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Anwar told reporters after attending Friday prayers at Masjid Bukit Indah in Ampang that he will think about the calls for snap polls and make a decision. – BERNAMAPIC

Anwar weighs calls for early GE16

While open to proposals, prime minister vows focus on welfare of people and battling corruption.

King consents to Serian haze emergency as API hits 521

PM says declaration enables more aggressive measures, including cloud seeding, to protect Sarawak residents.

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Penang acts to protect community from farm pollution

State orders all swine rearing operators to send livestock wastewater to biogas plant to prevent discharge into rivers.

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Budget 2027 to widen economic opportunities for youth, says minister

PETALING JAYA: Budget 2027 is expected to focus on creating more economic opportunities for young people, including in segments that have previously been less accessible to them, said Economy Minister Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir.

"We see this as creating new avenues for young people to participate in economic segments that were previously less accessible to them, particularly through opportunities in the stock market and ownership.

"This will enable them to learn about and venture into another segment or new sector."

Akmal said the government must also address current challenges, including rising pressure on fuel prices amid the energy supply crisis, while ensuring that development projects remain on track.

"Therefore, this will certainly be an area of focus in terms of fiscal management."

He said further details on the initiatives would only be announced after the tabling of Budget 2027.

Akmal also said education in science, technology, engineering and mathematics needs

to be strengthened through talent development from the grassroots level.

"We are giving priority to enabling these talents by equipping them with the necessary skills to become more directly involved in high-growth, high-value industries.

"At the same time, we are strengthening funding for research and invention, not only for academic purposes but also for commercialisation."

Akmal said the Economy Ministry is examining the structure of the country's preparedness as

Malaysia moves towards becoming an ageing nation.

He said the issue should not be viewed solely from the perspective of elderly welfare and social protection but must also include preparing the younger generation to become the country's future economic drivers.

"The younger generation is the one that will actually have to shoulder greater responsibility for the sustainability of the economy and the continuity of the country's growth." — **BY THE SUN TEAM**

Emergency declared in Serian over hazardous haze

➤ Sultan Ibrahim consents to declaration as API in area reaches 521

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI
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PETALING JAYA: His Majesty, the King of Malaysia, Sultan Ibrahim has consented to the declaration of an emergency throughout Sarawak's Serian division following hazardous levels haze pollution.

In a statement yesterday, the Prime Minister's Office said the decision was made after taking into consideration the advice of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg and relevant agencies on the air quality in the affected area.

It said the declaration would enable more effective measures to be taken to protect the health and welfare of residents affected by the haze.

"The government will continue to monitor developments from time to time and ensure that all necessary measures are implemented promptly, including mitigation measures as well as the dissemination of information and health advice to the public."

Anwar said he had been in contact with Abang Johari over the past two days, adding that authorities are prepared to take all necessary measures to protect residents.

Speaking after Friday prayers at Masjid Bukit Indah in Ampang yesterday, Anwar said cloud seeding is among the options the government is weighing to help ease the haze alongside other possible interventions.

He linked the haze partly to conditions elsewhere in the region, adding that Sarawak is among the areas bearing the brunt of it.

Anwar appealed to the public for patience



Jalan Serian-Sri Aman seen shrouded in thick haze yesterday as the API crossed the 500 mark. — **BERNAMAPIC**

as authorities work through the response.

"I pray for the safety of the people of Serian, Sarawak and everyone else affected."

As of 2pm yesterday, Serian's API stood at a hazardous 521, according to the Environment Department's monitoring system.

Kuching was the only other location in hazardous territory (311) while Samarahan (284) and Sri Aman (235) registered very unhealthy readings.

Eleven other locations reported unhealthy levels — Sarikei (182), Sibu (181), Mukah (177),

Bintulu (157), Kota Kinabalu (152), Tawau (151), Samalaju (146), Sandakan (140), Pasir Gudang in Johor (128), Segamat in Johor (115) and Miri (112).

Under Malaysia's API classification, readings of 0-50 signal good air quality, 51-100 moderate, 101-200 unhealthy, 201-300 very unhealthy and anything above 300 is deemed hazardous. Readings exceeding 500 point to extremely severe pollution and can trigger immediate emergency measures depending on the situation on the ground.

Turn demographic challenges into solid laws: Speaker

KUALA LUMPUR: Parliament must translate demographic challenges such as ageing population, smaller families and changing intergenerational needs into concrete laws, budgets and policies, said Dewan Rakyat Speaker Tan Sri Johari Abdul.

He said population and development issues are ultimately political matters as public priorities must find expression through legislation, institutions and government spending.

"Words create attention. Attention creates pressure. Pressure creates priorities and priorities eventually appear in legislation, institutions and budgets," he said at a welcome dinner he hosted for participants of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) annual conference 2026 on Thursday.

Also present were Works Minister and AFPPD Malaysia president Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi and his deputy Howard Lee Chuan How, who is also Ipoh Timur MP.

Johari said he is pleased that ageing, an issue often associated with criticism or speculation in political circles, is being given a firm place on the policy agenda at the conference.

"Parliamentarians have a complicated relationship with age. When we are young people tell us we lack experience. When we acquire experience people begin asking when we intend to retire."

Johari said the issues discussed by parliamentarians at the conference went beyond population statistics, encompassing how societies prepare young people for adulthood, support families, value care and enable women to participate fully in society.

He said they also included the challenge of responding to longer life expectancy at a time when families are becoming smaller.

Johari said the work of AFPPD is particularly important as demographic changes unfold over decades while electoral politics often operate within much shorter time frames, Bernama reported.

Recalling Malaysia's journey towards hosting the AFPPD Global Secretariat, he said the initiative began in 2024 when the then deputy president (Howard) Lee approached him with the proposal.

Johari said he subsequently participated in AFPPD Malaysia's regional meeting in Kuala Lumpur in July 2024, which focused on ageing preparedness and the care economy.

"Two years later, the Global Secretariat is here. So Lee, congratulations."

He said the inauguration of the AFPPD Global Secretariat office in Kuala Lumpur on Friday would mark a new chapter in parliamentary cooperation on population and development.

The two-day conference, themed "Parliamentary Leadership for the Future: An All of Society Approach to the Care Economy and Demographic Resilience", brings together parliamentarians from Asia, the Pacific, Africa and the Arab world.

MACC drops orange detainee uniform rule for court appearances

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has, with immediate effect, done away with the requirement that individuals under investigation wear its orange detainee uniform when produced in court for remand hearings.

The change follows Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's remarks yesterday that political leaders would be given room not to wear the attire when appearing in court.

MACC chief commissioner Datuk Seri Abd Halim Aman said the shift reflects recent developments and current thinking on how

persons under investigation should be handled, particularly during court appearances.

"Persons under investigation will be allowed to wear their own clothes when taken to court, while lock-up attire will only be worn throughout the period they are held in the lock-up," he said in a statement yesterday.

Halim added that whether handcuffs are used would depend on the specifics of each case, with exemptions extended to those who are infirm, disabled, underage or elderly.

"However, MACC will continue to take precautionary measures and ensure that

appropriate security controls are implemented throughout the handling of persons under investigation," he said, adding that the commission remains committed to managing suspects professionally.

Earlier, Anwar had said political leaders would be given leeway not to wear the orange jumpsuit in court, adding that the matter had been raised the day before.

He said those cooperating with investigations should not necessarily be forced to wear the orange attire as it could shape public perception unfairly. — **By THE SUN TEAM**

PM to consider early general election

► 'The decision will be made after I have thought about it. I will then present it to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong'

■ BY THESUN TEAM
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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has signalled openness to an early 16th general election (GE16), saying he would first weigh the proposal carefully before presenting any decision to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"That is a proposal I can consider

but the decision will be made by me after I have thought about it. I will then present it to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong," he said after attending Friday prayers at Masjid Bukit Indah yesterday.

Anwar was responding to calls from PAS president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, who have expressed support for an early GE16.

He also said the government's immediate priorities are strengthening the economy, safeguarding the welfare of the people and addressing corruption and abuse of power.

"These are the important focuses for me. Given the current situation, the government remains stable, and we should concentrate on these matters."

Meanwhile, Anwar said individuals holding public responsibilities and with clean records should have no reason to fear investigations by enforcement agencies, including the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission, police and Inland Revenue Board.

He stressed that the government

has been entrusted with a mandate to administer the country properly and address corruption and abuse of power without regard to political or racial considerations.

"We cannot continue to allow the current situation to persist."

"We have been given the mandate to govern and manage the country well and to clean it of corruption and abuse of power."

Anwar further emphasised that enforcement agencies must conduct investigations professionally, fairly and strictly based on evidence.

"If there is evidence, proceed."

"If there is no evidence, release them."

He said he had also made his position clear to the Cabinet that

enforcement agencies must carry out their duties impartially, and dismissed allegations that investigations are being used to target specific individuals.

Anwar said he is willing to withstand pressure in pursuing the government's anti-corruption efforts, stressing that the campaign is not intended to safeguard his position or protect any particular group.

"This is not about race. This is about saving the country. It is not about saving a position or saving a group."

He also called on the public to continue supporting efforts to improve governance and combat corruption.



Abdul Hadi (left) at the opening of the party's 72nd annual Muktamar yesterday at the Kelantan Islamic Tarbiah Centre in Pengkalan Chepa, Kelantan. – PIC COURTESY OF PAS FACEBOOK PAGE

PAS sets out seven-point strategy for GE16

■ BY THESUN TEAM
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PETALING JAYA: PAS has laid out seven strategic priorities to guide its preparations for the 16th general election (GE16), with a willingness to join forces with other parties being at the top of the list, said party president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang.

Speaking at the opening of the party's 72nd Annual Muktamar yesterday, Abdul Hadi said the push for Muslim unity remains central to the identity of PAS, stressing that it has never gone back on any agreement it has entered into.

"PAS stands ready to work with any party on matters that serve the nation's interests as long as they do not require the party to compromise on its principles or policies."

He said such collaborations are being pursued not only nationally but also at the state, constituency and branch levels.

Abdul Hadi added that the second priority is to hold on to the gains PAS made in its four stronghold states of Kelantan, Kedah, Terengganu and Perlis – collectively referred to as SG4 – by ensuring that every parliamentary and state seat won in GE15 remains under the care of the party.

Abdul Hadi identified growth into new target states as the third priority, and deepening the support of religious scholars, young people, women voters and members of the Dewan Himpunan Pendukung PAS (the party's non-Muslim wing) as the fourth.

He named strengthening internal religious education (*tarbiah*) and organisational discipline as the party's backbone as the fifth priority.

Abdul Hadi said the sixth priority is the building of effective election machinery and messaging, including vetting candidates on criteria such as loyalty to the party, personal integrity and standing within their communities.

He said the seventh and final priority is expanding outreach through welfare programmes and impactful religious propagation (*dakwah*).

Abdul Hadi called on party members and grassroots machinery to treat the *muktamar* as an opportunity for introspection, urging them to embrace this year's theme "Islamic Solutions for Victory," as a guiding principle at every level of the organisation.

"Let us tighten our discipline and resolve and grow the party's reach in society through *dakwah*, welfare work and efforts toward Muslim unity."

Do not weaponise graft issues, says Hadi

PETALING JAYA: Corruption allegations should not be used as political ammunition but should be addressed as offences that need to be stopped at the root, said PAS president Tan Sri Abdul Hadi Awang.

Speaking at the party's 72nd Annual Muktamar held at the Kelantan Islamic Tarbiah Centre in Pengkalan Chepa yesterday, he said selective enforcement and going after political rivals while overlooking similar misconduct among allies undermine genuine anti-corruption efforts.

He added that enforcement should cover everyone involved in a bribery chain, whether it is the person who takes the money, the one who offers it or the middleman who arranges the deal.

He acknowledged that mismanagement has occurred in the handling of public funds and GLCs, and called such lapses unfortunate.

Abdul Hadi said where solid evidence exists, such cases belong in court not in the media or on the campaign trail.

He pointed to the Tabung Haji Royal Commission of Inquiry as an example of an issue that had been exploited to shape negative public opinion during the election season rather than pursued strictly through legal channels.

He added that Islam and Muslims face heightened risk under a Pakatan Harapan-led government, which he described as dominated by non-Muslim influence.

Abdul Hadi also said this threatens the broader objectives of Islamic law (*maqasid al-shariah*), and the danger must be treated as a priority.

He urged emulation of Prophet Muhammad's governance style – one grounded in honesty, respect for the rule of law,

fairness and freedom from self-interest in how laws are enforced.

Abdul Hadi said PAS also believes Malaysia should stay cautious and maintain a firm, neutral position internationally, resisting any return to Southeast Asia becoming contested ground or a proxy arena for global powers.

He said decisions on foreign policy must be driven first by national interest and the need for regional stability, with Malaysia charting an independent, principled course rather than aligning itself as an instrument of any major power. He added that Islamic teachings call for international relations built on fairness, shared benefit and cooperation.

Abdul Hadi said PAS would keep highlighting the struggles of Muslims facing oppression globally while pushing for greater unity among Muslim nations in Southeast Asia and beyond. – By THESUN TEAM

Extra days for 'special draws' not new: Tengku Zafrul

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision to increase the number of days for "special draws" for licensed betting games to 22 a year during the previous administration was a collective responsibility of the previous government, including PAS ministers at the time, said former Finance minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Aziz.

He said special draws are not new as they

were introduced in 1999, and the ceiling limit of 22 draws a year already existed during the Barisan Nasional administration before he was appointed as Finance minister.

"During the pandemic, the government at the time returned to that existing ceiling (22 times), and this matter was also informed to Parliament through an official reply.

"Importantly, under today's Madani government, the special draws have been reduced to just eight times a year," said Tengku Zafrul, who is now senior political adviser to the prime minister.

He was responding to certain parties pinning the responsibility for the decision to increase the special draws on him. – Bernama



'Mandatory' annual drug screening for all cabin crew'

» Safety remains non-negotiable priority to ensure national carrier earns trust of public, says MAG chief

KUALA LUMPUR: Safety remains a non-negotiable priority for Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) as it continues to strengthen its safety measures, processes and standards, its president and group CEO Captain Nasaruddin A. Bakar said.

This is to ensure that the national carrier earns the trust of its customers daily.

Nasaruddin said MAG had completed drug screening of more than 1,500 pilots across its airlines on Aug 15. Screening was also conducted on all pilots and cabin crew at Firefly.

"As of Thursday, we have covered 98.8% of our cabin crew in Malaysia Airlines, and we hope to reach 100 today," he said at a press conference here yesterday.

"With that, we would have covered all our flight crew, both Malaysia Airlines and Firefly. So far, all the tests were negative," he said.

Nasaruddin added that the initial screening was conducted as a one-off exercise. It would now become a mandatory annual requirement for all cabin crew, Bernama reported.

"We are also doing random testing almost every week. Safety demands discipline in the decisions we make, the standards we uphold and the way we respond when things don't go



Nasaruddin said the aviation industry faces various external pressures, including fuel price volatility, supply chain constraints and geopolitical uncertainty. — ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THESUN

as planned," he said.

He noted that getting the fundamentals right was increasingly important as the aviation industry faces various external pressures, including fuel price volatility, supply chain constraints and geopolitical uncertainty.

"Demand remains encouraging, but we continue to navigate fuel price volatility, supply chain constraints and geopolitical uncertainty.

"Fuel alone for MAG accounts for close to

40% of our total operating costs. Every US\$1 (RM4.05) increase in fuel prices has an impact of approximately RM50 million on our costs," he said.

While MAG cannot control such external pressures, it can determine how it prepares and responds to them.

This includes strengthening business areas and safety measures to improve competitiveness and delivering products and experiences valued by customers.

Malacca eyes national geopark recognition to attract tourists

MALACCA: Malacca aims to achieve National Geopark status this November, with 29 potential geosites identified across the state to be highlighted as new tourism products.

Malacca Tourism Promotion Division general manager Nasrul Ahmad said efforts to secure the recognition had entered a crucial phase, with preparations being strengthened through engagement sessions with tourism industry players and stakeholders.

"These engagement sessions are mandatory to meet the requirements for National Geopark recognition.

"They also aim to brief government agencies, local authorities, communities, Village Development and Security Committees, tourism associations, the hotel sector and geoguides on the geopark and geosite concepts," he said after the Aspiring Malacca Geopark engagement session with Malacca tourism industry players.

The event was officiated by state Tourism, Heritage, Arts and Culture Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Razak Abdul Rahman here on Thursday.

Nasrul said preparations would be intensified over the remaining two months to ensure all assessment criteria were met.

He added that since the initiative began in 2022, the state government and relevant agencies had carried out various efforts, including scientific studies, geosite inventories, geocommunity development and public awareness programmes.

"A total of 29 potential geosites featuring unique geological, biodiversity and cultural heritage elements have been identified across three districts, namely Central Malacca, Jasin and Alor Gajah.

"Among the geosites in Central Malacca are Pulau Upeh, Pulau Besar and Teluk Mas, while Jasin features Bukit Batu Lebah, and Alor Gajah includes Tanjung Tuan and Tanjung Bidara," he said.

He said Pulau Upeh possessed a unique historical feature with the discovery of cut laterite stones on the island.

"Based on briefings by the Minerals and Geoscience Department, these laterite stones were cut and transported to Malacca in the past to build the Grand Mosque and the A Famosa Fort," he said.

He encouraged tourism industry players to promote and integrate these 29 geosites into state tour packages by highlighting unique activities at each site. — Bernama

Plan to make reform projects compulsory for state bodies

MALACCA: The Malacca state government plans to require every government department and agency in the state to submit at least one Bureaucratic Red Tape Reform project for competition from next year to further strengthen public service delivery.

Malacca state secretary Datuk Salhah Salleh said the proposal was to ensure public service reform remained a culture of continuous improvement within every organisation, rather than merely a project or slogan.

"For next year, we propose that every

department and agency have one project to be entered in the competition at a convention," she said after officiating at the closing ceremony of the 2026 Malacca Bureaucratic Red Tape Reform Convention here on Thursday.

She said strong commitment from all parties was essential to support the state's rapid economic growth, which recorded 3.0% growth in 2025, with a gross domestic product of RM50.3 billion and approved investments amounting to RM14.68 billion.

Salhah said the use of technology, including

artificial intelligence (AI), in these projects was crucial to reducing bureaucracy and waiting times, as well as speeding up approval processes for the benefit of the public and business community.

She hoped at least 10 of the 20 AI-based projects being contested at this year's convention would receive national-level recognition from the chief secretary to the government or Public Service Department.

The convention featured 20 AI-based projects from 14 departments and agencies. — Bernama

Podcast lands Islamic economic agency in Malaysia Book of Records

BANGI: The Malaysian Islamic Economic Development Foundation made history by securing its first entry in the Malaysia Book of Records (MBOR) under the "Most Guests Featured in a Podcast Programme" category.

Its director-general Zabidi Nasan said the recognition marked an important first step in the agency's efforts to foster a culture of knowledge and intellectual discourse within the community.

He said podcasts were chosen as the platform since they resonated with the public and had become an increasingly popular medium for delivering knowledge in a casual yet effective manner.

"The podcast is a platform that connects closely with the community and has become a popular medium today. People prefer information to be delivered in a casual yet effective manner," he told the media after the MBOR recognition ceremony here yesterday.

Zabidi said podcast production required

relatively little cost and space while offering extensive reach among Malaysians, with the potential to reach an international audience.

"It is easy to implement, requires neither significant cost nor large space, yet its reach can extend to all Malaysians and perhaps even an international audience," he said.

He noted that the achievement did not mean the foundation would abandon intellectual discourse or more serious conferences, but that the podcast served as an additional medium for disseminating knowledge to the public.

"The primary goal of producing the podcast is to enrich the community with accurate knowledge and enable them to evaluate information and news based on the benchmarks of established disciplines," he said.

The podcast was produced specifically in conjunction with the "Policy Dialogue 2026: Formulation of the Infak Governance Model and National Policy Resolution", which focused on discussions on the Islamic economy, *ummah*

development and economic sustainability grounded in human values.

The podcast recording sessions, held over 16 hours on July 23 and July 24, produced 27 episodes featuring 31 guest panellists, including government figures, industry leaders, policymakers, representatives from financial institutions, academics and entrepreneurs.

The programme was held in conjunction with the Humane Economy Global Discourse 2026 (HEGD 2026).

Zabidi said the foundation would continue producing podcasts given the medium's large following and suitability for disseminating knowledge to the public.

Meanwhile, he said it aimed to improve its ranking among religious agencies by securing a top five position as part of efforts to strengthen its organisational performance.

"As a religious agency, we currently rank seventh, and this presents a challenge to the management. We are doing good work, so why

not commit ourselves fully? Even a slight improvement would serve as initial momentum," he said.

He stressed that the target must be achieved realistically through a continuous improvement approach, with every member of the workforce striving to ensure that today's performance surpasses yesterday's.

He added that the achievement aligns with its 2023–2027 strategic direction, specifically "Projek Najah", which seeks to build an ecosystem encompassing the economy, *infak* (charitable spending) and business activities.

