impact of

losing his mother Princess Diana when he was 12 and his mental health struggles.

But he also talked about why he had returned to Britain, saying that being able to put his children in a British school "has meant a lot to me".

"I didn't know how important it was to me. I always thought it was going to be something that we would try and do but now they've been in school for two weeks. They're loving it and it's just giving them a whole different experience."

He also said he hoped his fraught relationship with the British press, which partly led to him leaving in the first place and has led to a number of lawsuits against newspaper groups, would now be better.

"My hope is that it will change. There have been some battles that have been fought, necessarily so. But hopefully we can all draw a line under that."

"As with everything else that's going on in the world, there's aspects of the past that I'm sure all of us, me, my family, some of the British press, that we'd all like to leave behind us and work for the greater good," he said. – Reuters



Ortega plays an Artificial Friend, programmed to combat loneliness.
- REUTERS/PIC

Reel vs real: Jenna Ortega plays android friend in new movie

» Dystopian drama based on Nobel-prize winning author

IN Taika Waititi's *Klara and the Sun*, which stars Jenna Ortega and Amy Adams, a robot delivers lessons on humanity.

The dystopian drama is based on Nobel Prize-winning author Kazuo Ishiguro's 2021 bestseller of the same name and set in a technologically advanced future, following what one character describes as a third world war triggered by the abuse of the internet.

Ortega plays Klara, an outdated model of an Artificial Friend, an android companion whose sell-by date is fast approaching when, to her relief, teenager Josie (Mia Tharia) and her mother (Adams) buy her.

Programmed to prevent loneliness, Klara is full of quirks and hopes and believes in the healing power of the sun. Her traits come in handy in a household marked by grief and mystery.

"It felt like a very timely story. To see it put in a futuristic world and see that we still struggle with the same things, and the answer's kind of always in one another and listening to one another, I thought it was a really nuanced, thoughtful way of putting it," said Ortega at the movie's recent world premiere at the London Film Festival.

Waititi, who directed, co-wrote and produced the movie, was struck by Ishiguro's allegorical interplay between humans, artificial intelligence and nature.

"She's a machine who comes into the world of a broken family and somehow teaches them the importance of being human.

"It's vital right now because we're now in a moment where we're maybe on the cusp of losing control of our relationship with technology,"



Waititi says he was struck by Ishiguro's allegorical interplay between humans, artificial intelligence and nature. - IMDB/PIC

said Waititi, adding that he also wanted the film to "remind people to put the devices down, not because there's a threat or anything but just put the thing down because it's a distraction and just be with the people you're with."

While Waititi injected some of his signature humour into the movie, he said he wanted to "keep the

profound feeling and the drama from the book."

"There's some funny bits there, but it's probably my most dramatic film," Waititi said.

Klara and the Sun, which also stars Natasha Lyonne, Steve Buscemi, Aran Murphy and Rachel House, released globally from Oct 21. - Reuters

Lena Dunham's hit TV show *Girls* to return for limited run

LENA Dunham's award-winning television show *Girls* will return to screens for a limited run, HBO said recently.

The five-episode run is set to begin production next year, a decade after the finale of the original series aired.

Dunham, who created, wrote and starred in the show, will return as Hannah, along with Allison Williams (Marnie), Jemima Kirke (Jessa), Zosia Mamet (Shoshanna) and Andrew Rannells (Elijah).

She said in a statement: "I've missed these characters, but for a long time I couldn't quite picture them in the present day.

"Then, right around my fortieth birthday, they started talking to me in the shower.

"And, as you may remember, once this fivesome starts talking, it's pretty hard to get them to stop."

HBO announced the show's return in a social



Girls followed the lives of young women living in New York. - PICS FROM IMDB

media post showing Dunham on a mock video call with members of the original cast.

In the video, she asks the cast if they are in, before raising the question: "Can we still call it *Girls*?"

American actor Adam Driver, who played Dunham's on-off love interest, was not mentioned in the announcement.

In her memoir *Fancesick*, Dunham accused Driver of aggressive behavior on the set of *Girls*. Driver has not commented publicly on the allegations.

Girls followed the lives of 20-something women in New York and critics say it defined the social mores of that generation.

The show received 19 Emmy nominations and two wins during its six seasons. - AFP



Driver has been accused of misbehaviour on the set of *Girls*.

A *Long Winter* actor Martin Freeman recalls 'freezing' Canadian shoot

BRITISH actor Martin Freeman (pic) said filming Andrew Haigh's new movie *A Long Winter* on a snow-covered Canadian mountain meant he spent a lot of time "concentrating on not dying".

"(It was) breathtakingly beautiful and breathtakingly freezing," the star of *The Hobbit* told AFP on the red carpet at the London Film Festival.

"It was really, really cold," he recalled of the Alberta landscape, where the sensitive drama exploring grief and longing was shot.

"So, you're sort of half concentrating on doing the scene with lovely Fred (Hechinger) and half concentrating on not dying."

"Both those things are quite a good impetus... They focus the mind," he said before the movie's recent screening.

A Long Winter is an adaptation of a 2006 short story of the same name by Irish novelist Colm Toibin.



Set in the 1950s, Hechinger - who starred in the first season of *The White Lotus* - plays Mike, who returns to his childhood home in the Rocky Mountains in Colorado.

His life is turned upside down when his mother (Caitriona Balfe) suddenly disappears during a snowstorm and Mike must navigate the fallout with his father, played by Ebon Che Moss-Bachrach.

"We shot on location. We built a real house, the snow is real, the wind is real, we shot on film.

"So, everything for me was about having a haptic, you know, tactile quality to what we were

making," said the director of 2023 romantic drama *All of Us Strangers* Haigh.

Hechinger said it was the "most technically challenging" role he had ever performed, recalling that one day the wind blew off the roof of the house.

"You sensed how fragile this whole thing was. You need a level of resilience. And so, it was interesting," he said. - AFP



A Long Winter takes place in the snowy mountains of the Rockies. - PICS FROM IMDB

Young voices cut through noise

► Five bands, plenty of covers, multiple facets of local artistes

BY AMEEN HAZIZI
lifestyle@thesundaily.com

THERE is something satisfying about a gig that knows when to move on. Five bands, little downtime and a crowd eager for live music made *Bunyi Apa Tu!* a quick, entertaining showcase of Malaysia's young independent scene.

Held on Oct 17 at Live Fact, the event featured Pokok, Om!ssion, Spinning Rackets, For Your Safety and Panic Youth.

Organiser and Pokok frontman Rahmat Al-Aziz wanted to bring different sounds together.

"I love all kinds of music so I thought why not make a gig with different genres mixed together," he told *theSun*.

An unusual opening

Pokok opened with a spirited cover of Kanye West's *Runaway*, an unlikely choice that immediately caught attention.

Rahmat, drummer Aaran Noah, guitarist Akeel Johari and bassist Amirmarzery followed it with their recently released single *Mummy* and a rousing rendition of Lustra's *Scotty Doesn't Know*.

The quartet practically rocked the roof off Live Fact, with a set that valued fun over predictability.

Rahmat said the name Pokok was catchy and easy to remember, although the artistic explanation was that different genres formed the band's roots.

He also encouraged his bandmates to defy expectations, noting that he had not seen other bands cover Kanye West.

No slowing down

Om!ssion followed despite a lineup change and several members feeling unwell.

Bassist Cate Yoen was omitted from the show due to influenza, prompting Ilhan Gomez of Sepak Takraw Shoes to step in alongside Kii Leong on vocals and guitar, Nick Tang on guitar and Ariff Zareen on drums.

The remaining members were

also affected by the haze but showed little sign of holding back. There was barely time for the crowd to reset between successive performances.

Their originals included *Call Me If*, *Drumasia Regulations*, *Prolly of Age* and the amusingly long *Semenyih Ain't Big Enough for the Both of Us So I'm Moving to TTDI With All My Friends*.

They also played *Indo Mee Tanpa U, K?*. An Oasis cover, *Married with Children*, and a surprise performance of Milo Christ's *Jetski Song* rounded out a lively set.

Dressed for the occasion

Spinning Rackets arrived wearing Fred Perry polo shirts, sponsored ahead of its Oct 25 appearance at a Fred Perry DNA event in Ipoh.

Vocalist-guitarist Ryan Danial Kessler, guitarist Adam Aqil, drummer Amill Rykal and bassist-vocalist Allif Muqkris, known as Haru, delivered a stylish performance despite technical problems.

The set paired originals including *I Get It*, *Passing Spark* and *Second Chances* with The Libertines' *Time for Heroes*.

A particularly neat transition took the introduction of Fictions' *The Sun in Your Mouth* into *Second Chances*. They returned for an encore of Title Fight's *Head in the Ceiling Fan*.

Kessler considered it one of its best shows, despite the absence of third guitarist Ikhran, who was preparing for his secondary school examinations.

Kessler and Rykal also had particularly busy nights. Ryan played additional guitar for Pokok, while Rykal doubled as Panic Youth's bassist.

Heavy sounds

For Your Safety stood out with unique vocals, heavy drums and prominent basslines.