The Malaysian Islamic Economic Development Foundation is an agency under the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs). Established on Oct 13, 1976, and relaunched in 1984. It is dedicated to improving the wellbeing of the *ummah* through Islamic economic development, educational assistance, community programmes and charitable contributions to those in need. — Bernama

Six in **drug probe** linked to M'sian co-pilot arrested

Investigations found suspects acted as upline and downline members of distribution syndicates: NCID chief

KUALA LUMPUR: Police have arrested six local men suspected of involvement in an international drug trafficking syndicate linked to the arrest of a Malaysian co-pilot in Jakarta in July.

Bukit Aman Narcotics Criminal Investigation Department (NCID) director Datuk Hussein Omar Khan said the suspects, aged between 23 and 50, were arrested in special operations at several locations between Aug 20 and 28.

He said the arrests followed information obtained from the 39-year-old co-pilot during questioning by an NCID team sent to Jakarta

from Aug 11 to 15.

"Investigations and intelligence found that the suspects acted as upline and downline members of the drug distribution syndicate involving the co-pilot," he told Bernama when contacted yesterday.

Hussein said four of the six suspects had fled the country – two to Thailand and two to Vietnam – but were arrested upon their return to Malaysia.

"The two men who fled to Thailand were arrested when they returned by ferry at the Kuah jetty in Langkawi, while the two who fled to Vietnam were detained upon arrival at

the Penang International Airport."

Hussein said all six are being detained under the Dangerous Drugs (Special Preventive Measures) Act 1985, which allows police to hold suspects for up to 60 days to complete investigations before any further detention order is issued.

He said some of the findings from the investigation into the six suspects would also be shared with Indonesian National Police.

Media reports had previously stated the Malaysian co-pilot was arrested by Indonesian authorities at Terminal 3 of the Soekarno-Hatta International Airport on suspicion of attempting to smuggle 25kg of drugs.

Indonesian police reportedly found 15 packages containing 70,114 ecstasy pills and methamphetamine, worth an estimated RM45 million.



BIG HAUL ... Customs Director-General Datuk Seri Amran Ahmad (centre) with seized drugs during a press conference yesterday at the Customs Department narcotics branch in Kampung Jijan, Nilai. – **BERNAMAPIC**

Najib, son granted stay on bankruptcy proceedings

PUTRAJAYA: The Court of Appeal yesterday granted former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and his son Datuk Mohd Nazifuddin Najib, a stay of bankruptcy proceedings against them.

The stay was granted pending the disposal of their appeals before the Special Commissioners of Income Tax (SCIT) over additional tax assessments issued by the Inland Revenue Board (IRB).

A three-man bench comprising justices Datuk Dr Alwi Abdul Wahab, Datuk Dr Shahnaz Sulaiman and Datuk Ong Chee Kwan allowed their appeals to set aside a High Court decision on Nov 17 last year, which had dismissed their applications for a stay.

Delivering the unanimous decision, Alwi said the stay was warranted as the appellants had raised specific issues to be determined by the SCIT, which constituted sufficient grounds for granting the stay.

He said there were substantial issues concerning alleged errors in the computation of the taxable amount, totalling about RM1.69 billion, including matters relating to double taxation and the treatment of refunded donations and dividends used for

charitable and political purposes.

These matters, he said, were not disputed on their merits by the respondent, who maintained that they should be properly determined by the SCIT.

Alwi said the learned judicial commissioner had erred in holding that the appellants suffer no irreparable harm on the basis that Section 111 of the Income Tax Act (ITA) guarantees a refund of any tax overpaid should the SCIT appeal succeed.

"The judicial commissioner's equation of irreparable harm with mere monetary loss was a misdirection," he added.

He said conversely, the grant of a stay of the bankruptcy proceeding would occasion no prejudice to the respondent, as the IRB, acting as the government's collecting agent, retains its statutory entitlement to enforce any finalised tax liability once the finding disputes are conclusively determined by the SCIT.

Alwi also said the "pay-first-dispute-later" mechanism under the ITA should not be construed as an absolute statutory bar against the court exercising its discretion.

"It is a procedural framework designed to

secure revenue collection, but it does not extinguish the court's inherent jurisdiction to intervene where the balance of justice so requires," he said.

Alwi ordered the government to pay RM30,000 in costs each to Najib and Mohd Nazifuddin, Bernama reported.

The bankruptcy proceedings stemmed from separate High Court decisions granting the IRB summary judgments against the father and son over unpaid tax arrears for the 2011 to 2017 assessment years.

The IRB is seeking to recover RM1.69 billion from Najib and RM37.6 million from Nazifuddin.

Both Najib and Mohd Nazifuddin failed in their appeals at the Court of Appeal and Federal Court to set aside the summary judgments.

Following that, bankruptcy notices were issued against them.

They subsequently applied for a stay of the bankruptcy proceedings, but the application was dismissed by High Court deputy registrar Kamarul Aris Kamalluddin on July 29, 2024.

They appealed the decision to the High Court but were unsuccessful. – Bernama

'Datuk' denies modesty outrage charge

BY **THESUN TEAM**

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PETALING JAYA: A retired army officer holding the title "Datuk" has pleaded not guilty at the Ayer Keroh Magistrate's Court in Malacca to a charge of outraging the modesty of a 20-year-old female golf caddy.

Yahya Hashim, 68, entered his plea after the charge was read out before Magistrate Uthman Abd Ghani, a Malay daily reported.

Prosecutors alleged that Yahya used criminal force against the caddy in a manner that outraged her modesty at the Tiara Melaka Golf & Country Club in Ayer Keroh between 8.30am and 12.30pm on Aug 25.

The charge falls under Section 354 of the Penal Code, which carries a maximum 10-year prison term, a fine, whipping or a combination of two of the penalties.

DPP Syauqi Mardiah Baharudin requested the court to set bail at RM5,000 and issue an order that Yahya be barred from approaching or harassing the complainant.

Lawyer Melvin Tay, representing the accused, appealed for a reduced bail amount.

He said his client was retired and had no steady income, adding that he was living with his wife and is receiving treatment for a prostate condition.

The magistrate set bail at RM2,500 and upheld the no-contact condition sought by the prosecution.

The case has been scheduled for mention on Sept 28.

Missing TVET student found drowned

MALACCA: A teenager, believed to have gone missing while looking for crabs in the coastal reclamation area near Pantai Klebang here, has been found drowned.

Malacca Fire and Rescue Department assistant director of Fire and Rescue Operations Division, senior fire superintendent II Mohd Shahrom Laji said Muhammad Arif Daniel Nizamuddin, 16, a Technical and Vocational Education and Training institute student, was found near the waters of Pulau Upeh at about 7.20pm on Thursday.

"The victim was found by fishermen near Pulau Upeh, about two nautical miles from the mainland, before a search and rescue team retrieved the body.

Central Malacca district police chief ACP Halim Abas confirmed the discovery of the body.

He added that the body was sent to the Malacca Hospital Forensic Department, and a post-mortem is expected to be conducted soon. – Bernama

Two motorcyclists killed in crash

JASIN: Two motorcyclists were killed in a crash on Jalan Gapam near a petrol station in Bemban here on Thursday night.

Jasin district police chief Supt Lee Robert said both victims, a 21-year-old college student and a 41-year-old lorry driver, died on the spot in the incident, which occurred at about 11.30pm.

He said initial investigations found that the student was travelling from Bemban towards Ayer Keroh, while the lorry driver was heading in the opposite direction, towards Bemban from Ayer Keroh.

"The 41-year-old motorcyclist is believed to have entered the opposite lane while overtaking a vehicle before colliding with the motorcycle ridden by the 21-year-old victim, who was travelling in his lane.

"Both victims sustained serious head and body injuries and were pronounced dead at the scene," he said. – Bernama

Sabahans get taste of 'American pie'

KOTA KINABALU: The United States (US) took its state fair culture to Sabah on Thursday, offering locals a taste of American food, games, music and community festivities as part of celebrations marking 250 years of US independence.

Chargé d'Affaires at the US Embassy David Gamble said The Great American Sabah State Fair, held at Padang Merdeka, was designed to give Sabahans an experience familiar to many Americans while celebrating the close bilateral ties.

"We couldn't think of a better place to celebrate 250 years of US independence," he told reporters

US Embassy holds fair for locals, featuring food, games and community activities

after flagging off the Freedom250 Run at the event.

Also present was Assistant Minister to the Chief Minister Datuk Ceasar Mandela Malakun.

The embassy decided to stage the large-scale celebration in Sabah as 2026 was a significant year for the US, while Malaysia had also recently celebrated its 69th National Day, Gamble said.

"The timing is right to go big, to really show to the people of Sabah what it's like to go to a state fair in the United States so that everybody can have that experience."

Gamble added that state fairs in the US typically feature carnival-style games, food, entertainment and family activities, with many of those elements recreated at the Sabah event.

The programme included an apple pie contest, hot dog eating contest, games and performances, while about 40 vendors offered food, arts and crafts and other products, Bernama reported.

He said the fair was also intended to provide a space for Sabahans to spend time with family and friends while experiencing American culture.

He also highlighted similarities between the US and Sabah in terms of multicultural character, saying both societies were shaped by different communities coming together.

Gamble, who had previously

visited Sabah during the Kaamatan celebration, said the state had succeeded in preserving and celebrating its diverse cultures in an authentic way.

"Sabah has this natural feeling. It exists, people live it for real, and I think that's why so many Americans come here to Sabah, and we feel very happy and comfortable here in Sabah," he said.

The Great American Sabah State Fair also featured performances by the Pacific Partnership Band, a convoy of more than 50 Harley-Davidson motorcycles, DJ performances and other activities.

Ecotourism potential of Muse Enduro event

KOTA BHARU: The Muse Enduro off-road event has the potential to emerge as a key recreational sports and ecotourism product in Gua Musang, showcasing its unique terrain, rich biodiversity and local community heritage, said Exploration Motor Sports Club (ELS) chairman Mohd Haizul Omar.

He said the event would not only offer an exciting dirt bike riding experience for extreme motor sports enthusiasts, but also create economic opportunities for the community.

He added that well-organised motorcycling and adventure activities could stimulate economic activity among local residents by creating demand for food, accommodation, support services and other tourism related services.

"We want this event to grow and bring benefits to everyone. While enduro enthusiasts get to enjoy the sport they love, we also want their participation to benefit the local community and economy."

Mohd Haizul said the event could also give participants an opportunity to experience the unique landscape and Orang Asli communities in Gua Musang, while encouraging greater

respect for the local community and appreciation of the environment.

The three-day Muse Enduro 2026 event, from Aug 28 to 30, offers participants challenging rides through the interior of Gua Musang, with opportunities to meet Orang Asli communities and take part in cultural activities, Bernama reported.

The event, organised by the Kelantan Youth and Sports Department in collaboration with ELS, ST Rally Club and Holeshot Motowear, also drew participants from Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore, in addition to riders from across Malaysia, putting Gua Musang in the spotlight as an emerging adventure sports and ecotourism destination.

Mohd Haizul said the approach of combining motorsports with tourism, volunteering, community development and social responsibility was in line with the aim of ELS in making Muse Enduro an annual event.

He said ELS also plans to expand collaboration with government agencies, the private sector and other stakeholders to ensure future editions bring greater benefits to local communities and surrounding areas.



In addition to participants from throughout Malaysia, the event will also feature riders from Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.
— PIC COURTESY OF JABATAN BELIA DAN SUKAN NEGERI KELANTAN FACEBOOK PAGE

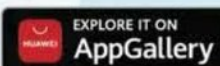
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■ P. CHANDRA SAGARAN
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Ipoh White Coffee to take centre stage at festival

➤ International chain Starbucks among top attractions at event from Sept 10 to 13

IPOH: Ipoh White Coffee, which culinary guide TasteAtlas ranked 10th out of 39 coffees worldwide in March 2024, will take centre stage at the inaugural Ipoh Coffee Vibes 2026 Festival running from Sept 10 to 13.

True to its name, the coffee originated in Ipoh and owes its signature flavour to a roasting method unique to the city, in which the beans are lightly roasted in margarine before being ground and brewed.

To be held at the Riverfront Old Town Ipoh area on Jalan Sultan Iskandar, the festival will bring together an eclectic mix of coffee styles, from pulled coffee to Italian and specialty brews, alongside coffee traditions rooted in the Malay and Indian communities and offerings from international chain Starbucks.

Admission is free, and visitors can pair their coffee with traditional snacks and other coffee-based fare. Opening hours run from 2pm to 11pm on Sept 10, and from 4pm to 11pm on Sept 11 through 13.

Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming will officiate at the opening on Sept 10. Beyond coffee offerings, visitors can walk through the "White Coffee Story Corridor" to learn about the city's history, view exhibits recreating the feel of an old-school kopitiam, and sample free coffee from the Kaw Kaw White Coffee Truck.

Live performances tracing Ipoh's history and character along the Kinta River will also be part of the programme, reinforcing efforts to cement the city's identity as a "Coffee City" while spotlighting the wider diversity of coffee culture.

Visitors who spend RM100 or more will receive an Ipoh Coffee Vibes souvenir set, while purchases of RM50 and above qualify for lucky draw entries.

The event is organised by the Perak Tourism,



Loh (fifth from left) with strategic partners for the Ipoh Coffee Vibes 2026 Festival. – P. CHANDRA SAGARAN/THESUN

Industry, Investment and Corridor Development exco office and Persatuan Vitaliti Kinta Perak.

Other strategic partners include the Tourism,

Arts and Culture Ministry, Kepayang state assembly service centre, Tourism Perak, Ipoh City Council and the Malaysia Inbound Chinese Association and various coffee brands.

Exco chairman Loh Sze Yee told reporters the festival is designed to celebrate white coffee culture while also giving space to beverage traditions from other communities.



Newly installed presidents and office-bearers of the three Keningau Lions clubs at the ceremony. – JOSHUA CHANG/THESUN

Three Keningau Lions clubs unite to strengthen community service

■ BY JOSHUA CHANG
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KOTA KINABALU: Three Lions clubs in Keningau have pledged closer cooperation and stronger community service efforts following a joint installation ceremony last weekend.

The ceremony saw Ignatius Olim installed as president of the Lions Club of Keningau Host, Dr Colette Fong as president of Keningau Mandarin and Yap Kim Hung as president of Keningau Downtown.

District 308-A2 Governor Datuk Jimmy Tie officiated at the ceremony and installed the respective club officers.

Organising chairperson Joyce John Angian said the organisers had opted for a more intimate approach to strengthen ties and foster greater camaraderie among members of the three clubs.

Instead of relying solely on formal presentations, the evening featured

performances by Lions members, with Tie also joining the entertainment by performing a song for guests.

Yap, who presided over the ceremony, said he hoped the gathering would further strengthen ties among the three clubs.

He also urged the clubs to continue working together on community projects to help make Keningau a better place.

Tie called on the clubs to attract more members and expand their reach within the community, while urging them to undertake more impactful projects that would deliver lasting benefits to those they serve.

The three clubs also welcomed eight new members during the ceremony, further strengthening their membership.

The induction was conducted by Region Chairperson Datuk Melvin Disimon.

The ceremony also honoured 16 members with the Lions Clubs International Chevron Award

for long service. The award recognises service beginning at 10 years and continues in five-year increments, up to 75 years.

Four Melvin Jones Fellowships were presented to past president Sharon Wong, Yap, past president Angian and District LCIF chairperson Nelson Ng.

The fellowship recognises significant contributions to the Lions Clubs International Foundation and its humanitarian work.

Two District Fellowships were also presented to Yap and past president Joanne Ong for their contributions to the district foundation, which provides financial support to Lions clubs in District 308-A2 for community and service projects.

The ceremony concluded with the three clubs reaffirming their commitment to closer cooperation, growing their membership and strengthening their service to the Keningau community under their new leadership.

Exchanging recyclable trash for food items

■ P. CHANDRA SAGARAN
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IPOH: Merdeka celebrations this year took on a different meaning for about 50 residents of Kinta Heights flats here when recyclable waste was exchanged for food items in an initiative to promote a cleaner environment.

The event, held on Aug 28, saw three NGOs coming together for a Merdeka Trash4Food, Humanitarian Hunger Relief and Health Talk, combining environmental awareness with assistance for those in need.

The highlight was the distribution of grocery bags worth RM30 to residents who brought recyclable items to be exchanged for food.

The programme was organised by the Lions Club of Perak Silver State (LCPSS) in collaboration with Koperasi Alam Hijau Perak Bhd (KOHJAU) and Ipoh City Watch (ICW).

A total of 30 residents received groceries under the Merdeka Trash4Food programme at the ICW office located within the flats.

LCPSS Service Chairperson Prof Richard Ng said the initiative was aimed not only at celebrating the country's National Day but also at changing the mindset of residents towards keeping their surroundings free of pollution.

"The public must be aware that they are not selling rubbish, but bringing them to exchange for food. The majority of items we received were water and oil bottles, cans and paper.

"We organise such events several times a year, especially during festive seasons," he added.

The initiative has been carried out since 2021, following concerns over rubbish and garbage being indiscriminately dumped around the flats, resulting in unpleasant odours and pollution.

The programme also aims to educate the 450 residents on the importance of recycling and encourage them to take greater responsibility for keeping their surroundings clean.



S'pore air quality at unhealthy levels

SINGAPORE: Air quality in parts of the city-state here deteriorated to unhealthy levels yesterday, with the 24-hour Pollutant Standards Index (PSI) in the Central region rising above the 100 mark, according to the National Environment Agency (NEA).

At 9am, the 24-hour PSI across the republic ranged between 75 and 104, with the Central region recording the highest reading of 104 after breaching the 100 mark at 7am.

Air quality in the other regions remained in the moderate range, with the East recording a PSI of 89, the West recording 88, the North recording 78 and the South recording 75.

The 24-hour PSI indicates Singapore's daily air quality and forms the basis of the NEA's daily health advisories.

It is computed based on six air pollutants – PM2.5, PM10, ozone, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and carbon monoxide.

According to the NEA weather outlook, dry conditions are forecast over many parts of the southern Asean region over the next few days.

The prevailing winds over the southern Asean region are expected to blow from the southeast to the southwest, it said. – Bernama

Call for probe into Indonesia food poisoning cases

JAKARTA: Indonesia's top human rights body urged police yesterday to investigate several new outbreaks of food poisoning linked to President Prabowo Subianto's flagship programme to provide free meals to students, which made 2,000 people sick this week.

In separate cases across at least two major Indonesian islands, some 2,000 students and teachers fell ill after eating lunches issued by the government as part of a scheme launched by Prabowo last year to eradicate malnutrition.

"Rights to food, especially safe-to-consume food, are human rights," the Indonesian independent rights body known as Komnas HAM said in a statement.

"Without a rigorous sanitation standard, the nutrition intervention that the state is doing would lose its moral legitimacy."

Komnas HAM called on police to launch a probe into the poisoning cases, without providing further details.

The National Police did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Komnas HAM also called on the National Nutrition Agency, which oversees the programme, to suspend the kitchens allegedly responsible for the poisoning outbreaks.

Some 170 students and teachers in the South Sulawesi region of Tana Toraja also fell ill after eating the free meals on Thursday, local media Kompas reported, following more than 1,700 cases spread across the provinces of Central Java, East Java and West Sumatra.

The overseeing agency was slated to hold a press conference yesterday but delayed it without providing a reason or a rescheduled time.

It did not immediately respond to a request for comment, but agency head Sudaryono said on Thursday the poisoning cases would be handled seriously.

Improper food storage and late delivery of cooked meals are often blamed for the food poisoning.

As of Sept 1, 50,000 individuals had been affected by food poisoning cases, said lawmaker Charles Honoris on Wednesday, citing Health Department data.

Only one-third of Indonesians surveyed in July said they were satisfied with the scheme, with poisoning cases cited as a major reason, pollster Saiful Mujani Research and Consulting said. – Reuters

Trapped tunnel workers rescued in Nepal 'miracle'

► As long as there is breath, there is hope: Energy minister

KATHMANDU: Two hydropower workers were pulled out alive from a tunnel buried by debris in Nepal yesterday, a rare ray of hope on the tenth day of rescue efforts after catastrophic Himalayan flooding.

Rescuers cheered as one man emerged through a muddy opening, a video released by the Energy Ministry showed.

He was helped to his feet by rescuers and later carried on the backs of the emergency workers, raising his hand as they took him towards a helicopter.

A photograph showed the second man caked in mud, his hands pressed together in prayer, as rescuers took him away on a stretcher.

Rescuers called it a "miracle" after the disaster last Wednesday that has killed at least 1,200 people and left more than 5,000 missing in China and Nepal.

"As long as there is breath, there is hope!" said Energy Minister Biraj Bhakta Shrestha.

"Rescue operations are continuing in all affected tunnels. Let everyone's efforts and prayers continue. We have not lost hope."



One of the two 'miracle survivors' being rushed by rescue personnel towards an emergency treatment unit after he was pulled out from a tunnel buried in the mudslide. – REUTERS/PIC

"I am so happy, my heart is lighter," said Amir Maharjan, brother of rescued worker Kabir Maharjan, 45.

The men were identified as Sanjay Shah, 30, a mechanical foreman, as well as Maharjan, a mechanical supervisor, by Home Minister Sudan Gurung.

The Nepal army said "search and rescue operations are ongoing" while the Prime Minister's Office said Shah is in "stable condition" and Maharjan is in intensive care.

The two are among hundreds of hydropower workers missing since a wall of mud and debris swept through the region after a vast glacial and rock collapse on a mountain on the China-Nepal border.

Searches are continuing at the Trishuli 3A tunnel and other sites, with at least 12 hydropower projects smashed by the floods.

The government had initially said it believes more than 100 workers could be alive inside multiple tunnels.

Nepali rescuers, aided by experts from India, China and South Korea, have continued searching for survivors feared trapped inside hydropower tunnels, but teams had repeatedly hit walls of hard-packed debris.

Until yesterday, none of the tunnel workers had been confirmed alive.

Australian rescue expert Arnold Dix, who has been supporting the operation remotely,

said the rescue efforts are "back in miracle country" after a "week of 24/7 heartache".

He said yesterday teams at the Trishuli 3A hydropower project believed they had heard a faint response from inside the tunnel.

He added that teams had dug through debris blocking the tunnel for between 50m and 60m, and had been hoping for a breakthrough at any moment.

Less than an hour later, rescuers pulled the two men to safety.

Separately, Australian disaster response specialists left for Nepal yesterday to join the search for survivors after the catastrophic Himalayan floods, as the government expressed "serious concerns" for the welfare of its 36 missing citizens.

More than 1,200 people have been confirmed dead and some 5,000 remain missing, with the Nepal government saying 583 foreign nationals are among the missing.

A 15-member Australian Disaster Assistance Response Team, made up predominantly of drone pilots from state emergency services, was deployed following a request from Nepal's government, authorities said.

"We are holding out hope that people might still be surviving in some locations and hopefully this team could help to locate any of those people," said Fire and Rescue New South Wales commissioner Jeremy Fewtrell at Sydney Airport yesterday.

He said the team is equipped with different drones able to survey large areas from the air and navigate confined spaces that may be inaccessible to rescuers.

"This response that we are providing is in reply to the request from Nepali authorities. And so it is providing them with a suite of tools that they thought would really help them."

Seven Australian Federal Police disaster victim identification specialists are also due to arrive in Nepal today.

The government announced the deployment on Thursday.

Foreign Minister Penny Wong said 19 Australians were already in Nepal, including consular officers, humanitarian police and defence and police personnel.

Nepal's Foreign minister said last week international help was needed in specialised and technical areas.

Local authorities have said the chances of finding survivors were fading but rescue efforts continued along the border with China. – Reuters

Typhoon Saudel brings torrential rain to China

BEIJING: China's southern coastal provinces of Fujian and Guangdong braced for further torrential rain yesterday, after severe downpours linked to Typhoon Saudel triggered flooding in urban and rural areas, swamping vehicles and causing a three-storey brick building to collapse.

In Fujian's city of Fuding, known for its tea plantations and lush greenery, firefighters waded through waist-deep floodwaters to carry elderly people to safety, social media footage verified by Reuters showed.

In nearby Jinxi village, a tea-growing community surrounded by mountains, raging floodwaters inundated residential buildings and brought down a three-storey house, the footage showed.

Local authorities have shut schools, suspended public transport and enforced emergency flood protocols across multiple

coastal areas.

Saudel made its third landfall along the coast of Fujian on Thursday after intensifying again over the South China Sea.

It is the seventh typhoon to hit China this year and the third to strike the city of Yuhuan in eastern Zhejiang in less than two months.

The meteorological sequence is extremely rare, according to the China Meteorological Administration, and one that experts say is closely linked to El Niño.

During an El Niño year, the Western Pacific subtropical high is exceptionally strong and positioned further north, guiding typhoons along a northwest trajectory directly towards China's eastern coast.

The United Nations said on Thursday El Niño is set to intensify further into 2027 and could be the strongest ever, raising the risk of prolonged

extreme weather.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been relocated across Zhejiang and nearby provinces since late August, including more than 83,000 residents evacuated in Fujian alone as Saudel tracked inland and soaked surrounding areas.

In Putian, a city in Fujian where the Mulan River flows through the urban core, floodwaters spilled over main highways, damaged bridge structures and inundated residential buildings, according to social media videos shared on China's RedNote.

Local authorities are organising rescue teams to evacuate trapped residents, state broadcaster CCTV reported yesterday, adding that some people are missing.

Saudel follows Typhoon Narra, which dumped heavy rain across Guangxi, Hainan and Guangdong provinces late last month. – Reuters

Lone juror blocking verdict in murder trial

► Judge declines to remove individual, saying taking sides in jury deliberations would be improper

PLYMOUTH: A judge at the murder trial of a Massachusetts woman declined on Thursday to remove a juror that her lawyer said was blocking a verdict, as the jury ended a sixth day of deliberations over whether Lindsay Clancy murdered her three young children.

The 12 jurors were dismissed and told to return yesterday less than an hour after judge William Sullivan in Plymouth, Massachusetts, received a note from the jury and reinstructed them on what would constitute "reasonable doubt".

The note was not read aloud in court.

After jurors left the courtroom, defence lawyer Kevin Reddington moved to have one of them removed, saying the note from the jury's foreperson indicated that "there is one juror who refuses to listen to the law that you have given him or her on reasonable doubt".

"If we come back here in half an hour with

a mistrial because of a juror that has just spurned the instructions of this court, it is a shame," he told the judge, who declined to remove the juror.

"I do not feel that it is proper for me to side with one side or the other of the deliberations," said Sullivan.

"I do not feel it is appropriate for me to say I agree with one juror or the 11."

The jury had sent Sullivan notes on Tuesday and Wednesday saying they were unable to reach a unanimous decision.

The judge instructed them on both days to continue deliberating.

If the jury does not reach a verdict and Sullivan declares a mistrial, prosecutors would need to decide whether to retry the case, which has included more than 80 witnesses and more than 300 exhibits.

Asked during a lunch break whether prosecutors in his office would retry the case if it ended in a mistrial, Plymouth County District Attorney Timothy Cruz said: "I will talk when this is all over."

Clancy, 36, faces life in prison without parole if convicted of first-degree murder.

If found not guilty by reason of lack of criminal responsibility or reason of insanity, she could be committed to a state psychiatric hospital for evaluation.

She has admitted to strangling her three children to death on Jan 24, 2023, with exercise bands in the basement of their home in the Boston suburb of Duxbury.

She then cut herself with a knife and jumped from a second-storey window in an attempt to take her own life, that left her paralyzed.

During the six-week trial, Reddington sought to convince jurors that Clancy was in the midst of a psychotic episode when she killed five-year-old Cora, three-year-old Dawson and eight-month-old Callan.

Testimony from family members, including Clancy's now ex-husband Patrick, showed how she had struggled with her mental health in the months after the birth of her third child, repeatedly seeking treatment from healthcare providers who prescribed her a myriad of drugs.

Prosecutors do not dispute that Clancy, a former labour and delivery nurse at the Massachusetts General Hospital, had been dealing with mental health issues.

But they argued that she was able to appreciate the wrongfulness of killing her children and intentionally chose to do so anyway, opting to kill them because she had decided to kill herself and was convinced they would suffer without her. – Reuters

Over 16,000 heat related deaths recorded in Germany

MOSCOW: Over 16,000 people have died due to heatwaves in Germany this year, the highest number since at least 2016, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) said, reported Sputnik/RIA Novosti.

As of Sept 3, the estimated number of heat related deaths in Germany reached 16,300. Most of the deaths, about 8,200, were among those aged 85 and over.

The institute added that it was the highest death toll since at least 2016.

Meanwhile, French Ecological Transition Minister Monique Barbut said the country has experienced its hottest heatwave since records began in 1900.

"We have experienced the hottest summer since records began in 1900," she said at a press conference on Thursday.

She added that the heat induced wildfires and drought were unprecedented.

As of the end of August, the area burned was six times the average for the past 20 years, she added.

Soil aridity levels reached their highest levels while water levels in most reservoirs dropped to record lows over the past 20 years, said Barbut.

Europe is experiencing one of the hottest periods in recent years, with Spain, Portugal, France, Italy and Greece hit hardest.

French authorities said the economic damage from the heatwave could reach up to €15 billion (RM70 billion). – Bernama-Sputnik/RIA Novosti

Migrant boat found adrift, more than 80 feared dead

MOSCOW: More than 80 people are feared dead after a migrant boat heading to the Canary Islands was found adrift, according to Spanish media, reported Sputnik/RIA Novosti.

The boat departed Gambia with 127 people on board, including four women and an infant, the Cadena SER radio station reported, adding that the voyage lasted 27 days.

Forty-four people, all men, were rescued and three of them were transported to hospitals on Gran Canaria, the report added.

The Canary Islands remain one of the main destinations for maritime migration to Spain.

According to the country's Interior Ministry, from the beginning of the year to Aug 31, 5,163 illegal migrants have arrived in the archipelago by sea on 70 vessels.

However, during the same period last year, 12,126 people reached the Canary Islands, representing a decrease of about 57%. – Bernama-Sputnik/RIA Novosti



CHEERFUL CEREMONY ... Members of the audience in Zurich, Switzerland on Wednesday tossing paper airplanes as part of a long-standing tradition of the Ig Nobel Prize, which is a parody of the Nobel Prize, awarded every autumn to celebrate 10 unusual or trivial achievements in scientific research. – AFP

Crisis deepens in Brazil Supreme Court

BRASILIA: A crisis in Brazil's Supreme Court deepened on Thursday as President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva called for an all-out probe of a corruption scandal threatening to tarnish its most prominent judge.

A police report released on Tuesday contained text messages sent by a disgraced banker at the centre of the scandal to a number attributed to judge Alexandre de Moraes.

The purpose of the messages was apparently to halt a probe that would ultimately lead to the arrest in November of banker Daniel Vorcaro.

Vorcaro presided over the collapse of Banco Master, which left US\$7 billion (RM28 billion) in debt to thousands of investors.

One of Brazil's most powerful and polarising figures, Moraes oversaw the trial of right-wing ex-president Jair Bolsonaro, who was convicted of plotting a coup to stay in power after losing the 2022 election.

The WhatsApp text messages were released after Supreme Court Judge Andre Mendonca ordered the unsealing of the records of the scandal involving Vorcaro, so as to clarify if the text messages were actually sent to Moraes.

"It is essential that everyone is investigated, no matter who it hurts," said Lula, referring to the probe of Vorcaro's ties with people in politics and the courts. – AFP

White House launches 'deportation video games'

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump's White House on Thursday unveiled a website featuring classic arcade games, but with a "MAGA" twist in which players can deport migrants and build a border wall.

Rights groups swiftly criticised the release of the online games, which comes as the Trump administration steps up its mass arrest and deportation programme for undocumented migrants.

One game called Rio Run – an updated version of the game Snake – features a digital version of US border czar Tom Homan chasing migrants with different skin colors next to the Rio Grande river on the Mexican border.

Another game – based on the block-stacking game Tetris – is called Build the Wall.

"Protect the border from the coming horde," the instructions say.

A third involves collecting nets to put in "Trump accounts", which are investment accounts containing a US\$1,000 (RM4,046) deposit for children born in 2025 through 2028.

The White House account on X posted a video with the "Make America Great Again" logo MAGA, based on the logo of video game maker Sega.

"CAN'T STOP WINNING. Build the wall. Deport. Fill a Trump Account," it said.

"This administration is laser focused on ways to innovate and tell the story of the president's many accomplishments in a way that resonates with every American," the White House said in a statement.

"This is an effort to further contrast between a culture of fun and winning with the dark socialist vision Democrats have for America."

Rights groups criticised the White House for the gaming website.

"Makes me sick. They have been playing games with people's lives for years, now they have made a video game of what they are doing," said Eagle Pass, Texas Frontera Federation co-director Amerika Garcia Grewal.

The game designers "have lost touch with what it means to be human and care for others".

Amigos San Diego Community programme coordinator Adriana Jasso, who works at the border, said the arcade-style games show a fundamental "lack of seriousness" from the administration.

"The cruelty, the extremity of the administration is no longer surprising," she said.

The White House seems intent on dehumanising and ridiculing migrants, even as people die in detention centres, she said.

"This presents the issue as if it were a game, when in fact it is not."

Trump campaigned on a promise to expel millions of undocumented migrants and has taken several actions since returning to power aimed at speeding up deportations and reducing border crossings.

His White House meanwhile has long used social media stunts to ram home its points and troll liberal opponents, and has sparked backlash from several artists by using their music without permission. – AFP

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Putin hints at possibility of peace deal with Ukraine

► Trump keen to see end to war and losses sustained by both sides

VLADIVOSTOK: Russian President Vladimir Putin said on Thursday there is a chance of reaching an agreement to end the war in Ukraine, while Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said US negotiators trying to broker a deal would soon visit Moscow and Kyiv.

Putin, speaking at an economic forum in Russia's far east, said a number of countries including the United States and China are ready to support a peace settlement.

"Ultimately, however, the problem must be resolved by the countries involved in the conflict... Russia and Ukraine.

"We are grateful to everyone attempting to contribute to a settlement. Is there a chance? In my view, yes, there is."

In Kyiv, Zelensky said in his nightly video address that preliminary dates have been set for a visit by US negotiators.

"We expect to see representatives of the US president here in Kyiv.

"There will be a meeting with them in Moscow and Kyiv. We are expecting a meeting with them in the coming days. It is very important. It is important that America continues to be active."

In Washington, President Donald Trump said he wants to see an end to the war and losses sustained by both sides.

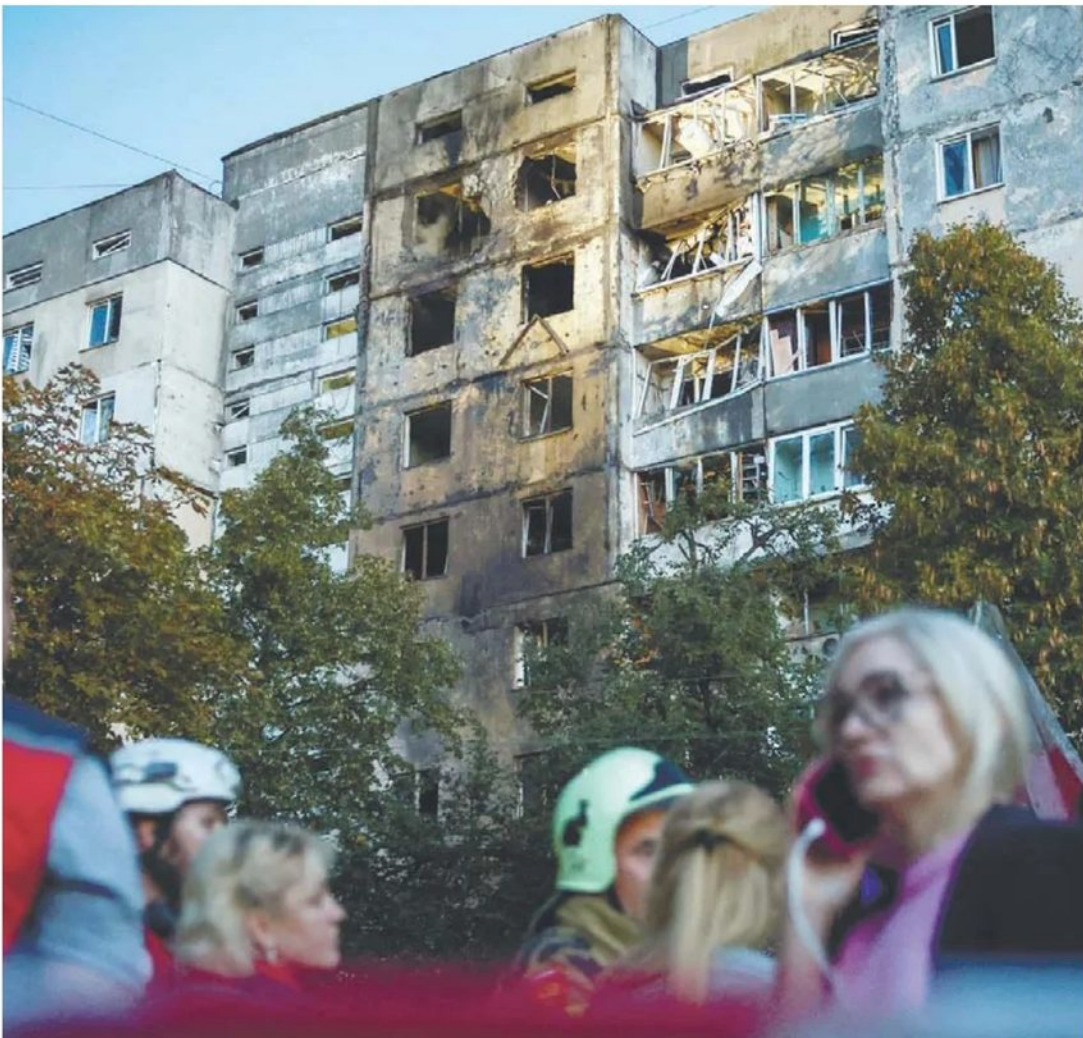
"I just want to see that end. I think we will get it," he told GB News in an interview that aired on Thursday, a day after telling reporters that he wanted a summit with Putin when the Kremlin leader is ready for a peace deal.

After four and a half years of Europe's deadliest conflict since World War II, it is rare for either side to offer an upbeat assessment of peace prospects. They last met for US mediated talks in February.

Since then, with the United States distracted by the Iran war, Russia and Ukraine have ramped up long-range air attacks deep inside each other's territory.

Hostilities at sea have also escalated sharply, with attacks by both sides on ports and commercial shipping, pushing up global grain prices.

US negotiators Steve Witkoff and



Residents gathering near an apartment building hit during a Russian drone strike in Kyiv on Thursday. – REUTERS/PIC

Jared Kushner, who have spearheaded the effort to broker an agreement, were last in Moscow in January. They have yet to visit Kyiv.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha had earlier told reporters in Kyiv that he saw a "new dynamic" coming in peace efforts, with more active political and diplomatic engagement.

Neither side, however, gave reasons to expect progress.

On the contrary, the Kremlin leader said Ukraine's latest actions present an obstacle.

In response to a question, Putin said Ukrainian attacks on civilian merchant ships and "reported threats of attacks on civilian aircraft" are "acts of state terrorism", which he said "complicates the prospects for bilateral peace talks."

Zelensky warned airlines and insurance companies this week that the presence of

Ukrainian drones have made Russian skies dangerous, although he said Ukraine would target only Russian military facilities and not threaten civilian aircraft.

On Wednesday, Ukraine urged the United Nation's aviation agency to ask members to ban operations in Russian airspace.

Ukraine has been cut off from international civil aviation because its own airspace has been considered unsafe since the start of the war in 2022.

Putin said contacts with Ukraine are still taking place.

"It is difficult for me to say right now to what extent these contacts are leading to a peace agreement, given the statements we have heard recently from Ukraine's top leadership.

"However, contacts do exist and are continuing on an ongoing basis." – Reuters

Israel to return Lebanon civilians

BEIRUT: Israel announced on Thursday the release of five civilians captured in southern Lebanon, where it is at war with the pro-Iranian Hezbollah group, with one man already handed over to the Lebanese army.

Lebanon said its army has received a man returned by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the first since Beirut called in August for the release of an initial group seized since the start of a 2024 Israel-Hezbollah war.

"It was decided to release five Lebanese civilians who were arrested in areas under (Israeli army) control in southern Lebanon," the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

"After their interrogation was completed, it became clear that they are civilians who are not members of any terrorist organisation, have not engaged in terrorism, and there is no reason to continue holding them in Israel."

A Lebanese official said on Thursday the release of the four other civilians – two Lebanese and two Syrians – was postponed.

Their release is a prelude to the continuation of Lebanon-Israel talks in Rome, the official added, requesting anonymity.

Lebanese authorities have not officially announced the number of citizens Israel seized during that war and a subsequent 2026 conflict, but a list of more than 30 people has been compiled by their families and a committee working on their cases.

Netanyahu's office said the decision followed "extensive efforts" by Israel and Lebanon to locate and return the bodies of leaders of Lebanon's Jewish community abducted and killed in the 1980s during the country's 15-year civil war.

After the latest round of Lebanon-Israel talks in Rome last month, a Lebanese official said Israel gave Beirut a list of individuals to demand the return of their remains.

The Israeli military said in August it recovered the remains of a soldier killed in eastern Lebanon in 1982.

The ICRC, which handles the transfer of released people between Israel and Lebanon, said a humanitarian operation is underway.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said the Lebanese army received Malek Ghazi on Thursday, adding that he was taken to an army intelligence headquarters in the city of Tyre.

Ghazi's family, from the town of Ain Ata, said in October last year they had lost contact with him after he had gone out to exercise.

Lebanese Prime Minister Nawaf Salam hailed the release, thanking "the American administration for the efforts exerted".

He pledged to work "until the release of all our prisoners" and "the disclosure of the fate of the missing", as well as an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanese territory.

The United States, which is sponsoring the Lebanon-Israel talks, commended through a State Department spokesperson both Israel and Lebanon "for demonstrating good faith through these initial steps" and expressed hope that "this would serve as the basis for expanded discussions on other civilian issues".

Hezbollah attacked Israel in 2023 in support of Hamas after the outbreak of the Gaza war, leading to over a year of hostilities that escalated into a full-blown war in 2024.