Frontman and rhythm guitarist Ariz Alirahman was joined by lead guitarist Johan Arief, bassist Leo-Wei Greiner and drummer Johanna Lok. Adrian Yeap handles the band's management and design.

Their six-song set comprised *Three Faces*, *Summer*, *Fall Sem*, *Never Remember*, *October's Night* and *Colours I Saved From You*.

Johan called it one of his favourite For Your Safety sets and welcomed the chance to play guitar again. Ariz was equally pleased with the genre-spanning lineup.



Pokok's name reflects the band's diverse musical influences, with different genres forming the roots of its sound. — ALL PICS BY AMEEN HAZIZI/THE SUN

"From what I saw, I say it is a lot more diverse and vibrant. So many different characters and music at Live Fact. There was punk, alt-rock, post-hardcore and emo, you name it! If these kinds of bands keep popping up in the local music scene, I think we have a bright future ahead of us," said Ariz.

One last explosion

Panic Youth finished the night with the loudest personalities of the lineup.

Frontman Idzman, joined by guitarist Aqil, bassist Rykal and drummer Jepp, carried himself with the flamboyance of a seasoned punk rocker.

Their punchy originals recalled Green Day in its heyday, particularly during *Until I Die*, *Borderline*, *Wish It Was Ez* and *Bulan Aku Dunia Ku*.

The band also covered Title Fight's *Symmetry* and *You Can't Say Kingston*, ending with Origami Angel's *Title Track*.

"It was awesome! We always have good time playing at Live Fact. Good to see some familiar faces and some new ones too!" said Idzman.

Pokok's Rahmat said the new collective had recovered its initial



Om!ssion's willingness to experiment with different sounds reflects the creative freedom enjoyed by Malaysia's emerging indie bands.

investment and hoped to improve future editions.

"More variety, possibly theatre elements incorporated as well," he said.

Pokok also plans an album. When asked about AI-generated music,

Rahmat was dismissive.

"People who make AI music are bums. Also, you could never enjoy AI music in a live setting."

Bunyi Apa Tu! made a convincing case for the appeal of seeing young bands share a stage, mistakes and all.



Spinning Rackets draws inspiration from various corners of alternative rock.



For Your Safety combines forceful basslines, intricate guitar work and energetic percussion during its live performances.



With theatrical showmanship and plenty of attitude, Panic Youth knows how to command attention.

PENG Dandan still remembers a small badge she bought on her first day at Management and Science University (MSU).

Designed by local students, the badge was part of an environmental protection activity she joined after arriving in Malaysia. At the time, it was simply something to take home. Today, it reminds her of the four years she spent studying and living in a different country.

Peng joined MSU in 2022 to pursue a doctorate in Management and Business, focusing on Music Management. The research explored how her parents in Henan province, China, make decisions about their children's music education. Completing her doctoral studies required years of research, guidance from her supervisors and the determination to keep going when the work became challenging.

Before coming to Malaysia, Peng worked as a teacher in China for more than a decade. Returning to university gave her the opportunity to experience education from a student's perspective. She chose MSU because of its academic reputation, international learning environment and doctoral training system, which suited her research interests.

Her experience also introduced her to people from different cultural backgrounds. Through friendships with international students, she gained new perspectives and learned to appreciate experiences beyond her own.

"Returning to campus as a student again has reignited my passion and enthusiasm for academic pursuits," she shared.

Throughout her studies, Peng

Peng Dandan: Four years, one degree and a **memory to keep**

received support from lecturers and supervisors who helped her navigate the demands of doctoral research. She expressed her gratitude to Prof Dr Ooi Boon Keat, Prof Dr Jacqueline Vanessa Tham, Prof Dr Ali Khatibi, Prof Dr Indang Ariati Ariffin and MSU China Joint Institute director Jenny Chen.

Their guidance influenced how she views her own profession. Having spent years teaching in China, Peng hopes to apply what she learnt from them in her future work with students.

"In the future, I hope I can become an excellent teacher just like them," she said.

One of the most important stages of Peng's doctoral studies was her thesis defence. During the session, she presented her research and answered questions from a panel of professors. It was an opportunity to explain her findings and demonstrate her understanding of the subject after years of work.

After receiving the results, Peng was relieved to learn that she had passed. She could finally celebrate the completion of her doctorate. The moment marked a major academic achievement and brought her closer to her next goal: returning to China to continue teaching at university level.

Her academic efforts were also recognised through an Industry Award



Peng (right) shares the joy of fulfilment during her graduation at MSU's convocation ceremony.

sponsored by Hong Leong Bank. Peng expressed her appreciation for the bank's support of students' academic development. She also thanked MSU for providing the academic guidance and resources she needed throughout her studies.

With local research in this area is still limited, she hopes to gather more findings through further study and potentially longer-term research.

After returning to China, Peng plans to continue her career as a university teacher. She hopes to develop her research further while building academic connections between Malaysia and China.

School of Management (GSM) provide advanced qualifications at the Master's and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) levels across a wide range of disciplines. These include Management, Accounting, Education, Social Sciences, Business Administration, Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), International Business, International Hospitality and Tourism Management, Early Childhood Education, Counselling and Guidance, Computer Science, Information and Communication Technology, Food Service Technology, Biomedicine, and other specialised fields.

These programmes integrate global best practices in educational innovation with real-world applications embedded into the learning experience. Students develop strategic thinking through engaging case studies that enhance advanced problem-solving skills. Each module is carefully designed with input from industry and corporate partners, incorporating contextualised insights into global developments and contemporary challenges.

For more information on post graduate programmes offered at MSU, call 603-5521 6868, email enquiry@msu.edu.my or visit www.msu.edu.my.



Enhance your life by pursuing postgraduate studies at Management and Science University.

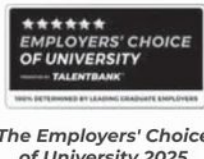
#beMSUrians

At Management and Science University (MSU), we are dedicated to academic excellence, global exposure, and industry-driven learning. We value innovation and integrity. Join a university that shapes future leaders.

Let's #go2msu for a transformative journey with MSU today.

Postgraduate Areas of Study :

- . Management / Business
- . Accounting / Finance
- . Business Administration
- . Management
- . Educational Management and Leadership
- . Education (Teaching English as Second Language)
- . International Event Management
- . International Business
- . Fashion Business
- . International Hospitality and Tourism Management
- . Early Childhood Education
- . Counselling and Guidance



Contact us:

Tel : 03 5521 6868
Email : enquiry@msu.edu.my

f @ X ► MSUMalaysia
www.msu.edu.my

MANAGEMENT AND SCIENCE UNIVERSITY (MSU) DU019(B)
No.4, Persiaran Olahraga, Seksyen 13, 40000 Shah Alam, Selangor.

Yayasan **msu**

MANAGER, ADVERTISING & MARKETING

Job Descriptions:-

- Develop and implement sales and marketing strategies to achieve revenue growth and business objectives.
- Identify new business opportunities and expand the company's client base across relevant market segments.
- Build and maintain strong relationships with clients, advertising agencies, business partners, and key stakeholders.
- Prepare and present customised advertising proposals, integrated media packages, and commercial solutions.
- Lead negotiations and secure profitable business partnerships and advertising deals.
- Plan and execute marketing campaigns and promotional activities across print, digital, social media, events, and other platforms.
- Monitor market trends, competitor activities, and customer insights to identify new revenue opportunities and enhance the company's products and services.
- Set sales targets, monitor KPIs, analyse sales performance, and prepare management reports with recommendations for revenue improvement.
- Manage sales forecasting, pipeline development, and overall commercial performance.
- Collaborate closely with editorial, digital, creative, and other internal teams to deliver effective integrated commercial campaigns.
- Represent the company at client meetings, presentations, networking events, and industry functions while ensuring excellent client service and issue resolution.
- Lead, coach, and develop the Sales & Marketing team to achieve departmental goals and foster a high-performance culture.

Requirements:-

- Bachelor's Degree or Diploma in Marketing, Business Administration, Sales, Communications, or a related field.
- Minimum 6 years of experience in sales, marketing, business development, media, or advertising.
- Proven leadership experience in managing a sales and marketing team.
- Strong track record in achieving sales targets and developing new business opportunities.
- Excellent communication, negotiation, presentation, and relationship management skills.
- Strong analytical, strategic planning, and business management skills.

WEB EXECUTIVE :

Job Descriptions:-

- Has basic understanding of news, including local, crime, sports, entertainment and international news.
- Knows how to use Canva to create social media content such as Instagram posts and simple videos.
- Able to upload strong volume of articles daily, including stories from staff reporters and news agencies.
- Can write reports / articles on breaking news, trending topics, entertainment and other general affairs.
- Has basic understanding of Malaysian politics and current affairs, including key national leaders and the local entertainment industry.
- Has basic understanding of using a Content Management System (CMS).
- Ensures articles are published with little to no errors, including proper spelling, accurate facts, effective links and correct photo captions.
- Communicates effectively with reporters, sub-editors and the social media team to ensure news updates are consistent across the website and social media platforms.
- Willing to work on a rotating shift schedule, including 7am, 9am, 11am and 2pm shifts, as required by the newsroom's operational needs.