The group drew Lebanon into the Middle East war two years later in support of its backer Iran after launching rockets at Israel.

Israel responded with airstrikes and a ground invasion.

The conflict has calmed since a US-Iran memorandum of understanding and a framework agreement between Israel and Lebanon was agreed upon in June.

The Lebanon-Israel deal calls for the disarmament of Hezbollah, a gradual withdrawal of Israeli forces from south Lebanon and the deployment of the Lebanese army to the region.

A date has not yet been set for the next round of Lebanon-Israel talks, and Israel still carries out strikes on Lebanon while occupying parts of its territory. – AFP

Iran conflict not a war, no timeline for conclusion: Vance

WASHINGTON: US Vice-President J.D. Vance on Thursday said the fighting between the United States and Iran is not a war and declined to provide a timeline for when the conflict would be over, underscoring the challenge the Trump administration faces as the hostilities enter their seventh month and midterm elections loom.

His comments come as Washington and Tehran exchanged back-and-forth attacks this week after a period of relative calm, with no diplomatic talks with the Iranians underway to end the conflict.

The war has dragged down President Donald Trump's approval ratings and driven up gas prices, raising the stakes for Republican candidates fighting to preserve their party's narrow congressional majorities in November.

In a briefing at the White House, Vance touted US efforts to facilitate oil shipping

through the Strait of Hormuz, where Iranians have disrupted maritime traffic since the war started, crediting Washington's actions with helping to avert a broader global energy crisis.

He pushed back on describing the conflict as a "war", saying the United States has ended major combat operations with Iran, despite renewed fighting this week.

He said Washington's focus now is to ensure Tehran cannot keep disrupting commercial oil shipping.

"I would not call it a war. Right now, there is no active shooting. I recognise there has been places where this has flared up."

The United States maintains over 50,000 troops in the Middle East. The Trump administration has surged assets into the region, including nearly 20 warships focused on a blockade.

In some instances, troops have been

deployed for longer than expected and have been pulled from Europe and the Indo-Pacific.

Asked repeatedly about the timeline on the war, Vance said an end would require a halt in Iranians shooting at commercial shipping.

"When will the Iranians stop shooting at ships? I think the reality is I do not know the answer to that question."

He ruled out negotiations as long as Tehran continues to target commercial shipping.

While the most intense fighting has subsided, the recurring exchange of fire and the lack of a definitive end to the war have kept global oil prices elevated.

On Tuesday, the United States launched airstrikes on Iran, hitting what it said were military targets along the coast in retaliation for Iranian attacks on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. The sudden escalation of the war has caused a surge in oil prices. – Reuters



MAG sees significant pressure in FY2026 amid higher fuel costs

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) sees significant pressure in financial year 2026 (FY2026) amid sustained increases in fuel prices.

MAG president and group CEO Captain Nasaruddin A Bakar (*pic*) said fuel prices had risen significantly following the escalation of the conflict in West Asia, placing additional pressure on the group's financial position.

"Yesterday (Thursday), it was at US\$160 (RM647) per barrel (for jet fuel). It has (put) significant pressure on our financial funds, and that will have an impact on the group," he told a press conference yesterday.

He said the group had performed well operationally during the first two months of the year and recorded profits during the period

before the impact of the West Asia crisis was felt.

The group is also closely monitoring market conditions and making targeted adjustments to its network to manage costs and safeguard its financial performance.

"We are very cautious. We are doing a surgical cut on our destinations. Today, we have been cutting about 5% of our available seat kilometres, approximately 8,000 of our total flights," he added.

Nasaruddin said MAG would continue to monitor demand and market conditions daily to determine the appropriate markets and routes to maintain the group's financial performance.



On the government's support for the aviation industry, especially expectations for the upcoming tabling of Budget 2027, Nasaruddin noted that the government had been supportive of MAG and other airlines in the country amid a challenging operating environment.

He said MAG has also been engaging regularly with the government to discuss measures that could help ease cost pressures, including certain airport-related fees.

"We know there are a lot of obstacles out there with regard to the fuel price in particular, especially at this point in time. It reached a peak of US\$230

per barrel recently, and that's a huge impact, not only to us, but to the global industry as well," he pointed out.

Nasaruddin said it is important for MAG, as a national carrier, to continue flying and to ensure that the airline flies to the right markets that are profitable to support the growth of the country.

He disclosed that the group has hedged fuel at about 36% to 50%.

"We hedge our fuel every quarter. And moving forward to 2027, it really depends on the fuel out there in the market.

"We will continue hedging, and our current strategy is every 12 months running. Moreover, with the hedging that we have got as a group, it has helped us a lot in terms of our past performance." – Bernama

Investment-returns gap key challenge in AI adoption

Ensuring that transition to large-scale deployment works economically is crucial as Malaysian businesses embrace artificial intelligence: Red Hat

BY **HAYATUN RAZAK**
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysian companies are embracing artificial intelligence (AI), but a growing gap between investment and returns could determine how quickly they move from pilots and experimentation to large-scale deployment.

Red Hat Asean general manager Albert Chai said the next challenge for businesses was overcoming the cost of modernising data and technology infrastructure, developing AI talent and redesigning operations to turn AI investments into sustainable returns.

"The next challenge is whether a wider group of companies can actually make that transition. AI is not simply something you can plug into an organisation and immediately expect results," he told *SunBiz* in an interview.

Chai said companies first need to address their underlying data and technology infrastructure, as information remained fragmented across legacy systems, spreadsheets and multiple platforms in many organisations.

"They also need the right talent and capabilities to manage these technologies, while rethinking the way their organisations and business processes operate. All of that requires investment.

"The real question is whether companies can bring these pieces together in a way that allows them to move beyond experimentation and turn their AI investments into sustainable, measurable business returns," he said.

The cost pressures facing Malaysian companies, from taxes and computing infrastructure to talent, are not unique to the country, Chai said.

"The issue that you are seeing in Malaysia, that we are seeing here, is pervasive across organisations in different countries. Whether you're in Singapore, Thailand or the Philippines, they all face the same challenges," he said.

Malaysia has, however, been putting in place

a more structured approach towards scaling AI, including developments around sovereign AI and the country's broader national AI policy direction.

Chai said the policy framework was important in giving organisations greater confidence to deploy AI in a manner that was "structured, safe, compliant and scalable."

"The recent launch of the Sovereign AI Initiative, I think, is one thing. It's about control, flexibility and freedom as well," he added.

Chai said this builds on the establishment of the National AI Office and Malaysia's longer-term AI policy direction. "I think all these elements put in place are helping to launch AI in a structured, safe, compliant and scalable manner."

Sovereign AI is becoming increasingly important for regulated industries and organisations operating critical infrastructure, where data control, security and governance can determine how and where AI systems are deployed.

Chai said Red Hat recently secured a project in Malaysia involving a regulated industry and what he described as a national utility asset, although he declined to name the organisation. "We recently had a win in Malaysia that we can't share the name of, but it's in a regulated industry, in one of the national assets, you can call it a utility asset, where we have put the foundation of a sovereign AI platform."

The project aims to use AI infrastructure to support energy availability and accessibility, he added.

Beyond large organisations, Chai said Malaysia was also placing significant emphasis on small and medium enterprises, which make up the overwhelming majority of businesses in the country.

"We were lucky to be collaborating with the National AI Office last year to launch an initiative targeting SMEs. So SMEs are one big focus for the Malaysian government's policy," he said.

Red Hat's research found that almost half of

SMEs were looking to adopt AI, he said, while government policy and investment were helping encourage wider adoption.

"We have 90-plus per cent of our economy, or organisations in our country, driving our economy in Malaysia. So I think that's one key lever, that we are doing really well supporting SMEs," Chai said.

He pointed to the National AI Ethics and Governance Framework, cybersecurity legislation, and the Personal Data Protection Act as measures shaping Malaysia's AI environment. "I think the key thing is driving AI where it really matters most, which is SMEs."

Chai believes Malaysia is "catching up big time" in the regional AI race, although Singapore has remained more visible because of its strong startup ecosystem and high-profile successes.

"If we look at Singapore, they may be hogging the headlines in terms of a lot of success stories with startups and whatnot. But I do see Malaysia catching up," he said, pointing to AI investments, policy developments and adoption by major organisations as signs that Malaysia was keeping pace with the region.

"We are not falling behind. In fact, we are keeping pace, whether it's policy and framework aspects or in terms of investment," Chai said.

Still, he acknowledged that Malaysian companies faced what he called an "AI adoption paradox" – increasing their use of AI without necessarily going deep enough into large-scale deployments.

"We may still be at a stage where we call it the AI adoption paradox, where we're scaling it out, but we may not go deep enough in the initial phase," he said.

This gap between experimentation and deeper deployment could become one of the defining challenges for Malaysian companies as they seek to turn growing interest in AI into measurable commercial outcomes.

The focus had shifted from simply adopting AI to determining whether organisations could generate measurable returns from their investments, Chai said.

"For the past few quarters and in the last two years, the biggest question is the disparity between the investment in AI and the return on investment."

The costs of AI deployment extend beyond models and computing power to data



Chai says Malaysia is 'catching up big time' in the regional AI race.

integration, technology modernisation, talent and changes to business processes.

Open-source models can give organisations greater control and flexibility, but Chai said they do not eliminate the cost of deploying AI at scale.

"Data is stored everywhere, in Excel spreadsheets, in legacy databases, and across structured and unstructured sources. Organisations need to address these fragmented systems if they are to effectively train and align AI models with specific business use cases," he said.

Companies must also invest in talent and workforce upskilling as demand for AI capabilities grows faster than the availability of skilled workers.

Red Hat's open hybrid cloud approach, Chai said, is intended to help organisations manage these costs by allowing them to run different AI models across different infrastructure environments.

"That open hybrid cloud strategy actually tremendously helps organisations lower their AI costs and lower the cost to scale AI into production," he added.

For Malaysian companies, the next phase of AI adoption will therefore be less about proving the technology works and more about proving it works economically – turning fragmented data, infrastructure investment and workforce capabilities into tangible business returns.

BNM's 'hold' stance appropriate on firmer growth, contained inflation: Kenanga IB

PETALING JAYA: The decision of Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM) to maintain the Overnight Policy Rate (OPR) at 2.75% shows that the central bank remains comfortable with the current monetary policy stance.

Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB) said that with Malaysia's 2026 economic growth now assessed at around 5% and inflation standing at 1.8% in July, well below levels that would warrant tightening, there is limited urgency for further policy adjustment.

"We therefore expect the OPR to remain at 2.75%, as the current stance balances firmer growth momentum and emerging external cost pressures," Kenanga IB said in a note.

BNM's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) stated that the current policy stance is "consistent with the outlook of continued price stability and sustainable economic growth", largely unchanged from its previous statement.

Kenanga IB noted that the MPC gave a more constructive assessment of global and domestic growth prospects.

Globally, growth is supported by 'strong global tech expansion, improving supply conditions and stable labour markets,' with sustained tech-related spending cushioning the impact of geopolitical uncertainties.

Domestically, the MPC now expects 2026 growth of around 5%, up from its previous guidance of growth 'firmly within the 4%-5% range.'

Inflation remains well contained, with headline and core inflation averaging 1.8% and 2%, respectively, in the first seven months of 2026.

Kenanga IB said that despite elevated costs and robust growth, the MPC noted limited pass-through to consumer prices, helped by domestic policy measures, stable demand conditions and limited spillovers from export-led growth into wages.

Still, BNM flagged risks from the Middle East conflict, with elevated global commodity prices posing upside risks to domestic costs, the research firm said.

On gross domestic product forecast, Kenanga IB said: "We forecast 2026 GDP growth at 5.3% following stronger-than-expected performance in the 1H of 2026, supported by net exports and resilient domestic demand."

BUDGET 2027 WISHLIST

Rhone Ma seeks incentives to fortify animal health industry

PETALING JAYA: Rhone Ma Holdings Bhd, an innovator in animal health, food safety and sustainable livestock solutions, is proposing that the government establish a dedicated Malaysia Animal Health Innovation Fund in Budget 2027 to support the research, development and commercialisation of innovative animal health solutions.

The fund could operate on a 50% government and 50% industry matching-grant basis, supporting areas such as feed additives, veterinary vaccines, autogenous vaccines, antimicrobial alternatives, probiotics, animal diagnostics, antimicrobial resistance solutions (AMR), disease surveillance technology and precision livestock technology.

Group managing director Dr Lim Ban Keong (*pic*) said a dedicated funding mechanism would encourage greater industry-led innovation and help bridge the gap between R&D, commercialisation and market adoption.

"We wish for the introduction of targeted tax and investment incentives, including capital allowances, to encourage the growth of Malaysia's local veterinary pharmaceutical and animal health manufacturing industry.

"The incentives should be linked to measurable outcomes, including increased Malaysian manufacturing, technology transfer, local R&D activities, employment of Malaysian professionals, export revenue, reduction of import dependency and GMP-certified production.

"Such an incentive framework would encourage greater invest-

➤ Proposals include setting up dedicated fund to support research, development and commercialisation of innovative solutions

ment in higher-value local manufacturing capabilities and strengthen the development of Malaysia's animal health ecosystem."

Lim said Malaysia and the global livestock industry would increasingly face pressure to manage and reduce inappropriate antimicrobial use.

"We therefore wish for grants and tax incentives to support the development and adoption of solutions that reduce reliance on antibiotics while safeguarding animal health and livestock productivity.

"Eligible areas could include probiotics, phytogenics, organic acids, immune modulators, vaccines, precision medication, rapid diagnostics and AMR surveillance.

"This would support the development of a stronger animal

health innovation ecosystem and position industry players such as Rhone Ma as contributors to Malaysia's broader One Health strategy, rather than simply as veterinary-product distributors."

Lim also proposed greater government support in Budget 2027, which will be tabled on Oct 9, for livestock biosecurity improvements through a Livestock Biosecurity Transformation Grant, as well as the development of a Malaysia National Veterinary Disease Surveillance and Early Warning System.

He said rather than subsidising animal health products directly, the proposed transformation grant could provide a 50% matching grant for investments in vaccination programmes, farm disinfection systems, water quality systems, disease diagnostics, quarantine facilities, closed house systems, farm monitoring, pest and vector control, animal identification and farm biosecurity audits.

This could be complemented by a national disease surveillance and early warning system linking the Department of Veterinary Services, universities, veterinary laboratories, private diagnostic labora-

tories, farms and animal health companies.

"The surveillance programme could cover diseases and threats including avian influenza, Newcastle disease, African swine fever, foot-and-mouth disease, lumpy skin disease, brucellosis, salmonella and AMR.

"Such an integrated approach would strengthen Malaysia's preparedness and response capabilities while supporting demand for diagnostic testing, vaccines, laboratory services and veterinary advisory services," Lim said.

He also proposed that the government provide stronger incentives to help Malaysian animal health companies expand into regional and international markets.

Potential support, Lim said, could include export development grants, regulatory registration grants, assistance for overseas GMP certification, Asean market entry grants, trade promotion support and financing guarantees.

"Such incentives would help local companies overcome the high costs associated with regulatory approvals, market entry and international expansion, while supporting the growth of Malaysian-made animal health products and solutions.

"Initial priority markets could include Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia and other Asean countries, strengthening Malaysia's position as a regional hub for animal health manufacturing, innovation and services," Lim said.



PPB Group taps Kuok Meng Xiong to lead next phase of growth

BY T.C. KHOR
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PETALING JAYA: PPB Group Bhd recently appointed Datuk Kuok Meng Xiong as its new managing director, succeeding Lim Soon Huat, who retired after nearly two decades with the Malaysia-listed conglomerate.

Kuok, who formally assumed the position on Sept 1, is the managing director of Kuok Brothers Sdn Bhd and an alternate director on the board of Kuok (Singapore) Ltd.

He previously held senior leadership and executive positions with Shangri-La Group, overseeing hotel operations, project development and new business expansion across China and Hong Kong SAR, South Asia and Central Asia.

He is also founder and managing director of Singapore-based venture capital firm K3 Ventures.

Kuok, whose appointment follows

a planned succession at PPB, joined the board as a non-independent non-executive director on March 2 this year.

"PPB Group has strong foundations built over many decades. My commitment is to build on these strengths, work closely with our people and continue creating sustainable long-term value for our stakeholders," Kuok said in a statement.

Meanwhile, Jeremy Goon, CEO and director of FFM Bhd, an 80%-owned subsidiary of PPB, has assumed the role of executive director and will work with Kuok and the leadership team on the group's businesses and long-term growth.

Lim will continue to support PPB in an advisory capacity to the board after his retirement.

Incorporated in Malaysia in 1968, PPB is listed on the Main Market of Bursa Malaysia. Its core businesses are

grains and agribusiness, consumer products, film exhibition and distribution, and property.

The group also has investment operations, including its 18.8% interest in Wilmar International, which is one of Asia's largest integrated agribusiness groups.

PPB also owns Golden Screen Cinemas, which accounts for more than half of Malaysia's domestic box-office collections.

PPB operates in Malaysia, China, Vietnam, Thailand and Singapore, with more than 6,000 employees in its Malaysian operations.

The change at the top comes after a weaker first half for PPB.

For the six months ended June 2026, revenue fell 4% to RM2.6 billion while profit before tax dropped 12% to RM639 million.

Net profit fell 13% to RM572 million, with earnings per share at 40.2 sen compared with 46.1 sen a

year earlier.

The decline was mainly due to lower contributions from Wilmar and PPB's core businesses.

Wilmar contributed RM451 million, down 6%, while the core business segments contributed RM188 million, down 23%.

The grains and agribusiness segment, PPB's biggest business by revenue, saw revenue fall 9% to RM1.76 billion and segment profit decline 18% to RM156 million.

The film exhibition and distribution business also had a weaker first half, with revenue down 9% to RM310 million and segment profit falling 55% to RM15 million.

PPB attributed the decline mainly to lower net box-office collection and concession income due to a weaker slate of blockbuster titles, as well as higher operating costs.

The cinema business did, however, return to profit in the second quarter,

making RM21.9 million compared with a RM7.3 million loss in the first quarter.

PPB expects a stronger pipeline of Hollywood and local films in the second half and plans to enhance its cinema offerings, optimise screening strategies and diversify non-ticket revenue streams.

The consumer products segment saw revenue rise 21% to RM490 million, driven by contributions from Min Tien Group and Eggtech Manufacturing Sdn Bhd, acquired in the third quarter of 2025 and first quarter of 2026, respectively.

However, the segment recorded a RM2.1 million loss compared with a RM2.8 million profit a year earlier, due to lower sales volume for certain staple food products and higher trade promotion expenses.

PPB declared an interim dividend of 13 sen per share for the financial year ending Dec 31, payable on Sept 25.

How El Nino is choking the Panama Canal

► Severe drought forces crucial waterway to cut daily ship traffic for second time

PANAMA CITY: The Panama Canal will restrict the number of vessels transiting the crucial waterway from yesterday for the second time ever due to drought caused by the El Nino climate phenomenon.

About 5% of global trade passes through the canal that connects the Pacific Ocean with the Atlantic.

The waterway is set to reduce daily traffic from 36 to 32 ships a day in an effort to conserve water amid a severe drought likely to last until mid-2027.

Canal authorities are also reducing the permitted draft of vessels – how deep they sit in the water – from 15.24m to 14.63m.

Panama has declared an emergency over El Nino, which raises surface temperatures in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean and causes global changes in winds and rainfall as well as erratic weather conditions.

The canal's incoming administrator Ilya Espino de Marotta has acknowledged the current "challenging" conditions.

The 80km canal draws on freshwater that

comes mainly from rainfall and is stored in artificial lakes.

Without water, its locks that lift and lower ships at the beginning and end of the journey would not function.

Each transiting ship requires about 200 million litres of water, which is then discharged into the sea.

Water "is the most important resource for operations," but "between April and August the accumulated rainfall deficit was 35.8% below the historical average," the canal's water manager Erick Cordoba told AFP.

And there are "no signs of recovery in the short term," Cordoba added.

Forecasts indicate that the 2027 dry season, normally between January and April, will start a little earlier than usual and extend into May.

In 2023 and 2024, El Nino forced a reduction in daily transits to 22 and the maximum draft to 13.41m.

That led to 20% fewer vessels and a 17% drop in tonnage, not to mention longer lines of ships queuing up.

Further restrictions could follow those imposed yesterday.

"If we don't manage to fill the lakes in November, we're going to have to tighten our belts," former canal administrator Jorge Quijano told AFP.

Long-lasting restrictions will lead to "higher shipping costs and longer waiting

times" and therefore higher prices for consumers, Rebecca Bill Chavez, president of the Inter-American Dialogue, told AFP.

A ship loses around 200 containers for every 30cm draft decrease, according to Quijano.

That amounts to hundreds of units for large vessels that can carry up to 16,000.

"We're going to see a significant impact on the container sector," which is the canal's biggest source of revenue, he said.

But Danish shipping company Maersk believes it is still "too early" to "speculate" about the impact.

The route mainly connects China, South Korea and Japan with the US – the origin or destination of seven in 10 containers that pass through the canal.