Requirements:-

- Diploma/Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Mass Communication or related field.
- Executive: 1 years of experience in Journalism or related field.
- Senior: 3 years of experience in Journalism or related field.
- Fresh graduates are encouraged to apply for Assistant Executive post.
- Excellent communication and interpersonal skills.

Kindly email to: thesun.hr2@gmail.com
Call or WhatsApp No : 018-7616626

322 Notices

DALAM PERKARA AKTA SYARIKAT 2016
DAN
DALAM PERKARA
HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (BANGSAR) SDN. BHD.
No. Pendaftaran:
201001036855 (920778-X)
(DALAM PENGULUNGAN SYARIKAT SECARA SUKARELA OLEH AHLI)

NOTIS MESYUARAT TERAKHIR

NOTIS ADALAH DENGAN INI DIBERIKAN menurut Seksyen 459 Akta Syarikat 2016 bahawa Mesyuarat Terakhir Ahli-Ahli Syarikat tersebut akan diadakan di 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur pada 30 November 2026 pada pukul 11.00 pagi untuk tujuan berikut:-

- Untuk menerima dan mempertimbangkan akaun dari Pelikuidasi yang menunjukkan cara bagaimana pengulungan tersebut telah dijalankan dan menerima sebarang penjelasan mengennainya;
- Untuk menentukan menurut Seksyen 518(3)(b) Akta Syarikat 2016 cara bagaimana buku-buku, akaun dan dokumen Syarikat dan Pelikuidasi sepatutnya dilupuskan.

YAP KAI WENG
Pelikuidasi

Kuala Lumpur

Tarikh: 27 Oktober 2026

322 Notices

IN THE HIGH COURT OF MALAYA AT ALOR SETAR
IN THE STATE OF KEDAH DARUL AMAN
COMPANIES (WINDING-UP) NO. KA-28NCC-43-09/2026

In the matter of Sections 464, 465 and 466 of the Companies Act 2016

And

In the matter of Regulations 8, 22, 23, 23A, 24, 25 and 26 of the Companies (Winding-Up) Rules 1972

And

In the matter of Synergy Distribution Sdn. Bhd. [Company No. 202001031570 (1387890-T)]

BETWEEN

MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD
[COMPANY NO. 200701029411 (787435-M)]
... PETITIONER

AND

SYNERGY DISTRIBUTION SDN. BHD.
[COMPANY NO. 202001031570 (1387890-T)]
... RESPONDENT

Advertisement of Petition

Notice is hereby given that a Petition for the Winding-Up of SYNERGY DISTRIBUTION SDN. BHD. by the High Court was, on the 21st day of September, 2026, presented by MAYBANK ISLAMIC BERHAD of Regional Corporate Remedial Management Penang / Kedah / Perlis, 2nd Floor, No. 447, 448 & 449, Jalan Permatang Rawa, Bandar Perda, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang. And that the said petition is directed to be heard before the Court sitting at Alor Setar, Kedah at 9.00 a.m. in the forenoon on Monday the 21st day of December, 2026; and any creditor or contributory of the said company desiring to support or oppose the making of an order on the said petition may appear at the time of himself or his counsel for that purpose; and a copy of the petition will be furnished to any creditor or contributory of the said company requiring the same by the undersigned on payment of the regulated charge for the same.

The Petitioner's address is at Regional Corporate Remedial Management Penang / Kedah / Perlis, 2nd Floor, No. 447, 448 & 449, Jalan Permatang Rawa, Bandar Perda, 14000 Bukit Mertajam, Pulau Pinang

The Petitioner's solicitor is MESSRS WONG & LOH of No. 44, Jalan Cantonment, 10350 Georgetown, Penang.

T.T
Messrs Wong & Loh
Solicitors for the Petitioner

NOTE:

Any person who intends to appear on the hearing of the said Petition must serve on or sent by post to the abovesaid Solicitors for the Petitioner, MESSRS WONG & LOH, notice in writing of his intention so to do. The notice must state the name and address of the person, or, if a firm, the name and address of the firm, and must be signed by the person or firm, or his or their solicitors (if any) and must be served, or, if posted, must be sent by post in sufficient time to reach the abovesaid not later than 12.00 o'clock noon of the 20th day of December, 2026 (the day before the day appointed for the hearing of the Petition).

TUESDAY | OCT 27, 2026



SPORTS

27

Shadab stuns England

... as Pakistan reach tri-series final

SHADAB KHAN'S maiden century rescued Pakistan from a dire situation and took them to a stunning one-wicket victory over England in the one-day international in Lahore on Sunday, booking the hosts' spot in the final of the tri-series.

Defending a modest 242-run target, England were on the cusp of victory with the home team reduced to 154-9, but Shadab's unbeaten 113 condemned Harry Brook's side to a third defeat in five days in the series, which also involves Sri Lanka.

England, who failed to defend a 430-run target against Sri Lanka on Thursday, were left stunned as number 11 Haris Rauf cracked the winning boundary with 17 balls to spare, sparking huge celebrations in the Pakistan dug-out.

Haris, who scored an unbeaten seven, ably played his part in a match-winning 89-run partnership with Shadab for the last wicket.

Shadab, who cracked five sixes and 13 boundaries, was lucky to survive a leg-before decision off Gus Atkinson with 20 needed. But while trudging off distraught, he took a review which overturned the decision.

Restored to the crease, the 28-year-old guided Pakistan to victory and a spot in next Saturday's final – his score now is the highest batting at number eight in all ODIs.

It was a stunning turnaround which left Pakistan skipper Shaheen Shah Afridi struggling for words,

"I can't say much, Shadab and Haris, the way they finished the game, 89-runs partnership is amazing," said Shaheen. "I've never seen that in my life. Really happy as captain, the team effort was top drawer."

Brook refused to blame his bowlers in spite of their inability to close out the game, just days after their nightmare against Sri Lanka.

"I don't think we went wrong with the ball, to be honest," said Brook. "I thought we did an exceptional job but maybe didn't quite get enough runs on the board."

Pakistan lost opener Fakhar Zaman and Babar Azam for 10 each and Saim Ayub for six in a poor start before Saad Baig (32) and Salman Agha (26) briefly revived the innings.

Match-winner Shadab then entered the fray in the 24th over with Pakistan on 103-6.

Defeat means England's chances of reaching a place in the Oct 31 final hang in the balance as they need Pakistan to beat Sri Lanka today and then win themselves against the island nation on Thursday.

Earlier, England's 241 all out was aided by a century by opener Ben Duckett, who anchored the innings with 105.

Atkinson contributed an unbeaten 36 at the bottom of the order. – AFP

Rybakina retains Ningbo title

A YEAR after winning the Ningbo Open transformed Elena Rybakina's (pic) season, the world No. 1 returned to the Chinese city and retained her title on Sunday, as her game clicked into gear before another tilt at the WTA Finals.

Her 2025 success proved the springboard for a stellar run as she secured the last spot in the eight-player WTA Finals field the following week, before winning the season finale and carrying that momentum into the current campaign.

The 27-year-old Kazakh went on to capture the Australian Open title in January before claiming

her third Grand Slam crown at the US Open last month.

Rybakina's 6-2 6-2 win over Leylah Fernandez in the Ningbo final on Sunday came after she had suffered defeat in her first match as world number one in Beijing and an injury-enforced absence from Wuhan.

"It's the first time I've defended a title, so it's a great achievement," Rybakina told the WTA website.

"Ningbo is already a special place. Last year I started to play really well from this tournament. Hopefully it's going to give me motivation and good energy to continue this season and start the next one."

After losing nine of her first 13 finals, Rybakina has now won 11 of her last 15.

"I remember I was getting upset always losing in finals," she said after winning her fourth title of the year and 15th overall.

"Now it's going my way, but I can't expect it all the time... now it's experience clicking in important moments."

Rybakina plays in the Pan Pacific Open in Tokyo this week before heading to Indian Wells for the Nov 8-15 WTA Finals. – Reuters



Musetti wins first title in four years

ITALY'S former world No. 5 Lorenzo Musetti lifted his first ATP title since 2022 yesterday as he beat American Taylor Fritz 6-3, 6-4 in the final of the 250 event in Lyon.

It was a third career title on the main tour for the 24-year-old, following victories four seasons ago in Hamburg and Naples, and brought an end to a seven-match losing streak in tournament showpieces.

In a dominant 81-minute performance in southeast France, Musetti secured two breaks of serve early in each set and forced his second-seeded opponent into 28 unforced errors.

The routine victory stood in juxtaposition to Musetti's grinding route to the final, in which the sixth seed had to show great physical resilience to beat France's Luca Van Assche in a three-and-a-half-hour marathon in the quarterfinals, as well as a lengthy last-four success against his compatriot Fabio Cobolli in which he saved four match points.

"The spirit of fight was the key for this tournament," Musetti said.

"I had an incredible attitude. I have to say thanks to my team... Today I felt more relaxed inside my head and my tennis was more fluid and it was a great performance."