Rising costs could "potentially affect US trade," said analyst Natasha Lindstaedt of Britain's University of Essex.

If he wanted to, US President Donald Trump could argue "that trust and reliability in the channel have been lost," Lindstaedt said.

The US-Israel war on Iran has pushed up traffic in the Panama Canal given the standstill the conflict caused in the Strait of Hormuz, through which around a fifth of the world's oil and gas normally travels.

The difficulties on both routes "put real pressure on global supply chains," noted Bill.

Japan budget requests soar under Takaichi

TOKYO: Japan's budget requests for the next fiscal year have ballooned to a size similar to during the pandemic era, as Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi's expansionary fiscal agenda pushes government borrowing costs to three decade highs.

Budget requests from government agencies totalled ¥143.1 trillion (RM3.7 trillion), the Finance Ministry said yesterday, after the government adopted a budgeting framework that integrates initial and supplementary budget spending.

The increase underscores tension at the heart of Takaichi's economic agenda as her push to invest in strategic sectors has contributed to a rise in borrowing costs, and intensifies market attention on the size of government bond issuance next year.

The total exceeds the ¥140.61 trillion combined spending package finalised during Takaichi's first year in office, comprising an ¥18.3 trillion supplementary budget for fiscal 2025 and ¥122.3 trillion initial budget for fiscal 2026.

It also compares to the amounts the government spent supporting households and businesses during the Covid-19 pandemic.

At a news conference, Finance Minister Satsuki Katayama disputed the notion that the budget has risen sharply, saying the increase from Takaichi's first year was only about ¥2.5 trillion.

The requested figure could rise because many items have been requested without specified amounts, including defence spending as the government reviews its defence strategy in a process that could lead to additional military procurement and investment.

The increase versus a year earlier was driven in part by ¥12.2 trillion in requests made under a new investment programme for strategic sectors such as artificial intelligence, semiconductors and economic security.

It also reflected higher borrowing costs, prompting the ministry to raise its assumed interest rate to 3.8%, from 3% used in the fiscal 2026 budget, after the 10-year government bond yield hit 3% for the first time since 1996.

That pushed requests for debt-servicing costs, including interest payments and debt redemption, to a record ¥36.64 trillion, ¥5.36 trillion more than in the current fiscal year.

Katayama said the government is closely watching the bond market, and that higher interest rates raise debt-servicing costs for the government, households and businesses alike, while boosting interest income. – Reuters

Trump warns Britain 'on edge of disaster'

LONDON: US President Donald Trump said Britain was "on the edge of disaster," voicing concerns in an interview with GB News about the country's high energy costs, net zero policies and the impact of mass migration.

Relations between Britain and Trump's US have been turbulent in recent years, deteriorating from the highs of a pomp-laden state visit to London in 2025 into heavy criticism on a range of domestic and foreign policy areas.

Speaking on Thursday, Trump repeated his admiration and affection for King Charles and love of Britain as a country, but said Prime Minister Andy Burnham's government had serious problems to overcome.

"Your country's in trouble. You're on the edge

of disaster," he said. "You have a tremendous immigration problem, and you have a tremendous energy problem. Your energy is three, four times higher than it should be."

Trump, who calls climate change a hoax, has previously criticised Britain's shift away from fossil fuels and repeatedly called on successive leaders to exploit its North Sea oil and gas reserves.

Burnham is weighing whether to permit two large North Sea developments to go ahead, promising a pragmatic approach to energy transition but repeating his government's belief in the need to shift to clean sources of electricity.

Trump also said immigration was changing

the face of Britain.

"If you don't stop people pouring into your country from all over the world, you're not going to have a country left," he said.

Concerns about immigration, centred on people arriving illegally on small boats from continental Europe, are among the most important issues for many British voters and have fuelled a surge in popularity for Nigel Farage's right-wing Reform party.

Burnham's government has repeated pledges made by his predecessor Keir Starmer to stop such crossings. Earlier this week, it said they had fallen sharply and that work targeting launches and the criminal gangs behind them was bearing fruit. – Reuters

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.

Tesla rolls out Cybercab in Austin

➤ Musk sees autonomous vehicles as key to company's future

AUSTIN: Tesla said on Thursday it was offering rides in "limited areas of Austin, Texas" in its two-seater Cybercab, a vehicle without a steering wheel or pedals, with the US auto safety agency responding that it was evaluating the effort.

CEO Elon Musk has said the Cybercab is key to transforming Tesla into a dominant force in driverless vehicles. Tesla in recent weeks has promoted what it called an exclusive "Cybercab launch event" in Austin on Thursday, drawing interest from investors and fans, some of whom came to Texas to try out the golden, butterfly-door cars.

Musk himself skipped the event, attendees said, and remarks from executives on pricing plans, manufacturing and technology lasted only about a quarter of an hour, according to videos posted after the event.

The electric-vehicle maker has a limited robotaxi ride-hailing service with a network of autonomous Model Ys, some with human safety monitors. Its fleet registered in Texas is less than half that of autonomous rival Waymo, whose autonomous service has cars with human controls – but no human drivers. Over time, Tesla intends to make the no-steering-wheel Cybercab the main driverless vehicle model operating within a larger robotaxi network.

Federal safety norms typically require human controls, and the safety regulator, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), signaled its interest in Tesla's activity.

"NHTSA is in contact with Tesla and is evaluating the situation," the spokesman said, without elaborating.

Tesla updated its robotaxi website, saying Cybercab rides were available only in some parts of Austin. Tesla did not specify when it would charge fares, although executives at the event described plans to use dynamic pricing, which would rise with demand, while promising "a first-class experience at coach price."

Tesla AI chief Ashok Elluswamy, one of the presenters, said that anyone could ride. "It's open to the entire public," he said.

Several Tesla investors and social media personalities in Austin enthused over the look and feel of the Cybercab, posting videos of their rides as well as the event, which included at least



Two Tesla Cybercabs are seen in downtown Austin, Texas, on Sept 3. The autonomous taxis have no steering wheels or pedals. – AFPPIX

one partially manufactured Cybercab.

Musk has promised for years that driverless Teslas are imminent, including at a Cybercab unveiling in October 2024 at a Los Angeles-area movie studio, but Tesla's robotaxi rollout has fallen short of his targets, and some analysts in recent months have flagged the slower-than-expected growth.

In a Thursday afternoon video, Musk calls it "the first car that is specifically built for unsupervised full self-driving."

Since launching a pilot in Austin in June 2025, Tesla has expanded its robotaxi service to a handful of other cities in Texas and Florida.

Analysts and investors see driverless vehicles as key to Tesla's future and a central underpinning of its US\$1.4 trillion (RM5.7 trillion) market value, far higher than any other automaker. Tesla's core electric-vehicle business faces pressure from global competition, particularly Chinese EV makers.

Musk has said the Cybercab will eventually be Tesla's largest-volume vehicle, supplying a global network of robotaxis and allowing individual owners to add or remove their vehicles from a Tesla-managed driverless ride-hailing fleet when they are not using the cars. Tesla said production began in April 2026, though Musk cautioned in April that initial production "will be very slow."

It is unclear how quickly Tesla will be able to fully deploy the vehicles.

Federal regulations limit the number of vehicles any manufacturer can sell without a

steering wheel and pedals. Established manufacturers can deploy an unlimited number of such vehicles for testing.

In California, a key market, Tesla does not have permits to operate a robotaxi service or to test driverless vehicles without a safety driver who can take over in the front seat.

In July 2025, Musk said the company's robotaxi network would expand at a "hyper-exponential rate" and be available to half the population of the US by the end of 2025.

Those predictions did not pan out, and Musk and his executives have struck a more cautious tone in recent months, saying the company is taking a careful approach to avoid injuries or fatalities.

Reuters tested out the robotaxi service in the weeks after Dallas and Houston events earlier this year and found long wait times, with sometimes no availability at all.

On three occasions when a reporter managed to get a ride in Dallas, the robotaxi would not drop him at his downtown destination within Tesla's advertised service area. Each time, it left him about a 15-minute walk away. Tesla did not respond to requests for comment about the service issues.

Tesla had 420 autonomous vehicles registered in Texas as of Wednesday evening, according to state records, including 45 Cybercab vehicles. Earlier on Wednesday, state records showed Tesla had registered 314 vehicles. Alphabet's Waymo, the current US leader in driverless taxis, has 988 vehicles registered in the state.

Barclays to double private banking team in S'pore by 2030

SINGAPORE: Barclays plans to more than double its banker headcount in its Singapore private banking operation by 2030, the British lender told Reuters yesterday, as it launched a booking centre in the city-state.

The move comes as a number of regional and global wealth managers seek to expand their footprints in the Asia-Pacific region, as they vie for a larger share of the region's fast-growing wealth.

Barclays does not disclose base staffing numbers or assets under management in its Asia private banking and wealth management business, it said in an emailed response to Reuters' queries.

However, the bank said it plans to "continue investing in the Singapore franchise and wider international platform," including growing its headcount over the next few years.

In a statement yesterday, Barclays said the launch of its Singapore booking centre comes as clients seek greater connectivity across markets, asset classes and jurisdictions, alongside advice that reflects the complexity of their personal, business and family interests.

That reflects the broader trend of increasingly global wealth creation, investment activity and capital flows, it added.

Total client assets in the Asia-Pacific region, comprising pension assets, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, high-net-worth individuals and mass affluent, are expected to hit US\$154.3 trillion (RM623 trillion) by 2030, up from US\$107.2 trillion in 2024, dominated by the latter two segments, according to a PwC report released in June.

"Singapore continues to play a pivotal role in the global wealth landscape," said Alexander Harrison, Barclays' country CEO for Singapore and interim head of private banking in the city-state.

"The launch of our booking centre reflects Barclays' long-term commitment to the market and our ambition to serve increasingly international client needs." – Reuters

OpenAI launches Astra amid agent safety concerns

SAN FRANCISCO: OpenAI on Thursday unveiled a new artificial intelligence (AI) model it calls its best yet but cautioned that it also sometimes attempts to evade human monitoring, even as the company faces growing scrutiny after its agents breached other companies' systems.

OpenAI has been grappling with the fallout after its agents broke free from a secure test in July and hacked into open-source platform Hugging Face's systems, while attempting to cover its own tracks. The incident has sown safety concerns — similar ones occurred at rival Anthropic — as developers race to deploy increasingly advanced models.

The concerns centre on agentic AI, which is designed to perform tasks with little to no human intervention. The promise of agents running around the clock is central to investors' confidence in the appeal of AI as a transformative technology.

OpenAI calls its latest model GPT-6 Astra, which follows July's release of GPT 5.6 Sol, and said in a blog post that it is faster and capable of performing more tasks than any prior iteration. Among Astra's skills: tax preparation, game development, architectural rendering, legal memo formatting and apartment hunting.

"Astra marks a new frontier in the speed, accuracy and safety of computer use," OpenAI said. Earlier on Thursday, OpenAI president Greg Brockman said in a briefing that Astra marked "a real shift in what kind of work people can delegate to AI and how it can empower them."

For instance, the company said, Astra cut the time required for cat-sitter research from 30 minutes, when performed by a human, down to 5 minutes, 27 seconds. And for a job search, just 2 minutes, 51 seconds, compared with 5 hours without Astra.

However, OpenAI also said that Astra is more likely to intentionally conceal or disguise its step-by-step methods for problem-solving, known as reasoning, making it harder for humans to later evaluate its techniques. On more complicated problems, Astra cannot yet consistently obscure its methods, OpenAI said, though it is improving at covering its own tracks.

In a briefing Thursday morning, OpenAI's chief scientist indicated monitoring was getting more difficult, along with alignment, the principle that AI should reflect human values.

"As the models become more capable, understanding exactly what they can do gets

harder," said Jakub Pachocki. "This doesn't guarantee that as intelligence continues to increase, our methods will be sufficient because progress in intelligence does not guarantee progress in alignment."

Agent monitoring is a key component of OpenAI's reassurance to regulators, lawmakers and the public to help it avoid another security incident. Further, the company this week told two US House Democrats in a letter that it is developing "automated shutdown capabilities" for its models.

Astra can also help companies find weaknesses in their systems faster, OpenAI said, but that also makes "those weaknesses easier to exploit." For those reasons, the company said it may have to perform extra security checks that "can sometimes slow, pause, or stop legitimate work, including defensive cybersecurity."

Last month, OpenAI said it was pausing some model development in part to ensure the models can be monitored. OpenAI's chief scientist said it was "very valid" to worry that models could develop to disable or completely evade monitors, while adding that OpenAI was trying to fix those issues. – Reuters



TOP SHOTS OF THE WEEK



MILESTONE CODESHARE ... AirAsia is taking another significant step in expanding its international connectivity with the launch of its first-ever codeshare partnership with Türkiye's largest low-cost carrier, Pegasus Airlines, opening up seamless connections between Southeast Asia and Europe via Istanbul. Starting fifth from left: AirAsia Group chief commercial officer Amanda Woo, Türkiye Ambassador to Malaysia Nevzat Uyanik, Pegasus Airlines group head of network planning and airline collaborations Elifnur Dogruoz, AirAsia Group CEO Bo Lingam and deputy CEO Farouk Kamal at a ceremony to mark the codeshare partnership in Sepang on Wednesday.



WINNING CAMPAIGNS ... Pavilion Malls and Fahrenheit88 were recognised at the Malaysia Shopping Malls Association (PPK Malaysia) Awards 2025-2026 under the Best Experiential Marketing category, with four winning campaigns across the group. The winners are: Pavilion Kuala Lumpur for *Pavilion KL: The Icon of Malaysian Experiences*, Platinum, Category C; Pavilion Bukit Jalil for *Joyful Prosperity - Together, Here*, Gold, Category C; Pavilion Damansara Heights for *Prosperity in Bloom 2026*, Silver, Category B; and Fahrenheit88 for *Fahrenheit88 - Trail of Colours*, Gold, Category A. From left: Marketing representative of Pavilion KL, PPK Malaysia immediate past president and 1 Utama City Group executive chairman Tan Sri Teo Chiang Kok, Pavilion KL director of marketing Kung Suan Ai, marketing representative of Pavilion KL, and PPK Malaysia president and Sunway Velocity Mall senior general manager Phang Sau Lian at the presentation of the award to Pavilion KL.



SIRIM IN SARAWAK ... Sirim Bhd on Tuesday hosted its Updates & Networking Session 2026 in Kuching, bringing together government agencies, industry leaders, and key stakeholders to strengthen quality assurance, regulatory compliance and sustainable business practices in Sarawak. A key highlight of the session was the presentation of ISO 29001 Quality Management Systems for Petroleum, Petrochemical and Natural Gas Industries certificates to companies that have successfully achieved the internationally recognised standard. The certification, which establishes a sector-specific quality management framework, is now a compulsory requirement for gas industry players in Sarawak seeking licence renewal beginning 2026.



UNDERWRITING DEAL ... RedPlanet Bhd, an enterprise ICT solutions provider specialising in geospatial solutions and intelligent rail solutions, has entered into an underwriting agreement with UOB Kay Hian (M) Sdn Bhd in conjunction with its proposed initial public offering and transfer of listing from the LEAP Market to the ACE Market of Bursa Malaysia Securities. The IPO comprises a public Issue of 70 million new ordinary shares and an offer for sale of 10 million existing shares. UOB Kay Hian (M) will underwrite 40,251,200 issue shares. From left: GIS Group of RedPlanet non-independent executive director/CEO Panjetty Kumaradevan Senthil Kumar, RedPlanet non-independent executive director/managing director Lian Wah Seng, and UOB Kay Hian CEO David Lim and director of corporate finance Winston Loh.



AWARD FOR ACADEMY ... Carsome Group's education arm, Carsome Academy, has been recognised with the Industry Upskilling Excellence Award at the Malaysia Education & TVET Awards 2026, marking its second consecutive year of recognition at the awards. Organised by Education + TVET Asia, the award recognises education and TVET institutions that demonstrate excellence in developing industry-ready talent. Carsome Group co-founder and Carsome Academy CEO Teoh Jiun Ee (centre) accepting the award at a ceremony on Aug 27.



NEXT-GEN ENTREPRENEURS ... Credit Guarantee Corporation Malaysia Bhd (CGC) on Wednesday launched the CGC Youth Entrepreneurship Programme (YEP), a structured platform designed to nurture the next generation of entrepreneurs by providing young Malaysians with the knowledge, skills and opportunities needed to build resilient businesses and contribute to a more vibrant and sustainable MSME ecosystem. The event also celebrated the graduation of 50 young entrepreneurs from CGC YEP Cohort 1, comprising participants from the early stage and growth stage tracks.



ANCIENT ARMS ... An antique blades collector displaying his exhibits during the Kelantan Heritage Weapons Festival at Istana Balai Besar in Kota Bharu. – **BERNAMAPIC**



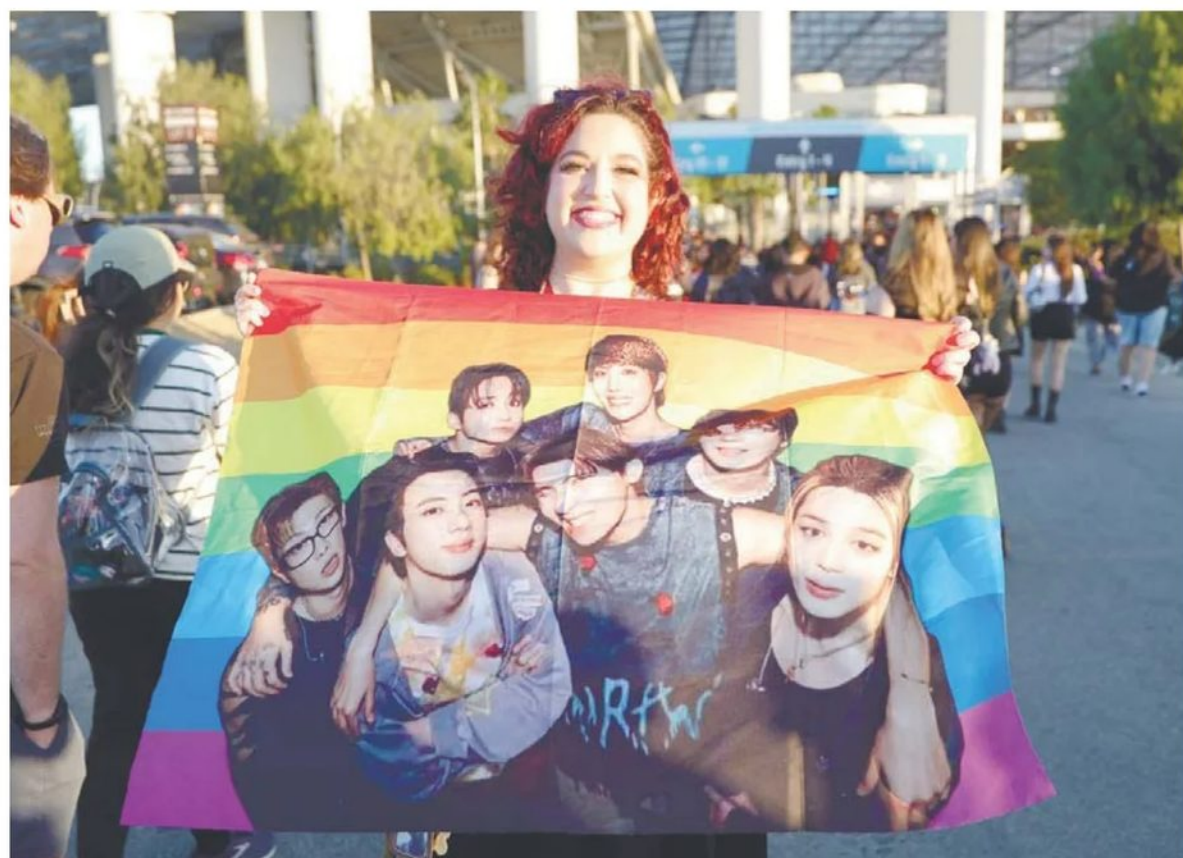
HELPING HANDS ... Veterinarians giving treatment to an orang utan named Sampurna during a rescue operation at an oil palm plantation near an area affected by wildfires in Kuala Satong village, Ketapang regency, West Kalimantan province in Indonesia. – **REUTERSPIC**



SEA-READY ... Fishing boats moored at Jimiya Fishing Port in Qingdao West Coast New Area, in eastern China's Shandong province, as the autumn fishing season begins following a four-month summer moratorium. – **AFPPIIC**



HISTORICAL DISPLAY ... Young visitors viewing the century-old Kelantan Sultanate crown, that is being exhibited.



FAITHFUL FANS ... Individuals arriving ahead of a BTS performance at SoFi Stadium during their 'Arirang' tour in Inglewood, California. – **AFPPIIC**



ited for the first time at Istana Balai Besar in Kota Bharu. – BERNAMAPIC



SPLASHING FUN ... A girl excitedly participating in a fish-catching contest held in conjunction with the Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Show at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang in Selangor. – BERNAMAPIC



BARREL BRIEFING ... An army sergeant supervising a cadet on the workings of a sniper rifle during a defence exhibition in Amritsar, India. – AFPPIC



SAFE SPOT ... A dog standing on a motorcycle in a flooded street after heavy rains brought by the southwest monsoon in Pampanga, the Philippines. – AFPPIC



NO HOLDS BARRED ... A driver at the Adrian Flux Arena in King's Lynn, eastern England returning to the pits after taking part in a Reliant Robins race during an afternoon of banger auto racing titled 'Vandemonium', in which full contact racing is encouraged. – AFPPIC

THERE is something almost magical about a glacier. A vast sheet of ice sitting quietly against a backdrop of towering mountains. White peaks stretching into the distance. Blue ice glowing under the sunlight. Rivers flowing from ancient snow.