"It is such a dream I don't want to wake up." – AFP

322 Notices

IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT, 2016
AND
IN THE MATTER OF HAP SENG LAND DEVELOPMENT (BANGSAR) SDN. BHD.
Registration No.: 201001036855 (920778-X)
(IN MEMBERS' VOLUNTARY WINDING UP)

NOTICE OF FINAL MEETING

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT pursuant to Section 459 of the Companies Act, 2016, the Final Meeting of the Members of the Company will be held at 21st Floor, Menara Hap Seng, Jalan P Ramlee, 50250 Kuala Lumpur on Monday, 30 November 2026 at 11.00 a.m. for the purpose of:-

- To receive and consider the Liquidator's Statement of Accounts showing the manner in which the winding up has been conducted and the asset/property of the Company disposed of and of hearing any explanations that may be given by the Liquidator.
- To determine pursuant to Section 518(3)(b) of the Companies Act, 2016 the manner and period in which the books, accounts and documents of the Company and of the Liquidator thereof shall be disposed of.

YAP KAI WENG
Liquidator

Kuala Lumpur

Dated this 27 October 2026

A member entitled to attend and vote at this meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his stead. A proxy need not be a member of the Company. Proxy forms must be deposited with the Liquidator at the above address not less than 48 hours before the meeting.

Wolff hails Antonelli's best race yet

KIMI ANTONELLI has given his Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff nine wins to get excited about this season but the Italian's dominant drive from pole position at yesterday's US Grand Prix took that to another level.

The 20-year-old, set to become the youngest ever Formula One champion in Mexico next weekend, won by more than 13 seconds on a one-stop strategy.

His teammate and closest title rival George Russell, now 123 points behind with 125 still to be won, started sixth and finished eighth – just enough to keep the championship hanging by a thread.

"On Kimi's side the main headline is that for me (that's) the best race that he's delivered so far," Wolff said.

"Getting off the start with inferior tyre and then controlling it (the race) at all times. The race of a champion who isn't the champion yet, but exceptional. I think he's outperformed the car. His driving style just glues with the car."

Wolff, reminded that Antonelli has had some special wins already this season including at his home Italian Grand Prix from the back of the grid as well as

Monaco and Spa, accepted that sometimes he struggled to remember past races.

"Both of them were pretty good," he said in reference to Monza. "But the headline, this is the best, we can keep."

Antonelli was happy to agree with the boss.

"I think it was one of the best, because of how we built up during the weekend," he told reporters. "And, you know, it was a great team effort as well today, especially with the strategy, believing in the one-stop. And, yeah, it was a really great team effort, and they all deserve this result today."

"Monza, we clearly had the fastest car. We were just super quick, so of course it was incredibly special coming from the back," he added.

"But it was also a track where it was relatively easy to overtake, and we were so quick. But definitely, Monza was a super special one, and one that I will remember forever. But, you know, this one probably, in terms of execution, was better... the way we built the performance throughout the weekend was very good." – Reuters

Max's gamble fails

MAX VERSTAPPEN admitted he had the wrong tyre strategy and lacked pace as he hung on to claim third place for Red Bull in yesterday's United States Grand Prix.

The four-time world champion, who started from second on the grid, opened the race with two stints on soft tyres that left him with a lot of work to do as he was stuck with a two-stop strategy.

Verstappen had hoped to compete Kimi Antonelli but was ultimately unable to match his overall speed and performance.

"I think our overall pace was not good enough and probably the tyres that we had available were not the right ones," he said.

"It's something that we have to understand because I think in the last few races it was always working well for us."

"For whatever reason it didn't work out here. And this choice of tyres also meant everyone knew we had to be on a two-stop race. We still managed to get on the podium, maybe a little bit luckily with the VSC (Virtual Safety Car) at the end, but I'll take it."

After two consecutive wins at the Bahrain GP in Malaysia and Singapore, it was a disappointment for Verstappen but it extended his strong run of results in the second half of the season.

It also meant the end of his slim hopes of fifth world championship title. – AFP

Russell seeks answers after off day in Austin

GEORGE RUSSELL was searching for answers after finishing eighth in a US Grand Prix won by Formula One champion-in-waiting Mercedes teammate Kimi Antonelli yesterday.

The Briton started in sixth place on the grid at Austin's Circuit of the Americas, collected a five-second penalty for an incident with McLaren's Oscar Piastri and said he had no explanation for his lack of pace other than "just not being quick enough."

"I need to try and understand why it is. It's strange when you're so far off, so hopefully there's some answers somewhere. But, anyway, I don't have one," he told Sky Sports television.

"The pace wasn't good on the first stint," Russell told reporters. "But when I came out of the pits on the hard (tyres), I probably did six laps where I was lapping the same pace as Kimi. But then I caught up with Oscar and I just couldn't overtake."

"Six good laps, 50 bad laps. I want to understand why the pace was so bad on the first stint."

Team boss Toto Wolff said Russell had just struggled.

"George for all of us in the team is a champion and has won in every category and I think he merits to be put in the group of the very best ones. And we've seen that last year," said the Austrian.

"This year... we see this variability in results. When we land the car in a way that suits him, he's absolutely fast. But when it drops out of that operational window, he struggles. And he struggles more than maybe Kimi."

"We just have to work it out with him, how there can be such a difference in driving, in performance. Because George is not half a second slower, three tenths slower than Kimi. That's just absolutely not the case." – Reuters

INSIDE LIP

Sabbatini gets hot late

RORY SABBATINI completed a surprise push yesterday with an eagle and three birdies in his final four holes to win the Stifel Charity Classic, the first leg of the PGA Tour Champions' Charles Schwab Cup playoffs, at Norwood Hills Country Club in St. Louis. Sabbatini, a South African native who competes under the flag of Slovakia, posted a 9-under-par 62 to rocket up to 14-under 199 for the week. His long birdie putt at No. 18 put him one ahead of Northern Ireland's Darren Clarke (65), who wound up placing second. It was Sabbatini's first win on the PGA Tour Champions after he turned 50 and qualified for the circuit earlier this year. "Obviously, doesn't matter what level you play at, winning's never easy," Sabbatini said on the Golf Channel broadcast. "It's very special. Obviously being out here and being a first-time winner out here, it's beyond words." New Zealand's Steven Alker (66), Sweden's Henrik Stenson (68) and American Mario Tiziani (68) tied for third at 12-under. Stewart Cink remains No. 1 in the Schwab Cup standings after posting a 68 Sunday and tying for 24th at 5 under. Zach Johnson is in second place and Alker hung onto third.

Yoshida captures first LPGA victory

YURI YOSHIDA overcame a four-stroke deficit entering the final round of the BMW Ladies Championship to record a one-shot victory on Sunday in Haenam-gun, South Korea. Yoshida recorded an eagle on the par-5 second hole and three straight birdies on Nos. 5-7 to highlight a 4-under-par 68 on Sunday at Pine Beach Golf Links. She finished the tournament at 17-under 271 to capture her first LPGA Tour victory and pocket a first-prize check of US\$352,500 (RM1.4m). "It's a special moment for me, and actually, I was nervous," Yoshida said. "But at this moment, I'm really happy." She benefited from a brilliant shot out of the bunker on the 17th hole, enabling her to make a birdie that proved pivotal. Yoshida finished one shot ahead of South Koreans Choi Hye-Jin (69 on Sunday) and overnight leader and World No. 3 Ryu Haeran (73). Defending champion Kim Sei Young of South Korea carded a 70 on Sunday to finish in a tie for 55th place. This is the second of four events on the fall Asian swing, followed by tournaments in Malaysia and Japan.

Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli (top) celebrates after winning the US GP at Circuit of The Americas in Austin, Texas yesterday. – AFP/PPIC



Kimi's date with destiny

Antonelli could become F1's youngest champion and end Italy's title drought as he looks to seal title 'in style' after US GP win

KIMI ANTONELLI said his mindset will not change as he heads to next week's race in Mexico seeking the two points he needs to become Formula One's youngest world champion.

The 20-year-old Italian delivered a well-executed and dominant drive to claim his ninth victory this year for Mercedes in yesterday's United States Grand Prix and move within reach of the title.

Antonelli is on the brink of smashing the previous record for youngest champion, held by Sebastian Vettel who was 23 years and 133 days old when he won his first title in 2010.

He is also set to become the first Italian to win the title since Alberto Ascari in 1953.

"The best way, the perfect way, would be to finish off in style and then just enjoy the rest of the season," he said.

"I'm very aware that it's very

close but the mindset doesn't change.

"I want to finish the season on a high in order to then go with high hopes into 2027. But we'll first focus and worry about finishing this well, and then we'll see."

After yesterday's triumph at the Circuit of the Americas he leads with 365 points ahead of nearest rival and teammate George Russell on 242 and seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton of Ferrari on 241.

He will be champion if he finishes in the top nine or, if he doesn't score, Russell or Hamilton fail to win.

But on current form, after winning again for the first time in four races, he looks certain to take the title in his own happy, generous and infectious style. "That was the perfect way to end the weekend," he said.

"It was an incredible team effort, especially from strategy, to believe in me and go for one stop because I

wasn't sure whether one or two stop was the quickest.

"But I'm really happy that we made it stick. Today was a really important victory for me and for the team, especially after having a couple of difficult races, so being back on top feels very good."