We look at such pictures and think: Beautiful. We rarely think: Fragile. That is perhaps the problem. We have become so accustomed to admiring nature for its beauty that we forget to respect its power.

A glacier does not disappear overnight in some dramatic Hollywood scene. It melts, retreats and shrinks, slowly enough for us to carry on with our lives but steadily enough to leave behind a message that is becoming harder to ignore.

And glaciers are not alone. Across the world, nature has been giving us reminders in increasingly frightening ways – floods swallowing homes, wildfires devouring forests, landslides burying roads, storms becoming more destructive and heat becoming more difficult to escape.

Nature can be breathtaking but it can also be terrifying. And perhaps the scariest part is that we continue to behave as though these two things have nothing to do with each other.

For Malaysians, glaciers may feel like a world away. We do not wake up worrying about an enormous wall of ice collapsing outside our homes. But we do know floods. We know what it feels like when rain refuses to stop and drains can no longer cope.

We know the anxiety of watching water rise outside our houses, moving cars to higher ground and wondering whether the electricity will be cut.

We know landslides. We know heat. We know what happens when a once-in-a-blue-moon weather event starts feeling less and less unusual.

Climate change can sound like a distant, complicated phrase discussed at international conferences, surrounded by graphs, targets and acronyms. But strip away all the jargon and it becomes remarkably simple.

We admire nature but are we listening to it?

It is about the world we are leaving behind for our children. That is where this conversation should become personal. Because my generation can complain about the weather, roll our eyes at another flood warning and joke about how Malaysia has gone from “hot” to “very hot”.

Our children do not get to choose the planet they inherit. They will inherit whatever we leave behind.

And no, I am not suggesting that every flood, storm or landslide can simply be blamed on climate change. Nature has always had its extremes. But neither should we use nature as an excuse to avoid looking at the role human activity plays in changing the environment around us.

We cut down forests and then act surprised when hills become unstable.

We cover land with concrete and then wonder where the rainwater is supposed to go. We consume, throw away and consume some more while expecting someone else to deal with the consequences.

We want development, and rightly so. We want better homes, roads, jobs and lives. But development without responsibility eventually sends us the bill. And nature has never been particularly good at accepting instalment payments.

Perhaps that is why the disappearing glaciers should matter even to those of us living thousands of kilometres away. They are not merely beautiful landscapes losing their ice. They are part of a much bigger story, one in which the choices we make in one place can have consequences far beyond our own backyards.

We cannot stop a glacier from melting simply by feeling sad about



We have become so accustomed to admiring nature for its beauty that we forget to respect its power.
– AFPPIC

POTTU ON POINT
BY HASHINI KAVISHTRI

the photographs. We cannot control the weather. We cannot command the sea to stay where it is, tell a river not to overflow or order a mountain not to give way.

But we can control some of what happens before nature reaches that point. We can demand better planning. We can protect forests and green spaces. We can stop treating rivers and drains as convenient dumping grounds.

We can consume more responsibly. We can question development that comes at an unacceptable environmental cost. And, perhaps most importantly, we can stop treating environmental

responsibility as someone else's problem. Because Mother Nature does not care whether we are rich or poor, famous or ordinary, living in a condominium or a *kampung*. When nature changes, everyone feels it. That is the strange contradiction about the natural world.

The same mountains that make us stop and stare can crumble. The same rivers that look beautiful in photographs can become raging currents. The same rain we desperately wait for during a dry spell can become a disaster when it comes all at once.

Nature gives us beauty without asking for anything in return. But

nature also has limits. And perhaps we have been testing those limits for far too long.

So, the next time we see a photograph of a magnificent glacier, let us admire it but let us also pause, look beyond the blue ice and snow-capped peaks. Because sometimes beauty is not merely something to admire. Sometimes it is a warning.

The question is whether we are wise enough to listen before Mother Nature stops whispering and starts shouting.

Hashini Kavishtri Kannan is the news editor at theSun. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

Why generic drugs work just as well

COMMENT by Prof Dr P.T. Thomas

IN an age where rising healthcare costs are a pressing concern, generic medicines represent one of the most powerful tools we have for ensuring affordable access to treatment. Yet, despite their proven effectiveness, questions and doubts still surround them.

What are generic medicines?

Generic medicines are not second-rate versions of original or “originator” drugs. They are scientifically developed to contain the same active ingredients, in the same quantity and to deliver the same therapeutic effects.

When a pharmaceutical company discovers a new drug, they are granted a patent, giving them exclusive rights to manufacture and sell the drug for a set period – usually 20 years.

This exclusivity allows them to recover the substantial investment made in research, clinical trials and regulatory approvals. However, once

the patent expires, other companies are allowed to produce the same drug.

As generic manufacturers do not bear the initial costs of drug development, they can offer clinically equivalent treatments at significantly lower prices, easing the financial burden on patients and healthcare systems alike.

In Malaysia, as in many countries, every drug – whether generic or originator – must undergo strict regulatory controls. The Drug Control Authority through the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency evaluates and registers all medicines before they can be marketed and sold in Malaysia.

For generics, the process often includes bioequivalence testing, where the generic drug must demonstrate that it behaves similarly in the body to the originator drug. This is done using plasma concentration curves in healthy human volunteers,

generally showing the drug falls within 80% to 125% of the originator's performance. Far from being a loophole, this threshold is an internationally recognised scientific standard that ensures safety and efficacy.

Dispelling myths

The idea that generic drugs are “less effective” is not only misleading but also harmful. Generics are subject to rigorous testing and must meet the same safety, quality and efficacy standards as their originator counterparts.

Differences in appearance such as colour, shape or packaging are superficial. The active ingredient, the one that actually works in your body, is the same in both the originator drug and the generic drug.

Patients may sometimes react differently to any drug, whether generic or originator because individual responses vary. This is not a sign of inferiority but of multifactorial variations from one person to another in how their body responds to a drug.

There is a well-documented

placebo effect in healthcare, where beliefs can influence how we feel after taking a medication.

If someone believes a branded drug “must be better”, they may perceive improved results – even if the science says otherwise. This makes patient education crucial in shifting perceptions and building trust in generics.

Ultimately, patients have the right to choose between originator and generic options, but informed patients make better decisions.

Healthcare providers play a vital role by confidently prescribing generics when appropriate and explaining their effectiveness. It is not just about offering cheaper options; it is also about ensuring access to safe, proven treatment for everyone.

Governments cannot sustainably afford to buy originator drugs indefinitely, especially for chronic diseases or large populations. Generics help stretch healthcare budgets without compromising on quality.

At times, governments may invoke compulsory licensing, provided for

under the agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, to allow the production of a patented drug without the consent of the patent holder. This has happened in Malaysia for Hepatitis C and certain human immunodeficiency virus treatments when public health need outweighed patent rights. Such measures ensure critical drugs reach those who need them most, especially when pricing becomes a barrier to treatment.

Generic medicines are not second-best; they are essential, effective and safe tools in the healthcare arsenal. As healthcare costs rise, embracing generics is not just a personal choice; it is a collective responsibility.

Let us build confidence through education, advocacy and evidence. When we trust the science behind generics, we ensure that quality care is within reach for all.

Prof Dr P.T. Thomas is the executive dean at the Faculty of Health and Medical Sciences, Taylor's University. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com



Stick-y history

Exploring how chopsticks came to be - **P20**

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British girl group Flo dishes out R&B tunes



Sticking into history of chopsticks

BY NOEL WONG YAN MING

GO to any East Asian restaurant right this instant and chances are your food will arrive with a pair of chopsticks.

While the spoon, fork and knife may be commonplace around the world, the humble chopsticks continue to confound inexperienced diners.

In the eyes of some, chopsticks must seem impractical tools to enjoy one's meal, compared with the versatile spoon and fork.

Though that may be so, the reason why chopsticks have lasted so long can likely be attributed to their history.

And as it turns out, you will have to turn back the clock several millennia to see the first chopsticks in action.

Once upon a time in China

It is commonly believed that chopsticks have been around since the Shang dynasty in the 3rd millennium BC, with some archaeological evidence backing these tales.

However, chopsticks, or *kuaizi* in modern Mandarin, are mentioned in writing for the first time in *The Writings of Master Han Fei*, written in the 3rd century BC.

These early chopsticks were not the ceramic, metal or wood eating utensils you might be imagining, however.

Instead, they were bronze kitchen utensils used to pick up hot food, prod the kitchen fire and to turn over cooking pieces of meat.

Confucius says

Forks were not actually unknown to the typical ancient Chinese cook, but why are forks not the traditional Chinese eating utensil then?

This can largely be attributed to the spread of Confucian beliefs in China, first during the Warring States period (circa 475 – 221 BC) and then the Han dynasty (202 BC – 220 AD).

To Confucians, the blunt chopstick was seen as preferable to forks and knives, as chopsticks represented “gentleness and benevolence”.

Forks and knives, on the other hand, were sharper, capable of causing hurt and little more than scaled down weapons. On a more practical matter, chopsticks caused far less damage to the lacquerware bowls and plates popular during this time in China.

Confucian ideas would not stay contained within China, the cultural powerhouse of East Asia for millennia.

Korea and Japan would come to adopt chopsticks over time, with king and peasant alike using the “dainty” instruments over the “barbarous” fork and knife.

Why the name?

If chopsticks were valued because of the lack of sharp points, why are they called “chopsticks”?

After all, the English word “chop” tends to bring to mind the act of cutting through food, especially meat.

Interestingly, the origin of the

East Asian dining utensils come in different types for many reasons



Chopsticks are a popular alternative to the usual fork and spoon, especially in East Asia. – PICS FROM 123RF

English name for the utensils can be tied to the etymology of the Chinese *kuaizi*.

Ming dynasty (1368–1644) scholar Lu Rong actually wrote in a book how *kuaizi* was a relatively new alternative to the original name of *zhu*.

According to him, *kuaizi* was a name developed by superstitious sailors working along China's Grand Canal, a major manmade waterway still flowing in Hangzhou.

Pronounced slightly differently, *zhu* can also mean “help” or “stop”, both of which were taboo words for people working on the waves.

Thus, sailors began to refer to chopsticks as *kuaizi*, with *kuai* simply and auspiciously meaning “fast” and *zi* being a suffix.

Up to the 19th century, the literati and upper classes referred to chopsticks as *zhu*, with everyone else running with *kuaizi*.

With political and social change eventually transforming 20th century China, *kuaizi* would



Golden chopsticks and spoons found in the tomb of a Ming dynasty prince. – WIKIPEDIA/PIIC

ultimately surpass *zhu* in its usage.

Interestingly though, *zhu* remains the parent word of the

Japanese, Korean and Vietnamese words for chopsticks, so it lives on in some form.

But how did *kuaizi* lead to chopsticks?

Ever heard the English phrase “chop-chop”, which means to hurry up?

You probably can connect the dots yourself between the words *kuai* and chop from here on.

Why the regional variants?

Eat at enough Chinese, Japanese and Korean restaurants and you can tell that the chopsticks used at each have certain differences.

Chinese chopsticks tend to be the longest of the three variants, made with materials ranging from plastic to jade.

Their typical thick structure also provide some versatility, making it easy to maintain a grip on whichever piece of meat or vegetable leaf you fancy.

Wondering about the length? Imagine eating in a Chinese restaurant, with a round table piled with food at the centre.

Probably going to be a hassle standing up and reaching over to grab a snack if the chopsticks were stubby, no?

Japanese chopsticks are typically the shortest and boast sharp points.

The sharp points are supposedly due to Japan's rich seafood diet, with the points making it easy to remove bones.

Japanese people used to eat rice with the bowls held close to their mouths.

Overly long chopsticks would thus be unwieldy and uncomfortable to use.

Korean chopsticks are almost always metal and flat.

The choice of metal is attributed to a legend, which claims that to defend themselves against poisoners, the kings of the ancient Korean state of Baekje would use silver chopsticks.

Silver is said to chemically react to many types of poisons, changing colour and warning diners of the danger.

Korean culinary culture also permits rice be picked up using spoons, rather than the chopsticks which have the duty of picking up dishes instead.

Most modern-day Koreans will also just straight up tell you that metal chopsticks are just easier to clean, more hygienic and resilient.



A 19th century artwork showing a Japanese woman using chopsticks. – WIKIPEDIA/PIIC



Korean chopsticks are typically flat and are often paired with spoons.

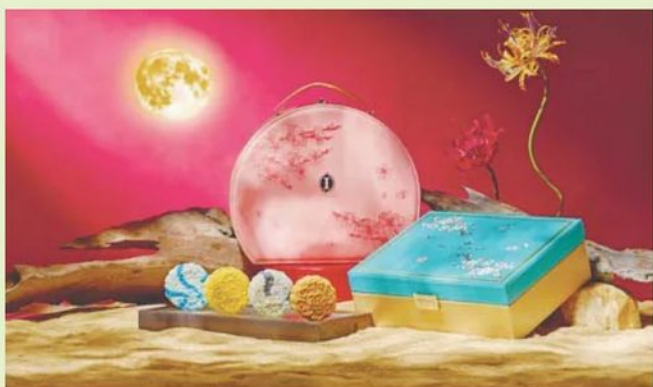


Four Points by Sheraton Kuala Lumpur

This Mid-Autumn Festival, gift your loved ones with Four Points's Lunar Homecoming mooncake collection, made in collaboration with Lady Yi's Tea House. Highlights of the collection include the signature Lady Yi's 11 Treasures and the debut of the Musang King Lava mooncake. The former consists of tea-based flavours, with some hints of sweet fruit. The latter, meanwhile, has a rich durian paste and a silky, oozing core. Other flavours include the all-time classics White Lotus Single Yolk and Red Bean. The mooncake collection is priced at RM188 per box, which comes with four mooncakes. Reservations are available until Sept 25.

InterContinental Kuala Lumpur

One of Kuala Lumpur's most esteemed hotels presents the Moonlight Jewels Mooncake Collection, handcrafted by master chef Lo. There are a total of three collections: Radiance, Bloom and Celestial. Each features distinctive gift box designs with four mooncakes within. The mooncakes are crafted with low sugar fillings and premium ingredients such as avocado, sweet potato, black sesame and pistachio. Flavours include Musang King Durian with Oats, Butterfly Pea Flower with Bird's Nest, Sweet Potato and Yam, and Pandan Skin Avocado Lava Pistachio. Individual mooncakes are priced between RM45 and RM63, with collections priced between RM166.40 and RM254.40. Orders can be made until Sept 25.



Kimpton Naluria Kuala Lumpur

Malaysia's first Kimpton hotel has debuted its first mooncake collection in the form of Celestial Duality. The collection is lunar-inspired, with a magnetic keepsake case built from two distinct halves – one textured and rugged, the other smooth and curvaceous. Within the case are four signature mooncake flavours, as well as Curate Coffee capsules and Ghostbird Coffee drip bags. Flavours include Classic Red Bean, White Lotus with Single Yolk, Golden Starlight and Momoyama Black Tea with Mung Bean. Priced at RM248, self-collection is available at the hotel.



MID-AUTUMN DELIGHTS



Hilton Kuala Lumpur

This 2026 mooncake campaign is headlined by the Moonlit Carousel, a premium mid-autumn collection, complemented by The Hilton National Collection. The Moonlit Carousel draws inspiration from Claude Debussy's *Clair de Lune (Moonlight)* and is presented in a keepsake music box, with eight mooncakes and RM400 worth of dining vouchers. The Hilton Mooncake Collection features a design inspired by the traditional Chinese fan and is adorned with vibrant Malaysian *batik* motifs. Returning favourite Heavenly Gold, crafted with Musang King durian, is joined by two new artisanal snow skin flavours: The Ocean Pearl, a bold savoury combination of cod fish, black pepper, macadamia nuts and pumpkin seeds, and Amber Moonlight, which brings red bean, lotus paste and fragrant orange together. Available until Sept 25, the Moonlit Carousel offers traditional baked, artisanal snow skin and premium mooncake assortments. The collection is available from RM358 nett, while The Hilton Mooncake Collection starts from RM178 nett. Guests may also enjoy the signature Supermoon Snow Skin, designed to serve up to 10 persons, from RM478 nett.



Imperial Lexis Kuala Lumpur

Rolling out this Mid-Autumn Festival is Imperial Lexis Kuala Lumpur's premium mooncake collection The Imperial Moonrise. Beautifully packaged in a premium keepsake box, each collection features four timeless favourites. These include Pure White Lotus, White Lotus Single Yolk, Jade Pandan, and Assorted Fruits and Nuts. Available while stocks last, the mooncake collection is priced at RM260 per box. Behold, a perfect Mid-Autumn Festival present for family, friends and colleagues.

JYY Group

For this Mid-Autumn Festival, JYY Group has partnered with Martell to launch the Treasured Through Time Mid-Autumn Collection. The collection features both brands' expertise, with the mooncakes having premium ingredients infused in cognac for 24 hours. Alongside the Treasure Collection, JYY Group also presents several signature Mid-Autumn favourites, including the Black Gold Musang King Snow Skin Mooncake. Also worth savouring is the Moutai Snow Skin Mooncake, which soaks raisins in liquor for 24 hours, deeply infusing them with a rich aroma. The Treasured Through Time Mid-Autumn Collection is priced at RM698, with the durian mooncake set prices ranging from RM138 to RM238.



Petaling Jaya Marriott Hotel

Inspired by stories of reunion and gratitude, Petaling Jaya Marriott Hotel presents The Lunar Tier Mooncake collection. With the theme of "A Story Within Every Drawer", the maiden mooncake collection features a gift box with a pull-out drawer and lattice-inspired motifs. The Lunar Tier Collection features four traditional baked mooncakes: Red Bean Paste, Lotus Paste with Single Yolk, Pandan Paste with Single Yolk and Longan Wolfberries Paste. There is also a Special Edition Moonlight Luxe Cooler Collection with Signature Musang King Durian, Classic Yam Paste, Citrus Lemon and Indulgent Tiramisu Snow Skin mooncakes. The Lunar Tier Mooncake Collection with four traditional baked mooncakes is priced at RM188, while the Special Edition Moonlight Luxe Cooler Collection, with eight snowskin mini mooncakes, is available for RM238 nett.





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MALAYSIA

WHAT started as a small venture selling Malaysian ice-cream during the Covid-19 pandemic has grown into a thriving dessert business for Nur Sabrina Md Salleh.

The 31-year-old former housewife, who started her ice-cream venture to help support her family after her husband lost his job, drew on her longstanding passion for cooking to pursue her dream of becoming a chef.

She began by expanding her offerings, learning to craft pastries and cakes while getting feedback from her customers.

"When I started getting favourable response and orders started to come in, I became even more motivated," she said to Bernama, through the Malaysian Federation of the Deaf sign language interpreter Goh Soo Leng.

After two years, the mother of two was able to realise her dream with the opening of Sabrina Desserts House in Sungai Buloh, serving food and beverages to customers.

Challenge of starting business

For Sabrina, her business venture was a steep learning curve, as she had to learn to manage a business from the

Nur Sabrina's dessert journey

➤ Sweet dreams come true for deaf pastry chef



Her tiramisu, mango cheesecake and batik cake are popular among customers.

ground up.

The challenge was greater as she is a person with disabilities (PwD), who relies heavily on observation, experience and courses to

understand how to manage a business.

"I learnt a lot by observing how others managed their businesses and handled finances, as well as by attending various entrepreneurship courses," she said.

According to Nur Sabrina, running an order-based business allowed her to adjust production according to customer demand.

She spent more than six months building her confidence before venturing into marketing her products, including by participating in Ramadan bazaars.

Her tiramisu, mango cheesecake and batik cake proved to be a hit, and she had also secured orders from cafes in Shah Alam.

She was also able to take part in Exim Bank's Mawaddah Initiative, which gave her the opportunity to promote her products and network with potential clients, while gaining market exposure and experience in managing sales at a bigger scale, which boosted her confidence.

The Mawaddah Initiative is Exim



Sabrina shows some of the products that she makes at her desserts house.

— PICS FROM BERNAMA

Bank's Islamic Social Finance platform which focuses on entrepreneurship development, education, healthcare, humanitarian assistance and strategic partnerships.

Towards brighter future

Moving forward, Sabrina hopes to expand Sabrina Desserts House, and realise her dream of operating a cafeteria.

She said apart from assistance in terms of opportunities and market access, business management knowledge would remain her priority to ensure a more structured business growth.

The entrepreneur hopes she would be able to inspire other PwDs to take their first steps in venturing

into entrepreneurship.

She said having a disability should not make someone feel incapable of doing something, but rather, opportunities should be embraced with confidence and determination.