Antonelli's ability on the track and infectious attitude off it have landed him numerous admirers around the paddock, including 1996 world champion Damon Hill.

"The team love him, he's enjoying everything he's got in F1 and he's very grateful for all the breaks they've given him at Mercedes," Hill said on the BBC.

"But he delivers. He's such a nice kid. It's incredible. Twenty years old and he's on the verge of winning his first championship, which I'm sure will be the first of many."

Hamilton is the only other driver who still has a mathematical chance of catching Antonelli but the seven-time champion was left to rue

RESULTS

1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes)
2. Charles Leclerc (Ferrari)
3. Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
4. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari)
5. Lando Norris (McLaren)
6. Isack Hadjar (Red Bull)
7. Oscar Piastri (McLaren)
8. George Russell (Mercedes)
9. Liam Lawson (Racing Bulls)
10. Pierre Gasly (Alpine)
11. Nico Hülkenberg (Audi)
12. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls)
13. Gabriel Bortoleto (Audi)
14. Estéban Ocon (Haas)
15. Lance Stroll (Aston Martin)
16. Fernando Alonso (Aston Martin)
17. Alexander Albon (Williams)
18. Carlos Sainz Jr (Williams)
19. Sergio Perez (Cadillac)

STANDINGS

DRIVERS: 1. Kimi Antonelli (ITA) 365 pts, 2. George Russell (GBR) 242, 3. Lewis Hamilton (GBR) 241, 4. Max Verstappen (NED) 236, 5. Charles Leclerc (MON) 233, 6. Lando Norris (GBR) 211, 7. Oscar Piastri (AUS) 144, 8. Isack Hadjar (FRA) 105, 9. Liam Lawson (NZL) 77, 10. Pierre Gasly (FRA) 42, 11. Arvid Lindblad (GBR) 38, 12. Franco Colapinto (ARG) 27, 13. Oliver Bearman (GBR) 23, 14. Nico Hülkenberg (GER) 13, 15. Gabriel Bortoleto (BRA) 10, 16. Estéban Ocon (FRA) 7, 17. Fernando Alonso (ESP) 7, 18. Carlos Sainz Jr (ESP) 7, 19. Alexander Albon (THA) 5, 20. Yuki Tsunoda (JPN) 1.

CONSTRUCTORS: 1. Mercedes 607 pts, 2. Ferrari 474, 3. Red Bull 355, 4. McLaren 355, 5. RB 102, 6. Alpine 69, 7. Haas 30, 8. Audi 23, 9. Williams 12, 10. Aston Martin 7.

missed opportunities in Sunday's race.

"I felt the race was lost in my first two stints," said Hamilton. "I lost so much time. I couldn't turn the car in the lower speed corners particularly."

"I was adjusting my settings and by the last stint I was closer to the right balance."

"I think I've lost a lot of points in the last five races or so and I think it's really come from set-up or just not perfecting the set-up. It's something I've really got to get on top of." – AFP



Inter pull off another escape

INTER MILAN struck twice in stoppage time to complete a remarkable 2-1 comeback win over Fiorentina and return to the summit of Serie A on Sunday, while Juventus and AC Milan both bounced back with victories yesterday.

Alex Jimenez's rocket strike had struggling Fiorentina heading for a shock win at San Siro, but Marcus Thuram levelled in the 91st minute before winning a penalty that Piotr Zielinski converted in the 98th minute.

The result lifted Inter to first place, level with surprise fellow pace-setters Lazio on 22 points, while the Florence club's winless run stretched to four games to keep them in 18th spot.

Later, Juventus claimed a 2-0 win over Lecce that lifted them into seventh place after a poor recent run of form and AC Milan bounced back from a heavy Europa League defeat to Bournemouth by beating Udinese 2-0 to go fourth.

Inter's fifth comeback win of the season saw them concede for the 10th time, but head coach Cristian Chivu was unconcerned by his side's defensive issues.

"That's football: sometimes you concede," Chivu told DAZN. "The important thing is not to let your heads drop and to maintain the same mentality. Ever since I arrived here, I've always said that games last 90 minutes."

"I don't want to see people feel sorry for themselves," Chivu added. "I want to see players respond to setbacks."

Milan continued their

unbeaten start to the league season and responded to their midweek drubbing in Bournemouth by claiming a confident win away to Udinese.

"We need time to work on several things, but we don't have time sometimes even to address the problems we had in the last game," Milan coach Ruben Amorim told DAZN.

"We are learning in the games, with videos, in team meetings, because for three weeks we have barely had any training. I am proud of these lads, because they are paying attention to everything."

Milan moved level with third-placed Roma on 18 points after claiming their first away league win.

It continued a desperate run of form for Udinese, whose losing run was extended to six games to leave them in 17th place.

Juventus claimed a much-needed win away to Lecce to relieve some pressure on head coach Luciano Spalletti.

Last weekend's humbling 3-0 defeat at home to Lazio left Juve in mid-table with one win in five league games, and a 2-2 midweek Europa League draw with Rennes did little to improve the mood in Turin.

There was an eight-goal thriller in Bergamo as Atalanta and Frosinone played out a 4-4 draw, while Genoa beat bottom side Venezia 1-0 to climb out of the relegation zone. - AFP

Bayern beat Freiburg to reclaim top spot after Kompany illness

BAYERN MUNICH reclaimed top spot in the Bundesliga with a 3-1 win at Freiburg yesterday, days after coach Vincent Kompany was hospitalised when he collapsed at training.

Bayern were missing several first-team players and Kompany, but cruised to a two-goal lead at half-time with Dayot Upamecano and Serge Gnabry scoring.

Freiburg pulled one back and were pushing for a point in stoppage time when goalkeeper Mio Backhaus was caught out up the field, allowing Michael Olise to slide the ball into an empty net.

Kompany remains in hospital and is being treated for a mystery virus, with Bayern saying Saturday the coach is likely to be out for "days, not weeks".

"I just opened my phone to a message from Vince saying 'well done' and he was happy," assistant coach Aaron Danks told DAZN.

"I just replied saying 'brilliant - now go rest'. I sent him a kissing emoji, so hopefully he rests up."

Bayern sporting director Max Eberl gave an update on Kompany's condition.

"He's stable. He no longer has a headache. He's now undergoing a thorough examination. Everything is being handled," he said.

"There's no diagnosis, nothing final yet."

Kompany had admitted following the draw with the Arsenal that he had not listened to his body by taking time off work.

"I caught a pretty nasty virus last week, and of course I didn't listen to my body," Kompany said last week.

"And then at some point my body just said: 'Enough is enough.'"

With victory Bayern leapfrogged Borussia Dortmund to top the table ahead of the duo's clash in Munich next week.

Harry Kane had a close-range effort saved late in the second half but failed to find the net.

The visitors were also without injured captain Manuel Neuer, Luis Diaz, Jamal Musiala, Aleksandar

Pavlovic and Kim Min-jae, while midfielder and Germany captain Joshua Kimmich was on bereavement leave due to the sudden death of his father.

Bayern were in the unusual position of sitting back and absorbing pressure as Freiburg pushed, but took the lead after 16 minutes when Upamecano started and finished a length-of-the-field counter.

Bayern doubled up just before the break when Gnabry latched onto a Nathaniel Brown pass and nutmegged Backhaus to score.

With 10 minutes remaining, Kane stung Backhaus's palms from close range and the hosts went on an immediate counter, forcing Tom Bischof into conceding an own goal.

With Freiburg and Backhaus pushing high, Olise won possession and scored to wrap up the victory.

Hoffenheim scored three goals in the final 11 minutes, including the 1,000th league goal in their history, as they snapped Bayer Leverkusen's six-game winning streak with a 3-0 home victory. - AFP

Mbappe double, Barca trouble

Mourinho celebrates a triumphant Clasico return after French forward struck twice to compound Barcelona's miserable week and reignite Madrid's title challenge



Kylian Mbappe celebrates after scoring Real Madrid's winning goal during the La Liga match against Barcelona at Nou Camp yesterday. - REUTERS/PIC

KYLIAN MBAPPE struck twice to earn Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid a 2-1 Clasico victory over La Liga leaders Barcelona on Sunday at Nou Camp, cutting the gap to three points.

French superstar Mbappe opened the scoring before the

interval and then slotted home late on to inflict Barca's first domestic defeat of the campaign after Raphinha had equalised for the champions.

Real Madrid remain third, behind Atletico Madrid and Hansi Flick's Barca, who had won their first nine games before a chastening week.

The Catalans suffered a second straight defeat after losing on Tuesday against Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League.

Mourinho was delighted with his team's display in his first Clasico back at the helm of Madrid.

"My team had an extraordinary game, very organised, good concentration, with courage to play out from the back

against a team that presses you a lot," Mourinho told reporters.

"We had chances for the second goal... obviously Barca had a strong reaction but we were calm and organised and at 1-1 we never lost our tranquility."

Barca had won six of the seven previous Clasicos since Flick arrived but were surprisingly subdued against Mourinho's side.

"You saw today, we lacked freshness," said Flick of his team's performance.