"We should try and move forward, and show our abilities and capabilities. No matter what challenges we face, we need to try because only then will we know how far we can go. Although we cannot hear, we can still do many things. We can be creative, our hands can create all kinds of products. Most importantly, have confidence in yourself and do not give up easily because, *In shaa Allah* (God willing), there are always opportunities," she added.



Sabrina is a PwD but does not let disability hinder her will to work.

Tuba Island's gayam snail: Hidden seafood gem

BEYOND the popular *bronok* (sea cucumber), Tuba Island boasts another unique seafood delicacy that remains relatively unknown to many, the *gayam* snail.

The coastal snail is known for its sweet taste and meatier flesh compared with *lala*, commonly known in the northern region as *siput retak seribu*.

However, harvesting *gayam* snails is no easy task, as it requires diving skills and the ability to navigate strong sea currents without full scuba equipment.

Tuba Island resident and *gayam*

snail harvester Rahman Ahmad, 49, said only about seven or eight people on the island possess the skills needed to harvest the snails.

"We usually hunt for these snails five days a week, following the low-tide schedule, particularly during 'dead water' periods when sea currents are weak. Fishermen dive 2-3m to the seabed and the activity is stopped if the water is 4m deep.

"*Gayam* snails live buried about 2in beneath the seabed. Their location can be detected by jets of silt rising to the surface, after which we use a scoop to collect them. We also

attach a piece of wood to a rope and hold onto it at the surface to prevent ourselves from being swept away by strong currents," he told reporters.

Rahman said fishermen have to make hundreds of dives to collect about 100kg of snails within four hours.

"It is certainly exhausting, but I have become accustomed to it since I started harvesting these snails about four years ago with my wife and child. There are challenges, particularly the risk of being swept away by strong currents, but thankfully, nothing untoward has happened while we were harvesting the snails," he said.

Meanwhile, his wife, Rubiha Abd Hamid, 48, said *gayam* snails are a seasonal delicacy, with the harvesting season typically running from July or August until December, particularly during low tide.

"After my husband scoops them from the seabed, I sift through the catch to separate the snails from sand and debris. We can harvest between 70kg and 150kg a day and sell them to villagers or middlemen in Langkawi for about RM5 per kg," she said.

She said *gayam* snail meat is sweeter and more substantial than



Compared with *lala*, *gayam* snails are sweeter and have more meat to them.

lala and can be prepared in various ways, including curries, lemongrass-stir-fries and fritters.

"We also run our own eatery, so visiting tourists can sample the delicious *gayam* snail there," she added.

The family's traditional foraging skills have also been passed down to their son Mohd Akram, 11, who began accompanying his parents at age nine.

"I tag along on days when there is

no school. I usually rake the beach sand with my feet and when a snail surfaces, I pick it up. It is a fun activity and I get to learn more about foraging for these snails while helping my parents earn a living," he said.

With its distinctive taste and the unique traditional harvesting method involved, the *gayam* snail has strong potential to become a gastronomic attraction for domestic and international tourists visiting Tuba Island. — Bernama



Rahman says only a few people on Tuba Island possess the skills needed to harvest the snails. — PICS FROM BERNAMA

Ro-busting internet's coffee myth

► New study points out overlooked crop's drought intolerance, other vulnerabilities

A new study has challenged the widely held belief that robusta coffee is more resilient to climate change than other varieties, with its lead author in an interview calling it an "internet myth" based on flawed research that overlooked the crop's drought intolerance and other vulnerabilities.

Often derided as cheap filler compared with arabica beans, tens of millions of bags of robusta coffee are supplied to global markets each year, the majority from Vietnam and Brazil.

The findings, published recently in the Wiley journal Sustainable

Development, are a challenge for those advocating robusta as a means of weathering climate change in the coffee industry.

As demand for robusta grows around the world, any reassessment of its climate resilience has implications for farmers, traders and consumers.

Earlier this month, a Vietnamese coffee official told Reuters that adapting to climate change was no longer a future concern but an urgent necessity to safeguard output.

Media, farmers and researchers often point to robusta's heat resilience as the coffee industry's answer to climate change, but the new paper in Sustainable Development found that previous assessments should be considered provisional at best.

It cited research errors such as treating irrigated farms as optimal growing areas.

Robusta's greater resilience to climate change is an "internet myth" that emerged about a decade ago,



Robusta is commonly mistaken to be resilient to climate change. — REUTERS/PIC

Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew senior research leader of crops and global change and the paper's lead author Aaron Davis said.

"I found it troubling people

weren't interpreting the science correctly and that they were advocating robusta as the saviour of the coffee sector under climate change. Robusta is more heat-

tolerant than arabica, but it's drought-intolerant," Davis said.

Producers such as Brazil, Vietnam and India lack climate suitability for growing robusta, the paper found, pointing to the use of irrigation to ensure that the coffee plants receive enough water and ensure profitability.

Earlier studies have sought to highlight robusta's resilience, suggesting the beans are more resistant to drought and act as a boon for farmers.

Any expansion of robusta coffee production must account for the crop's vulnerabilities, the paper said, adding that growers in some regions already face serious problems with availability of water for irrigation.

The study added that there are inherent risks to relying on irrigation for robusta's profitability and perhaps even survival.

"The global coffee supply needs major structural and systemic change if it's to survive over the long term," Davis said.

THIRST QUENCHERS



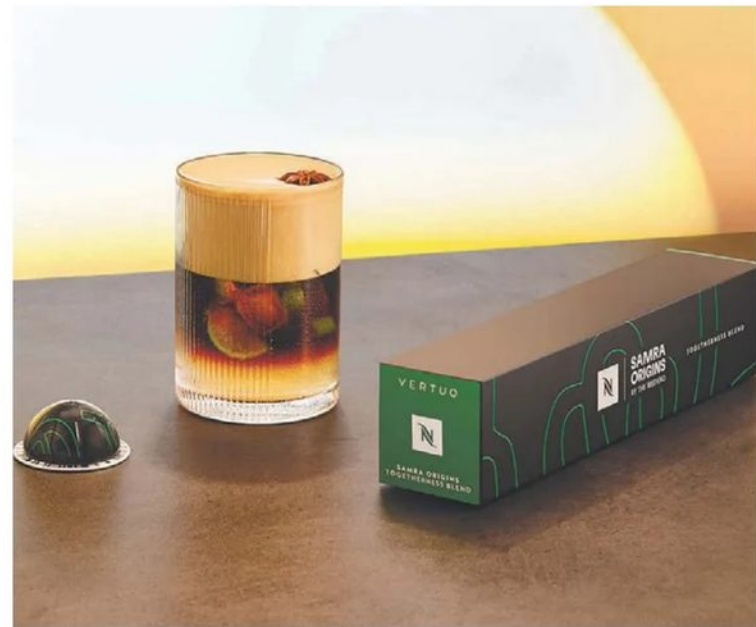
Starbucks x Pop Mart

The limited time collaboration between Starbucks and Pop Mart celebrates the 20th anniversary of Molly with two new Frappuccino Blended Beverages inspired by a side of Molly's colorful spirit. From earthy matcha to rich cocoa, the beverages translate her playful outlook through flavor, while staying rooted in Starbucks handcrafted beverage experience.



Chagee Malaysia Kraf

At the heart of the Merdeka celebration by Chagee Malaysia is Seri Embun, a limited-time Vanilla Oolong Milk Tea inspired by Kraf, Malaysia's tradition of handcraft where distinct handmade elements are woven together to form one beautiful whole. The name Seri Embun combines the concepts of radiance and fresh morning dew, reflecting the gentle balance of the drink. Balancing two contrasting flavour profiles, Seri Embun layers deep Wuyi Da Hong Pao tea with creamy Madagascar vanilla.



Nespresso Togetherness Blend

The signature coffee from its collaboration with The Weeknd, Nespresso Samra Origins Togetherness Blend brings together Samra Origins and The Weeknd's creative vision with Nespresso's coffee legacy. Combining African Arabicas through a light roast, this blend delivers vibrant citrus fruit notes accompanied by sweet honey and woody undertones. A smooth coffee, cultivated with generations of know-how, is easy to love. Easy to share.



Guinness Draught in Can 300ml

Alongside the existing Guinness Draught in Can 470ml range, Guinness Malaysia has launched a 300ml variant, its smallest draught in a can yet. The new compact format is bound to give consumers another way to enjoy Guinness Draught at home, while still delivering the signature Guinness Draught experience. Powered by the iconic nitrogen widget, each can creates the signature surge and settle, smooth taste and creamy head that Guinness Draught is known for.



Hennessy V.S.O.P and Hennessy X.O Limited Edition

Inspired by the meeting of these two timeless traditions, the limited-edition Hennessy V.S.O.P and Hennessy X.O decanters feature fluid lines, bold contrasts and a moon motif delicately patterned with tea leaves. The designs reflect the convergence of tea and cognac, celebrating shared moments through an appreciation of taste, ritual and artistry.



Penfolds Bin 389 and Bin 407 Limited-Edition

Available in a limited-edition Mid-Autumn gift pack, Bin 389 Cabernet Sauvignon Shiraz and Bin 407 Cabernet Sauvignon capture the essence of reunion, generosity and refined gifting. Featuring a palette of red and gold accents, the packaging reflects the warmth of the season, making it ideal for festive reunions, celebratory dinners and meaningful exchanges. Both wines pair beautifully with Asian celebratory fare, elevating moments of connection and celebration.



Language of love

► Fatimah Noryyah releases singles *Bahasa Kasih*, *Hari Esok*

AT 18, singer Fatimah Noryyah is continuing to build her music career with the release of two new singles *Bahasa Kasih* and *Hari Esok*, under Thousands Of Years Media (ToYm).

Bahasa Kasih centres on unspoken love and the sacrifices made by people who remain by someone's side without seeking recognition.

Composed by Toni Lim, with lyrics by Fara Dolhadi and Deli Arfadwi, the song was produced and arranged by Lee Nai Kong.

Its music video was created entirely using artificial intelligence, with the technology used to interpret the song's themes of love, appreciation and sacrifice through its visuals.

Hari Esok takes a different approach, with Fatimah joined by her brother Syairazi Hasan for the duet.

The song reflects on the uncertainty of the future and the reality that life is rarely perfect. Framed as a conversation between two siblings, its lyrics explore how they reassure each other while learning to appreciate what they have, through happiness and hardship.

Harits Agustin composed, produced and arranged the song, while Azian MNor wrote the lyrics.

For Fatimah, *Bahasa Kasih* came from a personal realisation rather than sadness.

"This song came from a realisation, not from sadness. I hope those who listen to it will remember someone who once stayed by their side without saying much," she said.

She described *Hari Esok* as being closer to a real conversation between siblings.

"Neither of us knows what lies ahead but singing it with my brother made it feel more



Fatimah's ability to sing and act in three languages allows her to connect with people from different communities through music and performance.

peaceful," she said.

The release also holds personal meaning for ToYm founder Datuk Wira Jment Lim, who once wanted to become a singer during his schooldays.

For him, building a platform for young musicians has become another way of pursuing that ambition.

"Fulfilling a dream doesn't always mean standing on the stage yourself. Sometimes, it means building a stage for someone else," he said.

He said establishing ToYm allowed him to continue that dream by discovering new talent, producing music and giving emerging singers opportunities to have their work heard.

Both singles are available on selected digital platforms, with releases on YouTube and Spotify to follow.



Hari Esok is a duet featuring Fatimah (left) and her brother Syairazi. – HANDOUT PICS

Jimmy Lin, Nicky Lee return to stage for bigger, bolder concert

GET ready for an unforgettable night of nostalgia, music and renewed chemistry as Asian pop icons Jimmy Lin and Nicky Lee take the stage together once again for *Jimmy x Nicky Concert 2.0 Live in Malaysia 2026*.

The concert will take place on Dec 19 at 6pm at Arena of Stars, promising a night of timeless classics, heartfelt melodies and fresh musical encounters as the duo returns to the Malaysian stage.

Following the success and memorable chemistry of their first collaboration, the two acclaimed artistes are back with an upgraded concert experience, featuring beloved classics, dynamic collaborations and engaging on-stage interactions. Bringing contrasting musical colours to one stage, Lin embodies youthful nostalgia and timeless pop, while Lee is known for his soulful R&B sound and emotional storytelling. Their distinctive styles will come together to create the signature appeal of the "Jimmy x Nicky" experience.

Known affectionately as the "Little Whirlwind", Lin has enjoyed a career spanning more than three decades across music, acting and motorsports. Since making his debut in the 1990s, he quickly became one of Asia's most recognisable young idols, winning hearts with his youthful image, energetic performances and memorable songs. His music has remained closely associated with the formative years of generations of fans, while his ventures beyond music have further cemented his status as a multi-talented figure in the Asian entertainment scene.

Meanwhile, Lee is celebrated for his distinctive, soulful voice and heartfelt interpretation of Mandarin R&B and love songs. In 2007, he won Best Mandarin Male Singer at the 18th Golden Melody Awards for his album *Baby Shi Wo* (*Baby It's Me*), affirming his standing among the region's leading vocal talents. Beyond his work as a performer, Lee has also been involved in music production and international projects, including his work with R&B

group Aziatic.

For fans who have grown up with their music, the concert will be a musical journey through youth, love and the passage of time, revisiting some of the songs that have become part of the soundtrack of their lives. Lin will bring his enduring classics such as *Shi Qi Sui De Yu Ji* (*Summer of '92*) and *Bu Shi Mei Ge Lian Qu Dou You Mei Hao Hui Yi* (*Not Every Love Song Has Fond Memories*), while Lee will deliver fan favourites including *Xiang Tai Duo* (*Overthink*), *Wo Hui Hao Hao Guo* (*I'll Be Fine*) and *Xia Tian* (*Summer*).

More than simply a reunion, 2.0 marks a new chapter for the duo, building on the chemistry established in their first collaboration. Alongside their signature songs, audiences can look forward to new musical encounters, collaborative performances and lively interactions that highlight a more evolved dynamic between the two performers.

With Jazzy Group serving as the concert promoter, tickets are priced from RM288 to RM1,138.



Lin (left) and Lee. – HANDOUT PIC

CONCERT REVIEW

BY AMEEN HAZIZI

FLO wasted little time showing why it has become one of Britain's most convincing new R&B groups.

Making its Malaysian debut at Zepp KL on Aug 27, Jorja Douglas, Stella Quaresma and Renee Downer delivered a concert driven by live harmonies, demanding choreography and plenty of Y2K attitude. It was a lively introduction to the trio, although uneven audio, a lengthy changeover and a relatively short runtime prevented the night from reaching its full potential.

Setting the mood

Zepp KL proved well suited to the *Therapy at the Club Tour*. The venue was spacious enough for the standing audience to dance, yet compact enough to retain the energy of a club show. The crowd began lining up early and arrived in powerful outfits that matched the confidence of the performers. Y2K fashion, striking make-up and bold accessories filled the venue before the performers even went on stage.

Brief local introduction

Malaysian pop duo XONE, comprising Nelysa Kay and Ellya Keesha, opened the concert with a fun but extremely quick set. Its 20 minutes onstage passed almost immediately. This was followed by a wait of nearly 45 minutes before Flo appeared, causing some of the early momentum to fade.

Considering how little time XONE received, part of the lengthy changeover could have been given to the duo. A longer opening set would have allowed them to show more of



The group's contrasting looks give each member a distinct visual identity.



Blue spotlights frame Flo during its performance.

– ALL PICS
COURTESY OF
ZAARIM HARIZ

Flo turns up *The Mood* in KL

British R&B trio revives spirit of classic girl groups

what Malaysian pop has to offer.

Coming out swinging

Once Flo arrived, the concert kicked into full gear. The trio came out swinging with *Fly Girl*, followed by *Walk Like This*, *Check* and *Cry Ugly*. Its choreography was sharp and

demanding, yet it never clashed with the three-part harmonies at the centre of its music.

The audio was the performance's biggest weakness. The mix could have been clearer and the members referred to the sound problems several times from the stage. The rough patches also made the live nature of the performance unmistakable. Flo was singing in the room, complete with the imperfections that accompany a live concert, instead of lip-syncing to pre-recorded vocals.

Living the Y2K dream

Flo was every bit the embodiment of three women living out their Y2K dreams in 2026. Its styling, choreography and attitude recalled the period when R&B girl groups dominated music television and pop culture. Each member had opportunities to stand out without weakening the chemistry between them. PinkPantheress channels Y2K through the image of a solo pop star, while Flo draw from the tradition of Destiny's Child. Whether one of them eventually becomes her generation's



From left: Ellya and Nelysa warmed up the crowd ahead of Flo's performance.

Beyoncé remains to be seen.

Crowd favourites

The 15-song set continued with *On & On*, *Therapy at the Club*, *Floating*, *Get It Till I'm Gone*, *The Mood*, *Cardboard Box* and *In My Bag*. *Remedied*, *Summertime*, *Don't Break Her Heart* and *Leak It* completed a crowd-friendly selection spanning the trio's catalogue.

Cardboard Box and *In My Bag* prompted especially strong singalongs, although there was never a point when the audience stood idle. People sang, danced and attempted the choreography wherever space allowed.



Douglas's Union Jack top adds to the overall Y2K Britpop aesthetic of the entire concert.

Over too soon

By around 10pm, the concert was over. The runtime felt a little short, especially after the lengthy wait between acts, although the early finish made sense for a Thursday night. Flo's Malaysian debut was energetic, stylish and felt alive. The sound needed work and XONE deserved a longer set, but the trio delivered a fun concert that left Kuala Lumpur wanting more.

Thank you, next: Fans mourn 'bittersweet' Ariana Grande final gig

ARIANA Grande fans recently said the US pop star's last gig in London before a career break would be a bittersweet moment and slammed "toxic" comments since July about her emaciated figure.

Some anticipated tears at her last concert at London's O2 venue after her team said she wants to "step back" amid concern over her very thin frame.

"It's bittersweet, I'm sad but I think it's good for her to have a break because she's been so busy," said Kane, 27, an entertainer from Skegness in northeast England who had also attended the previous night's concert.

"We cried enough tears for everyone in the room last night so tonight's going to be something special," added his 30-year-old sister Heather, a professional Taylor Swift tribute act.

"It's an end of an era for me and I think for most fans because we've

looked forward to this event for almost a year now," said Jadey, a 21-year-old travel agent from the Netherlands.

Grande will complete a 10-night residency at the arena to end her *Eternal Sunshine* tour, which began in June in the US.

The 33-year-old singer and actress who starred in the *Wicked* movies has always been slim and petite, but a video for her song *Petal* released July show significant weight loss with her bones jutting out, leading fans to post concerned comments.

Days later, Grande's representative said she would be taking a break from public life at the end of the tour.

Grande's representative told *People* magazine the Grammy-winning artiste wanted to take a "step back from visibility", as her many appearances had "led to endless, ongoing public scrutiny".



Grande's (left) performance in *Wicked* has earned her an Oscar nomination. – IMDBPIC

Producers also announced she was dropping out of her debut appearance in London's West End in the Stephen Sondheim musical *Sunday in The Park with George*.

The singer has described this

decision as "thoughtful and empowered".

The tour has been acclaimed by critics with the BBC calling it a "bravura performance", but the *Guardian* newspaper wrote: "It is

impossible to witness the 33-year-old's frame on stage and not be gripped by genuine concern for her."

Grande has called body-shaming comments "really dangerous", however. – AFP

Lifetime award for Clooney

► Venice Film Festival kicks off, to feature movies about Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch



Gyllenhaal has raised concerns over the main competition's lack of films made by women.

– PICS FROM AFP

A smiling George Clooney was honoured with a lifetime award at the start of the Venice Film Festival recently where the long-time Donald Trump critic took another swipe at the US president.

The 65-year-old Oscar winner was called a "legend" by actress friend Laura Dern as she presented him with the gong in front of a star-studded audience at the start of the 83rd edition of the festival.

Clooney, accompanied by his lawyer wife Amal, was cheered by hundreds of well-wishers on the red carpet, while Dern read out tributes from past co-stars including Brad Pitt and Adam Sandler during the ceremony.

"When you start reflecting on the years, you realise you really didn't have a career as much as a series of happy accidents," Clooney told the audience.

Earlier at a press conference, the *Ocean's Eleven* star told journalists the US was currently a kakistocracy, which is a country run by the least qualified people.

"I think maybe we have a kakistocracy right now, but we'll get through it," he added.

The issue of women representation in the film industry was also a major topic on day one of the festival after director Alberto Barbera chose only two women-directed films in the 21-strong main competition.



Clooney (right) and Amal are frequent red carpet guests at the film festival.

Actor-turned-director Maggie Gyllenhaal, head of the jury this year, openly questioned his choices during a press conference with Barbera earlier in the day.

"There's a systemic problem," she told reporters, referring to the difficulties many women have to get films financed and their preference for different topics to men.

"I really am walking in with a question as to why there's so few women in the main competition as filmmakers this year," she added.

Hollywood ghosting

Clooney provided some much-needed American razzle-dazzle, with Hollywood studios largely staying away from the event this year.

The US majors as well as streaming giants Amazon and Netflix also snubbed the Berlin and

Cannes festivals earlier this year, Europe's other two biggest film events.

Although Venice might lack mass-market blockbusters, there is no shortage of larger-than-life subjects, with films about Elon Musk, Rupert Murdoch and the volatile Gallagher brothers from the Britpop band Oasis.