"It's the first defeat in La Liga, we won nine in a row. This is what we have to see."

"Defeats are a part of the game. We have to analyse, we have to make things better. Now it's important that we make a reaction."

Los Blancos, without suspended winger Vinicius Junior, won their fifth straight game across all competitions and are finding their footing under veteran Portuguese coach Mourinho.

After two trophyless seasons Madrid turned back to Mourinho to try and stop Barca's dominance, and this result will give them hope they are on the right track.

The opening period of the game was cagey, with few opportunities.

Andriy Lunin, playing in goal for Madrid after Thibaut Courtois pulled out of the squad with flu, saved at his near post from Anthony Gordon, playing in his first Clasico since joining Barcelona from Newcastle, before the visitors took the lead.

Mbappe scored his 10th league goal of the season and also his easiest, with Barca's Gerard Martin clearing a cross straight at the Frenchman, who deflected it into the net.

Martin redeemed himself early in the second half as he held off Jude Bellingham, who could neither beat the defender nor find a free Mbappe.

Raphinha, who had a quiet first half, pulled Barcelona level just after the hour mark.

There was a sting in the tail for the Catalans though as substitute Gabriel Jesus lost possession and Madrid raced through on goal.

Eduardo Camavinga beat Cubarsi and unselfishly cut the ball back for Mbappe to tuck home his second of the night into an empty net with Joan Garcia drawn out of position.

It brought up a century of goals since Mbappe joined Madrid from PSG in 2024, although the trophies to match have not yet followed.

"(Winning) is a good message today, but we can't think the season is done - next week (at Racing) Santander we have to put in the same intensity," Mbappe told *Real Madrid TV*. - AFP

Rennes take Ligue 1 lead after Lille held by Monaco

LILLE were made to pay for Tanguy Nianzou's red card as Monaco fought back to hold them to a 1-1 draw in Ligue 1 yesterday, opening the door for Rennes to take the summit of the table thanks to a 3-0 win over struggling Strasbourg.

With Paris Saint-Germain and Lyon's match pushed back overnight due to protests taking place across France this weekend, a winner in the principal city would have gone three points clear at the top of the table.

But Lille have to content themselves with second spot on goal difference in the standings ahead of Monaco as both sides moved to 15 points - one ahead of Lyon, reigning champions PSG and Paris FC.

Rennes then took full advantage of the draw as they eased past 16th-placed Strasbourg in Brittany to

climb to 16 points.

At the Stade Louis II, Ethan Mbappe's goal midway through the first period put Lille in the driving seat but a straight red for Nianzou just after the hour was swiftly punished by Edan Diop as the hosts forced a draw.

"The plan worked well in the first half. We managed to stick together," Lille coach Davide Ancelotti said of his side following the dismissal of Nianzou. "The mood in the dressing room is positive because we held on until the end."

The younger brother of France and Real Madrid star Kylian showed the crisp finishing instincts associated with the Mbappe name as he darted into the box and whipped a first-time shot with his left foot past Lukas Hradecky on 24 minutes.

Monaco rarely threatened through the rest of the opening period but the match burst into life in the second half before Lille defender Nianzou was given his marching orders for a reckless challenge.

The hosts then levelled in the 74th minute as Diop's cross toward Brunner evaded everyone and nestled in the far corner.

First half goals for Boulaye Dia and Sebastian Szymanski put Rennes in the driving seat against Strasbourg as they moved into top spot in Ligue 1.

Elsewhere, eighth-placed Marseille held on to beat bottom-of-the-table Le Havre 4-3 at the Stade Velodrome.

Toulouse and Troyes, as well as Angers and Lorient, played out goalless stalemates, while Auxerre drew 1-1 with Le Mans. - AFP



Isak back to his best

Sweden international struck again in Liverpool's victory over Brighton as his impressive run of form continued

ANDONI IRAOLA said Alexander Isak is back to his deadly best after the Liverpool star extended his hot streak in a 2-0 win against Brighton on Sunday.

Iraola's side netted twice in quick succession in the first half at Anfield, with Pascal Gross's own goal followed by Isak's latest strike.

Isak has scored six times in seven league games this season and has three goals in his last four matches.

After a turbulent debut season following his acrimonious move from Newcastle, the Sweden striker is finally beginning to repay his £125 million (RM681m) fee.

"If we can put him in those positions, we can provide him good crosses, good situations, he will score the goals," Iraola said.

"I think it's a matter of, in this case, Bradley (Barcola) winning the duel, going one vs one, being faster than the opposition and finding good spots."

It was a welcome first taste of top-flight success at Anfield for Iraola, who had failed to win his first three league games on Merseyside since arriving from Bournemouth in the close season.

The Spaniard, who had won Champions League and League Cup games at Anfield, has led Liverpool to four successive victories in all competitions since the chastening 3-0 home defeat against Manchester City.

Liverpool have climbed to fourth place, just one point behind third-placed Brighton after inflicting the high-flying Seagulls' second league loss this term.

The Reds are six points behind leaders City as they eye a potential title challenge.

"Very happy for today, very happy overall for this fourth win," Iraola said.

"We faced a very good opposition and it was key how we started today.

"We needed a strong start, be aggressive, recover balls, win our duels, be dangerous in transitions.

"I think we've done that and it has been a different game from the last ones, where we've conceded first.

"After, you need the comeback. Today we've started better and the game has gone differently."

Liverpool playmaker Florian Wirtz was forced off with an injury but Iraola is hopeful it will not be a

significant issue.

"Unfortunately, he had to leave the pitch with a small twist of the ankle," he said.

"It doesn't look very big but we are playing every three days so we need to see where he is."

Brighton had 64% possession and 17 shots but although Yasin Ayari hit a post, only one effort was on target as the Seagulls' defence was breached after more than nine hours without conceding.

Albion boss Fabian Hurzeler claimed his side deserved more for an attacking approach that contrasted with Liverpool's more conservative style.

"I think everyone in the stadium saw that there was one team who really tried to create and try to win this game and therefore I have to praise my players," he said.

"There was a missed opportunity for us. Before they scored, we had one, two big chances and I think it was just the difference that they scored, we didn't score.

"They kept a clean sheet because they defended well. They blocked a lot of shots.

"They really defended the box well. We didn't have that efficiency." - AFP

RESULTS & STANDINGS

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE: Crystal Palace 0 Newcastle 2 (Osula 47, Barnes 58), Hull 1 (McBurnie 24-pen) Brentford 1 (Ouattara 63), Liverpool 2 (Gross 17-og, Isak 21) Brighton 0, Manchester United 0 Bournemouth 3 (Rayan 38, Tavernier 43, Evanilson 71), Sunderland 0 Leeds 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Man City	8	7	0	1	20	9	21
Arsenal	8	7	0	1	13	5	21
Brighton	8	5	1	2	23	7	16
Liverpool	8	4	3	1	11	8	15
Chelsea	8	4	1	3	17	15	13
Brentford	8	2	5	1	14	9	11
Leeds	8	2	5	1	9	6	11
Newcastle	8	3	2	3	12	14	11
Aston Villa	8	3	2	3	9	12	11
Hull	8	2	4	2	9	8	10
Everton	8	2	4	2	8	9	10
Ipswich	8	3	1	4	12	16	10
Bournemouth	8	2	3	3	12	13	9
Tottenham	8	2	3	3	8	10	9
Fulham	8	2	2	4	8	10	8
Man United	8	1	4	3	10	13	7
Crystal Palace	8	2	1	5	9	19	7
Nottm Forest	8	1	3	4	6	10	6
Coventry	8	2	0	6	6	15	6
Sunderland	8	1	2	5	6	14	5

LA LIGA: Athletic Bilbao 4 (Berenguer 17, Williams 35, Paredes 70, Berchiche 88) Getafe 0, Celta Vigo 0 Real Betis 0, Real Sociedad 2 (Oskarsson 6, Turrientes 27) Levante 1 (Perez 22), Barcelona 1 (Raphinha 61) Real Madrid 2 (Mbappe 41, 87).

	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

Real Betis	10	6	2	2	16	14	20
Real Sociedad	10	6	1	3	19	18	19
Sevilla	9	4	2	3	14	16	14

SERIE A: Inter Milan 2 (Thuram 90+1, Zielinski 90+8-pen) Fiorentina 1 (Jimeenez 65), Atalanta 4 (Krstovic 14, 45, Ederson 33-pen, Elmas 50) Frosinone 4 (Schmid 1, 17, Calo 48, Terzic 82) Genoa 1 (Ellertsson 25) Venezia 0 Lecce 0 Juventus 2 (McKennie 29, Douglas Luiz 41), Udinese 0 AC Milan 2 (Pulisic 6, Hutchinson 65).

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Inter Milan	8	7	1	0	23	10	22
Lazio	8	7	1	0	16	5	22
Roma	8	5	3	0	19	6	18
AC Milan	8	5	3	0	16	7	18
Como	8	5	2	1	14	7	17
Frosinone	8	4	2	2	17	13	14

BUNDESLIGA: Freiburg 1 Bayern Munich 3, Hoffenheim 3 Bayer Leverkusen 0.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
B. Munich	7	5	2	0	25	6	17
Dortmund	7	5	2	0	12	4	17
Freiburg	7	4	1	2	16	9	13
Leverkusen	7	4	1	2	16	12	13
Leipzig	7	4	0	3	20	11	12
Bremen	7	3	3	1	15	14	12

FRENCH LIGUE 1: Monaco 1 Lille 1, Rennes 3 Strasbourg 0, Marseille 4 Le Havre 3, Angers 0 Lorient 0, Toulouse 0 Troyes 0, Auxerre 1 Le Mans 1.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
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	7	4	2	1	13	5	14
Paris SG	7	4	2	1	14	9	14
Paris FC	8	4	2	2	13	9	14

SHORTS

Magpies turn the screw

NEWCASTLE UNITED piled more pressure on Crystal Palace manager Pierre Sage after claiming a 2-0 Premier League victory at Selhurst Park, courtesy of second half goals from William Osula and Harvey Barnes.

Palace, who drew 2-2 with Besiktas in the Europa League last Friday, had hoped to build on that result after suffering a humiliating 5-0 defeat to Brighton last weekend.

The hosts started positively, with Daichi Kamada and Jean-Philippe Mateta threatening early on, but neither side managed to break the deadlock before halftime.

Newcastle struck less than two minutes after the restart when Osula latched onto Jacob Murphy's pinpoint cross and prodded the ball home for his seventh goal in 13 Premier League appearances.

Joe Willock thought he had doubled the visitors' advantage shortly afterwards, only for VAR to rule his effort out for offside.

Barnes made it 2-0 in the 58th minute, sweeping home after Amar Dedic created the opportunity as Newcastle capitalised on Palace's defensive uncertainty.

Palace attempted to respond, with goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek making several saves to prevent further damage, including stops against Adam Wharton and substitute Dario Osorio.

However, the Eagles struggled to mount a sustained comeback, and their frustration was evident when boos rang out from sections of the home support at the final whistle.

The defeat extended Palace's difficult run and increased the pressure on Sage to turn the club's fortunes around.

Tigers' drought drags on

HULL CITY'S unbeaten home record remained intact, but their winless run stretched to seven games after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Brentford at the MKM Stadium.

The Tigers took the lead in the 24th minute when Oli McBurnie converted a penalty after Aaron Hickey



FROM RIGHT: Newcastle United's William Osula celebrates with Joelinton and Joe Willock after scoring against Crystal Palace on Sunday. - REUTERS/PICT

fouled Tim Iroegbunam inside the box.

Brentford goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher guessed correctly but could not stop McBurnie's effort, which marked the striker's first Premier League goal in more than 900 days.

The visitors responded after the break and equalised in the 63rd minute. Igor Thiago set up Dango Ouattara, who took advantage of hesitant Hull defending to slot the ball home under little pressure.

Brentford pushed for a winner, with Jaidon Anthony sending an effort narrowly wide before forcing a save from Hull goalkeeper Konstantinos Tzolakis.

Hull threatened on the counter-attack, but Mohamed Belloumi fired over after racing towards the visitors' goal. The hosts had another opportunity in the 88th minute when Mohamed Ali-Cho crossed for Joe Gelhardt, whose effort failed to find the target.

Both sides had to contend with strong winds from Storm Boelo, which blew balloons and litter from the pre-match display onto the pitch during the opening minutes.

Despite their efforts late on, neither team could find a winner as Hull settled for a point, extending their wait for a victory to seven matches.

Bottom of the pile

SUNDERLAND ended their four-game losing run in the Premier League but remain bottom of the table

after being held to a goalless draw by Leeds United at the Stadium of Light.

The Black Cats had the better chances in a scrappy first half, with Brian Brobbey twice denied by Leeds goalkeeper James Trafford after returning to the starting line-up following injury.

Leeds threatened early through Jayden Bogle and Harry Wilson, but neither could find a breakthrough as both sides struggled to create clear-cut opportunities.

The contest opened up after the break, with Sunderland winger Nilson Angulo testing Trafford with two fierce efforts, both of which were kept out by the visiting goalkeeper.

Leeds responded with pressure of their own, forcing Sunderland goalkeeper Robin Roefs into action to deny Tarik Muharemovic and later Ao Tanaka.

Sunderland also survived a scare when a defensive mistake allowed Chemsidine Talbi an opportunity, but his effort was blocked by Jaka Bijol.

Both teams pushed for a late winner, with Leeds midfielder Sean Longstaff seeing an effort saved by Roefs before another strike was blocked near the goal line.

However, neither side could find the decisive goal, leaving Sunderland with a point that ended their losing streak but did little to improve their position at the foot of the standings.

Leeds, meanwhile, remain seventh in the table and inside the top half after extending their unbeaten run.

TOUCHLINES

FORMER Newcastle United boss Eddie Howe - who is out of work - would be interested in speaking to Manchester United if the Old Trafford club part ways with under-pressure manager Michael Carrick.

MANCHESTER UNITED are targeting a move for 24-year-old Everton and England defender Jarrad Branthwaite as they aim to make big changes to their defence.

FORMER Watford, Burnley, Everton and Nottingham Forest boss Sean Dyche is the frontrunner for the Crystal Palace job if the Eagles sack manager Pierre Sage.

EX-BRENTFORD boss Thomas Frank and former Wolves manager Vitor Pereira might also be in the running along with former Ferencvaros boss Robbie Keane.

TOTTENHAM'S Sweden midfielder Lucas Bergvall, 20, is a target for Napoli and Barcelona.

MAN UNITED will not terminate the registration of academy forward JJ Gabriel, 16, meaning he will not be able to leave the club until January, as Barcelona and Paris St-Germain seek to reach an agreement.

ARSENAL, Liverpool and Manchester United are monitoring Bayern Munich's 18-year-old German midfielder Lennart Karl.



Aliff eyes LA28 after Asian Para Games setback

LOSING the silver medal at the 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Para Games has spurred national F20 shot put athlete Mohamad Aliff Mohamad Awi to improve his throwing technique as he pursues qualification for the 2028 Los Angeles Paralympic Games (LA28).

Aliff, who won silver at the 2022 Hangzhou edition, admitted that his performance at this edition of the Games had fallen short of expectations, but said he was still grateful to have made it onto the podium and contributed a bronze medal to the national contingent.

He said his main focus now was to refine his throwing technique, which remained inconsistent, particularly as his performance in training differed from that in competition.

"If there is anything I need to improve, I want to focus on my technique because it has been somewhat disrupted. My performance in training is different from my performance in competition," he told reporters recently.

Commenting on his performance in Aichi-Nagoya, Aliff said he had not expected to achieve a personal best after having only recently recovered from an injury ahead of the competition.

He said he did not consider himself a leading contender, adding that his throw of 14.45 metres (m) had given him the motivation to continue improving his performance.

Aliff said he was now targeting qualification for next year's World Championships in Uzbekistan as an important step in his preparations for LA28.

"I will try to improve my performance step by step and can only hope to qualify for the World Championships," he said.

On his target throwing distance, Aliff said he was initially aiming for between 15 and 16m, while a distance of at least 17m would be needed to be competitive in the medal hunt.

He also pledged to compete against fellow athlete Muhammad Ziyad Zolkefli, who won silver in the event at Aichi-Nagoya, in a bid to sustain Malaysia's success in the discipline.

"God willing, I will do my best to compete with Ziyad and work towards restoring Malaysia's medal-winning momentum," he said. - Bernama

Future para stars wanted

MALAYSIA is ramping up its search for new talent as regional competition heats up, aiming to keep the national team performing strongly at future Asian Para Games.

Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Mordi Bimol said efforts will be boosted to find new athletes through special education schools and the Para Sukma, ensuring a steady pipeline of backup athletes for the national squad.

"I believe what concerns us now is that the competition exists and is intensifying... that's why we encourage the search for new athletes.

"Challenges will always exist, but we remain prepared, including in terms of additional funding," he told reporters after welcoming home the national contingent returning from the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games at Terminal 1 of Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) yesterday.

Malaysia wrapped up its Asian Para Games campaign with six gold, eight silver and 13 bronze medals, finishing 12th in the overall standings.

The national team sent 68 athletes to compete in 94 events across 10 sports, marking Malaysia's smallest delegation to date.

China dominated the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Para Games, collecting 207 gold, 117 silver and 111 bronze medals, far ahead of host Japan (64 gold, 60 silver, 62 bronze) and Uzbekistan (45-49-51). - Bernama

THE Sepang International Circuit (SIC) is drafting a feasibility study on bringing back the Formula One (F1) Grand Prix (GP) to Malaysia, to be presented to the Cabinet in November.

SIC chief executive officer Azhan Shafriman Hanif said it was currently holding engagement sessions with the government, relevant agencies and industry players to obtain accurate information and data for inclusion in the study.

He said the findings would serve as one of the factors for the government to consider before deciding whether Malaysia should return as host of the prestigious race.

"We are in the process of preparing a feasibility study of bringing F1 racing back to Malaysia. In November, we will present a proposal paper to the Cabinet for the government to decide whether to agree to the proposal.

"During this period, we expect to hold engagement sessions with the government, rele-

Can Malaysia bring back the F1 magic?

vant agencies and industry players to ensure that the data presented is accurate," he told *Bernama* recently.

Azhan Shafriman said the study would emphasise the economic impact of hosting F1, in addition to assessing the country's level of preparedness, especially in terms of traffic congestion management and public transport facilities.

On the prospects of Malaysia returning as host of F1, he described the country's chances as 50-50, as the final decision would depend on the government's consideration of the study's findings.

"For now, it is still 50-50. It's difficult for me to say yes or no (whether it will happen or not).

"But, *Insyallah*, we will provide verified data or information to help the government come to a

decision," he added.

Meanwhile, on the possibility of Sepang serving as an alternative venue for international races amid tensions in West Asia, Azhan Shafriman said the SIC had so far not received any approaches from countries affected by the conflict.

However, he said the SIC remains open to discussions should the need arise, taking into account the preparation time required to host a race. Malaysia last hosted an F1 race in 2017.

After nine years, Sepang once again hosted an F1 race - the Gulf Air Bahrain Grand Prix 2026 - from Oct 2-4 following the conflict in West Asia and an agreement involving Formula One, the International Automobile Federation (FIA), and the governments of Bahrain and Malaysia. - Bernama

Doubles delight

Wei Chong-Kai Wun staged a superb comeback to end M'sia's 22-year wait for the French Open men's doubles title



Malaysia's Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun (right) celebrate after winning the men's doubles title at the 2026 French Open, defeating compatriots Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin Rumsani in the final. - @BWFTV/Facebook

NATIONAL men's doubles pair Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai Wun ended Malaysia's 22-year wait for the French Open men's doubles title after staging a superb comeback to defeat compatriots Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin Rumsani in an all-Malaysian final on Sunday.

The unseeded world No. 11 pair recovered from a 13-21 opening-game defeat to beat the sixth-seeded professionals 21-15, 21-7 in 44 minutes at Arena Grand Paris.

The triumph marked Wei Chong-Kai Wun's first title of the season and their first since winning the Malaysia Masters last year. Gan Teik Chai-Koo Kien Keat were the last Malaysian pair to claim the French Open crown in 2004.

As champions, Wei Chong-Kai Wun pocketed US\$70,300 (RM287,196), while Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin received US\$33,250 (RM135,836) as runners-up.

The defeat denied world No. 5 Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin a third title of the season after their victories at the Indonesia Masters in January and Indonesia Open in June.

Wei Chong said the pair had focused on delivering their best performance rather than worrying

about the outcome, knowing they were not among the favourites.

"We did not think too much about winning or losing because we knew we were not the favourites. We just wanted to play our best and try to win every point," he said in an interview shared by the Badminton World Federation.

The victory was particularly significant for the pair, who had never progressed beyond the French Open quarterfinals before this year's triumph.

Their more than five-year partnership was interrupted for about five months before they reunited in August as part of the national men's doubles restructuring ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympic Games.

Despite the separation, the Malaysians showed that their understanding and chemistry remained intact.

Wei Chong also revealed that his knee injury was almost fully healed after disrupting his preparations.

He believes competing without lofty expectations following his return from injury helped the pair play with greater freedom and less pressure. - Bernama

Four spots up for grabs

■ BY ZIKRY MARZUKI

TWO MALE and two female marathon runners will vie for places in Malaysia's squad for the 2027 SEA Games through a qualifying race scheduled for early April in Putrajaya.

Acting Malaysian Athletics (MA) president Datuk Wan Hisham Wan Salleh said the event would be open to the top five male and female finishers from the 2025 and 2026 Kuala Lumpur Standard Chartered Marathon (KLSCM), as well as other runners who meet the association's qualifying criteria.

"As part of our partnership with Dirigo, MA will organise a qualification event to determine which athletes will represent Malaysia in the men's and women's marathon at the 2027 SEA Games.

"The event will take place sometime in the first half of April 2027, most probably in Putrajaya," he said at a press conference in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday.

Wan Hisham said interested athletes must meet several requirements, including having competed in a World Athletics (WA)-recognised marathon between April 1, 2026, and March 30, 2027. MA has also set qualifying time standards, requiring male runners to clock under 2 hours 39 minutes 4 seconds, while female runners must finish in under 2:59:25.

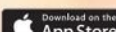
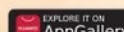
The criteria are intended to ensure Malaysia sends its best available marathon runners to the next SEA Games while providing a fair and open pathway for athletes to earn selection.

Meanwhile, Wan Hisham said MA would provide additional support to the top five finishers from KLSCM 2026 to help them prepare for the qualifying race.

"To help these athletes prepare for the qualification event, they will be given access to National Sports Institute (ISN) facilities in Bukit Jalil and rehabilitation services through Dynamique Sports Rehab Centre as an alternative to ISN.

"We will also help athletes register for international competitions before the qualification race," he added.

The top two finishers in both the men's and women's races will be proposed for selection to represent Malaysia in the marathon at the 2027 SEA Games, with the third-place finisher serving as a reserve.



**Kimi's date
with destiny**

Story
on page 28



**Mbappe double,
Barca trouble**

Story
on page 29

MANCHESTER UNITED AFC BOURNEMOUTH



0
3

95:14

Carrick on the brink

MICHAEL CARRICK said he will do what is best for Manchester United after a 3-0 demolition by Bournemouth plunged his future as manager into doubt on Sunday.

Winless in eight games in all competitions, the 20-time English champions slipped to within one point of the relegation zone after a damaging defeat at Old Trafford.

"It's a tough situation," Carrick told *Sky Sports*. "What is next? I don't know."

"I'll always do what's best for this football club. I've said it all along, I don't change that now. I love what I do. I love the responsibility, but we'll have to wait and see."

Asked in a post-match press conference if he expects to be sacked in the coming days, Carrick replied: "I totally understand the situation. I'm not expecting anything in particular, to be honest. I'm carrying on as normal. I love this place."

Despite a dismal run of results, the United fans largely supported the former midfielder as he made his way off the field at fulltime before they turned on the club's players.

"I have mixed emotions to have that connection with the supporters in the moment we're in. I need time to digest that," added Carrick.

"I appreciate their support but the situation is where it's at. We haven't been good enough."

Carrick's decision to drop captain Bruno Fernandes to the bench and not even introduce the Portuguese international as a substitute backfired.

Fernandes, last season's Premier League player of the year, had criticised Carrick's tactics after a 4-1 thrashing by Como last Thursday.

Carrick said before the game that call was a "pure football" decision, but it was hard to believe Fernandes was not being punished as he was left on the bench for the entire match.

Devils' crisis deepened as Bournemouth inflicted another blow, leaving United manager facing mounting questions over his future

"There's always times in games when you are trying to change the course of the game and to make a difference," said Carrick as he swerved questions on Fernandes's absence. "Those were the decisions we made today."

Carrick was only appointed on a two-year deal in May after a successful caretaker spell in charge led United to third place in the Premier League last season.

However, he has been unable to arrest the club's steep decline since his former boss Alex Ferguson retired as manager in 2013.

United were outspent by many of their rivals in the transfer market

as they added just three midfielders - Youri Tielemans, Andrey Santos and Carlos Baleba.

But Carrick said a lack of investment did not justify such a decline in results.

"Last season to finish third was a really good achievement in the circumstances," added Carrick.

"We understood where that left us, what was next, what needed to be done and how we needed to improve, and where we were at as a team and as a group at that stage."

"I definitely knew that we hadn't cracked it and there was a lot of work to be done, but that doesn't mean to say that it should have gone this way."

A strong finish to last season during Carrick's interim spell in charge secured third place in the Premier League.

Yet with just one win against promoted Ipswich, United have taken just seven points from eight league games so far this season - their lowest tally at this stage of a season since 1986/87.

United's players were booed off by the few frustrated fans that remained inside

Old Trafford at the end of their heaviest home defeat since 2024. Carrick was taunted by Bournemouth supporters with chants of "sacked in the morning".

Carrick says waving to fans after Bournemouth thrashing 'wasn't a farewell'. He was still serenaded by United fans as he went down the tunnel but claimed: "It wasn't a farewell from me."

He said he had only had a short conversation after the game with the United hierarchy and is not sure if chief executive Omar Berrada and sporting director Jason Wilcox will dismiss him.

Carrick insisted the United players are hurting as their nosedive continues but admitted he has not spoken to them all.

"There's a lot of emotion in the changing room right now, there's a lot of disappointment, there's a lot of the boys quite hurt, disappointed," he said.

"It's not like they don't care, or they want to be in this position. The ones I've spoken to - I've not spoke to everyone individually, the ones I have spoken to, it's affecting them a lot."

Carrick said he was left with a variety of feelings as he thanked the United fans for their backing. "Mixed emotions for the supporters to respond in that way," he said. "To feel the connection and appreciation from the supporters, I feel it and appreciate it a lot."

United's co-owners the Glazer family and Jim Ratcliffe were also targeted for angry chants, although Carrick largely avoided the fans' ire.

It is unlikely that sympathy vote will spare the former United midfielder from the axe. - AFP/The Independent



Manchester United manager
MICHAEL CARRICK