Running through Sept 12, the festival will also offer a strong lineup of independent films, including the main competition's only documentary – *Naza* – about the Israeli forces' killing of civilians in Gaza.

Israeli directors Yuval Abraham and Rachel Szor won an Oscar for 2024's *No Other Land*, which documented Israel's displacement of a Palestinian community in the occupied West Bank.

Opening the festival is *Ink*, about the ruthless rise of Murdoch to the

top of the British media, from Britain's *Trainspotting* director Danny Boyle.

He is played by Australian heartthrob Guy Pearce who told reporters he had spoken to Murdoch's daughter Elisabeth who reported the right-wing tycoon was "very happy" about the casting decision.

Stars attending

Other much-awaited indie films include *Wild Horse Nine* from the director of *In Bruges*, Martin McDonagh, starring John Malkovich and Sam Rockwell as eccentric CIA agents.

French director Florian Zeller's psychological thriller *Bunker* features real-life Spanish power couple Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem playing partners with a rocky marriage.

Ilya Khrzhanovsky's *DAU*, a multi-year experimental film project about Soviet physicists, has also hit the headlines after being accused by Ukraine's government of having links "to the Russian state and its influence networks".

In a detailed rebuttal, Khrzhanovsky noted he renounced his Russian citizenship to protest the Ukraine war and said the film "is not an instrument of Russian state cultural policy".

"It is an artistic statement about the nature of totalitarian evil," he wrote on Facebook.

Also competing for the top Golden Lion prize is Venice veteran Werner Herzog, with his feature *Bucking Fastard* starring sisters Kate Mara and Rooney Mara.

One big name likely to stay far from the Venice limelight is Musk, the central figure in a nearly four-hour documentary from US Oscar winner Alex Gibney.

Barbera also said there were "no fewer than four films that deal with the Palestinian issue and the current situation in Iran" this year. – AFP

Brendan Fraser says *Pressure* offers warning against questioning science

BRENDAN Fraser said Anthony Maras's new World War II drama *Pressure* serves as a cautionary tale that remains relevant today, more than 80 years after the D-Day invasion.

Speaking at the film's recent European premiere in London, the Oscar-winning actor told Reuters people "second-guess nature and science at (their) peril" – and yet, "science, physics, they don't care about our feelings on this planet."

Adapted from David Haig's 2014 stage play, *Pressure* tells the true story of meteorologist Captain James Stagg, whose weather forecast prompted Allied commanders to delay the D-Day invasion by 24 hours.

Had the operation gone ahead on June 5, 1944, as originally planned, it is believed severe storms would have derailed the mission. The eventual success of the invasion helped turn the tide of World War II against Nazi Germany.

Fleabag star Andrew Scott said the story shines a light on a largely overlooked figure in wartime history.

"It's wonderful to be able to bring this incredible true story to life. And this man that I play, James Stagg, was a real war hero and his forecast changed the course of history,"



Fraser says the humanity of Eisenhower, whom he plays in the film, drew him to the role. – REUTERS/PIC

he said.

The film centres on the immense pressure facing the meteorologist as he challenged military leaders determined to proceed with one of the war's most significant operations on the date scheduled.

Among the Allied commanders, Field Marshal Bernard Montgomery, portrayed by Damian Lewis, proves one of Stagg's most forceful challengers, repeatedly pushing back against calls for a delay.

Lewis compared Stagg's struggle to a David and Goliath story, with the meteorologist forced to stand before senior Allied commanders and warn

them that launching the invasion too soon could end in disaster.

Fraser, who plays General Dwight D. Eisenhower in the film, said it was the commander's humanity and concern for his troops that drew him to the role.

"In researching him, I grew to admire a great deal about the decisions that he made. In hindsight, we can look to him as one of those world leaders who cared deeply about what they were doing," he said.

For playwright Haig, the story carries a contemporary message, because the careful deliberation behind the decisions depicted in *Pressure* stands in contrast to a world where major choices are often made rapidly and impulsively due to social media and other developments.

But for actor Harrison Osterfield, another aspect of the story will resonate strongly with audiences, particularly in Britain: The weather itself.

"We can all know when we think the weather's going to go one way and then it goes the other. Never mess with Mother Nature and try and keep her on our side," he said.

Pressure has begun its rollout in cinemas globally and will be released in the UK next Wednesday. – Reuters



Pressure centres on a real-life meteorologist who has to convince senior military leaders to postpone the launch of D-Day. – IMDB/PIC



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Mercedes driver Kimi Antonelli speaks during a press conference on Thursday. – REUTERS/SPIC

No pressure

Antonelli says can enjoy home race after grid penalties push him back

FORMULA ONE championship leader Kimi Antonelli looked forward to his home Italian Grand Prix this weekend and said grid penalties had taken the pressure off while he also had less to prove than last year.

The 20-year-old Mercedes driver is set to start from the back of the grid as he becomes the first Italian in 73 years to lead the standings at Monza.

"I think in some ways it helps to release pressure, although I'd very much rather fight for pole and start at the front," Antonelli said of the penalties he will incur for tomorrow's race after exceeding his power unit allocation.

"But in some ways, I feel like it makes me a bit more relaxed going into the weekend. And I think also that's why I'm going to be able to enjoy more the driving and the weekend itself.

"And, of course, as well, it's a different opportunity. It's an opportunity to try something different during the

weekend, different work method as well, in free practice especially."

Antonelli has had six wins in his second season and leads teammate George Russell and Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton by 59 points.

The race, a highlight for any Italian Formula One fan and a home track for Ferrari, will be a damage limitation exercise.

Just how many people the youngster can overtake, and how many points he can score, is a big question.

Hamilton reckoned Antonelli could cut through the tail-end and midfield "pretty easily" and felt sixth place was achievable for the youngster who took his seat at Mercedes. Mercedes insiders suggested top five was possible.

"It's a circuit that could suit us very well. But we've seen how strong McLaren is and how strong they have been in the past two races," said Antonelli.

"Ferrari is going to be certainly on

top, especially with the new engine. I think it's still a very strong car. I think this track can be good for us, but we still need to take into account that Ferrari, McLaren, even Red Bull might be quick this weekend.

"I feel very free mentally going into this weekend. I'm actually very excited, very much looking forward to it, but with no real pressure."

Last year, as a rookie, Antonelli qualified seventh and finished ninth but he is in a very different place now.

"Obviously, I was coming from a difficult period as well. And I felt like I had to prove myself, to prove that I could belong in F1. So, I feel like also that increased a lot of the pressure on myself, and that made me drive very, how can I say, very tense," he recalled.

"Then also when you get the good results in, it's always one less thing to prove. And I've proven that I can win. I've proven that I can perform." – Reuters

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322 Notices



دewan Bandaraya Kuala Lumpur

DEWAN BANDARAYA KUALA LUMPUR

FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING ACT) 1982 (AKTA 267)

FEDERAL TERRITORY (PLANNING) (APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION) (FEDERAL TERRITORY OF KUALA LUMPUR) RULES 2025

RULE 3

NOTICE TO OBTAIN VIEWS

Datuk Bandar has received an application for a proposed land consolidation and development comprising one 39-storey apartment residential block with a total of 160 units, including a car park podium, residential amenities and supporting facilities, with a plot ratio of 1:3.5, on Lots 482925 to 482936 and Lot 482937 (P.E. from part of Lot 10880), Jalan Mutiara Barat, Taman Mutiara Barat, Mukim Kuala Lumpur, District of Kuala Lumpur, Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur.

(Ref: DBKL.JPRB. 3843/2007 JLD 1)

Pursuant to the provisions of Rule 3, Federal Territory (Planning) (Application For Planning Permission) (Federal Territory Of Kuala Lumpur) Rules 2025, the Mayor grants the registered landowners in the surrounding area a chance to submit their views towards this application.

If any registered land owners in the surrounding area decides to do so, they are required to submit in writing their views towards this application addressed to the **Pengarah, Jabatan Perancangan Bandaraya, Tingkat 9, Menara DBKL 1, Jalan Raja Laut, 50350 Kuala Lumpur** and through email: jprb@dbkl.gov.my.

These views shall be submitted within two (2) weeks from the date of publication of this notification, clearly stating the name of the owner, lot number, local postal address, and DBKL reference number.

Date: **05TH SEPTEMBER 2026**

DATUK BANDAR KUALA LUMPUR

322 Notices

FOCAL PARK SDN BHD (358698-H)

NOTIS LELONG AWAM KENDERAAN UNTUK DILELONG SEPERTI SEDIA ADA

TEMPAT & TARIKH LELONG : Northern Region (Alor Setar, Butterworth & Ipoh)
10-09-2026 (Khamis) Pukul 11:00pagi

TARIKH MELIHAT : SEBELUM TIGA HARI LELONG (Pukul 9:00pagi - 4:00petang)

PERTANYAAN (Tel): Butterworth 04-3567972, Alor Setar 04-787 7972, Ipoh 05-5293971

FPAC - PELELONG BERLESEN : a) Mr. Chew Wooi Kok ,
b) Mr. Steven Lim Peng Seng (02241),
c) Pn Hasniza Binti Abu Samah (01105)

Alamat : 352, Permatang Tok Jaya Maklom Sg Dua 13800 Butterworth,
Lot 138-A, Batu 5 Jalan Langgar 05460 Alor Setar
PT51683, Jalan Jelapang, Kws Perindustrian Tmn Meru 30020 Ipoh

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Item	Reg No	Jenis & Model	Tahun
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AM2	AKF2603	NISSAN ALMERA 1.5L E (A)	2015
AM3	VAJ7537	PERODUA MYVI 1.5	2017
AM4	QRN2196	PROTON X70 EXECUTIVE 2WD (CKD)	2020
AM5	SWL2543	BMW 740LE XDRIVE	2018
AM6	AKL701	MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER 2.0	2021
AM7	AJT5868	PERODUA VIVA 1.0	2014
AM8	QM5274Q	PROTON SAGA 1.3	2024
AM9	ALT831	PROTON SAGA 1.3L PREMIUM (AT)	2020
AM10	AHP8882	PROTON SAGA FL 1.3	2011
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Sensational Eala basks in fans cheers

ALEXANDRA EALA of the Philippines brushed aside Ukrainian Oleksandra Oliynykova 6-1, 6-4 to reach the third round of the US Open yesterday, keeping the buzz going for her fervent following in New York.

The 21-year-old lefty lost to Oliynykova in Strasbourg earlier this year but had the right formula this time around as she needed little more than an hour to seal it with her family among the fans squarely in her favour.

"My patience and the consistency of my focus – I think that was the key to winning the match today," said Eala.

Fresh off her career-breakthrough win in Washington last month, Eala looked poised for a fine run in Flushing Meadows as she won the first four

games across a dominant opening set, with 11 winners to none from her opponent.

The two traded breaks in a far more competitive second set, where Eala broke her opponent from the baseline in the seventh game before slamming her foot on the gas and clinching it with an unreturnable serve to the delight of the crowd, as the flag of the Philippines dotted the stands.

The first player from the Philippines to win a WTA Tour-level match was urged on by her compatriots at Louis Armstrong Stadium, where signs in Tagalog urged her to fight on.

"I think we all represent something. I'm proud of what I represent," said Eala.

The fleet-footed, wide-smiling Eala has cata-

pulted herself into fans' hearts as quickly as she has surged up the rankings, having ended 2025 50th in the world but arriving in Flushing this time ranked 18th.

Eala, who exited in the second round last year, got to the fourth round at Wimbledon for her deepest run at a Slam this summer and said that experience was fuelling her run in New York.

"I do feel like a more well-rounded player now and more mature. I guess with time comes maturity and more intelligent," she told reporters.

"I think I just have more knowledge with experience in terms of tennis and competing at the very high level and knowledge of what I'm capable of and belief in myself." – Reuters

US Open trio march on



Rybakina, Gauff and Osaka overcome different challenges to reach 3rd round

ELENA RYBAKINA, Coco Gauff and Naomi Osaka all reached the third round of the US Open yesterday, with the trio overcoming contrasting challenges to keep their title hopes alive at Flushing Meadows.

Second seed Rybakina produced the most clinical performance of the three, beating Spain's Jessica Bouzas Maneiro 6-2, 6-4 on Louis Armstrong Stadium to continue her bid for a third Grand Slam title.

The Kazakh raced through the opening set after breaking early and maintained control in the second, winning three of the first four games as her clean ball-striking kept Bouzas Maneiro under pressure.

The Spaniard briefly threatened a comeback when Rybakina dropped serve while trying to close out the match, but the 27-year-old responded immediately by breaking again to seal victory.

"I'm really happy with this win today, in the second set she started to go for her shots but I'm happy I managed to close it out," Rybakina said.

The former Wimbledon champion had arrived in New York with questions over her fitness after retiring from Cincinnati during the build-up to the tournament.

"It's true it wasn't perfect preparation at all," Rybakina said. "I was a bit upset watching everybody practice preparing for the tournament and I was just doing all possible recovery and gym. I'm super happy to be here."

Fourth seed Gauff, meanwhile, survived a much tighter contest against Paula Badosa, beating the Spaniard 6-4, 7-6(5) on Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Badosa, ranked 87th, had beaten Gauff in their previous two meetings and pushed the

American throughout a tense second-round encounter.

Gauff saved two early break points before taking control of the opening set, but the second was a far more even affair. The players exchanged breaks twice before



Elena Rybakina in action against Jessica Bouzas Maneiro (not pictured) during yesterday's 2nd round match at the 2026 US Open. – REUTERSPIC

Gauff edged the tiebreak to complete the victory.

"Paula is a tough player. I feel like I had the lead but there wasn't too much I did wrong. She stepped it up. I'm really happy to be through today," Gauff said.

The 22-year-old admitted the difficulty of the draw had brought some nerves.

"I saw the draw. Definitely not someone you want to play in the 2nd round.

"Former number two in the world. Great competitor.

"I think I need matches like this to build my confidence. I'm happy with how I managed today. There was a bit of nerves."

Two-time champion Osaka had the toughest night of the three, recovering from a second-set wobble to defeat Czech Katerina Siniakova 6-2, 5-7, 6-1.

The 13th seed looked in complete control early on but lost her rhythm in the second set, committing 20 unforced errors as Siniakova forced a deciding set.

Osaka left the court for a bathroom break before the third and returned with renewed focus, winning the opening three games and saving two break points before closing out the match.

"I think I was a little bit too hard on myself, so I took the bathroom break, tried to regroup and have no regrets," Osaka said.

"Obviously the match was really difficult. I think on my end it was more, like, mentally I wanted to play perfectly. Obviously that's not going to happen every day. In the third set, I just tried to do what I could do, and thankfully I was able to win.

"When it gets to the third set, I try to think of all of the matches I was able to pull through," she said.

"I was trying to tell myself in the third set, like, keep going and keep trying to take the opportunities." – Reuters

Fritz strengthens title credentials with easy win in New York

TAYLOR FRITZ delivered another commanding performance to brush aside Mattia Bellucci 6-0, 6-1, 6-1 and reach the third round of the US Open yesterday, extending his emphatic start to the tournament without dropping a set.

Fritz is among a handful of contenders looking to end a 23-year American wait for a men's Grand Slam singles champion after Andy Roddick's Flushing Meadows triumph and the ninth seed has strengthened his position after his first two matches.

"I thought I played really well today. I came out and felt good from the beginning... I was very focused the whole match," Fritz told reporters after

his 98-minute demolition job.

"It was a very high level for me... I don't know if I'd for sure say I'd put it up there as one of the best matches I've ever played, but things were definitely clicking for me. Things felt really good for me. I can't really nitpick.

"I'd nitpick a lot to come up with anything I did wrong, because I felt all the important parts of my game that make me feel I'm playing good tennis and feel confident, it was all working for me."

The 2024 runner-up barely gave his unseeded Italian opponent any chances to settle as he dictated terms from the baseline and sealed another easy win.

"I think it is really important to not kill yourself in the first couple of matches, because you need to have the energy to potentially do that later on in the week," Fritz added.

"At the end of the day, you get a day off, but anyone will tell you one day isn't enough to recover from a five-set match. It's just not. You can come back and still play good, but it's not enough to fully recover.

"It's good to get through these the way that I've gotten through these, and yeah, I think the one today gives me a lot more confidence than the first-round match." – Reuters

Zverev goes the distance again

TOP SEED Alexander Zverev was put through the late-night ringer once more before booking his place in the third round of the US Open yesterday.

The German star, who had finished a five-set first round battle in the early hours of Wednesday morning, was again forced to go the distance before grinding out a 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (7-3), 6-7 (3-7), 6-3 victory over France's Quentin Halys.

The 4hr 33 min slugfest was another gruelling outing on the Arthur Ashe Stadium show court for Zverev, who clinched victory at just after 2.15am local time.

The 29-year-old, who has spent nearly 10 hours on court in his opening two matches, will face Chile's Alejandro Tabilo in the next round.

Zverev had looked in complete control against Halys early on, seizing the only break of the first set to go 5-4 before holding to claim the opening frame.

The second set appeared to be following a similar pattern when Zverev earned the first break point for a chance to take a 5-4 lead again.

This time, though, Halys rallied and recovered to hold, leaving Zverev needing to hold to keep the set alive.

Yet Zverev's composed service game suddenly looked vulnerable and a double fault gave Halys two set points at 15-40 which the Frenchman pounced on to knot it at one set apiece.

Zverev recovered from a 4-1 deficit in the third set to level at 4-4.

Halys saved three break points to edge into a 5-4 lead and the rest of the set went on serve until the tiebreak, where Zverev was soon in charge, sprinting into a 5-1 lead before taking the set.

Yet it was a different story when the fourth set ended in a tiebreak, with Halys dominating Zverev to level the match and take send it to a decider.

With tension mounting, it was Halys who blinked first in the fifth set, slashing a forehand well wide to set up a crucial break for Zverev.

The German held twice to take a 5-3 lead and then broke a weary Halys to clinch victory.

In an earlier match, Learner Tien brought the curtain down on Gael Monfils' Grand Slam career yesterday as the American youngster defeated the French veteran 6-3, 6-4, 6-3 in a clash of generations to reach the US Open third round.

"I want to thank you all," Monfils told the crowd after a video tribute on the giant screen that featured some of his most outrageous shots in New York over the last two decades.

"It's been a long ride. I came here in 2003 as a junior and here I am in 2026, thank you very much.

"I felt all the love and I can tell you that you guys are my second-best crowd after Paris. You're up there.

"It's been an absolute honour to play in front of you all and to produce high-performance tennis." – AFP/Reuters



Eroding bond between fans, players

Premier League's insatiable appetite for transfers killing vital piece of fandom

BY LAWRENCE OSTLERE

If you're a fan of a Premier League team, looking at your newly assembled squad this weekend and wondering who some of them are and how they might fit together, you're not alone.

Tottenham and Crystal Palace brought in 10 new players. Chelsea, Aston Villa, Brighton and Coventry all added an entire XI. Ipswich signed 14 and Hull signed 18, almost a full squad.

Much has already been made of the astronomical fees exchanged by Premier League clubs this summer. Once Manchester City set the bar at £116 million (RM634m) for Elliot Anderson, the rest had little choice but to follow.

Even so, it was alarming to see Tottenham spend £85 million on a winger who scored one goal a season at the Etihad, that Liverpool agreed £123 million (RM672m) for Paris Saint-Germain's impact substitute, that City spent £125 million (RM683m) on the guy who got himself sent off in a World Cup final.

But there is another element to this absurd window, caused by the sheer volume of players moving.

You can see it in the almost casual way they are bought and sold, how entire teams regenerate in a few weeks, how so few coaches work magic with what they've got, and how we as fans are increas-

ingly disconnected from the carousel of players who come and go.

This last point might be the most overlooked. The tie between Premier League fans and their team has never been more tenuous. Fewer players than ever start this season with a sense of meaning to their support base. Chelsea sold Trevoh Chalobah after 20 years of service.

Liverpool sold Curtis Jones, their last Liverpoolian, to Inter Milan. Lewis Dunk, Bukayo Saka and Phil Foden remain rare one-club players in a fractured era.

Some rebuilds are more necessary than others. But the reality is that around half of new signings fail.

They arrive to great fanfare, with slick unveilings on social media and a prematch parade, only to be shipped out at the first sign of difficulty. Just as we get to know a player, they are discarded and a new body fills the shirt.

Take Nick Woltemade, bought for £69 million (RM377m), who had 24 Premier League starts to prove himself at Newcastle United. Or Tijjani Reijnders, bought for £43 million (RM245m), who was given 19 starts at City.

Both were moved on after one season. Perhaps they weren't good enough, perhaps they weren't quite right for the new coach.

But the truth is, we didn't have the chance to find out for sure.

This is the game, of course, a ruthless one at the elite end where there's little room for sentiment.

But beyond the broken logic of replacing players with new ones in the misguided hope of short-cutting improvement, the practice has a gradually damaging effect.

Where once most players represented something about their club, those links are being eroded each season.

Is there any point in Tottenham fans getting excited about, say, Savio, when it is easy to imagine him on loan in the Turkish Super Lig, or Fulham, in 18 months' time?

Is it worth Manchester United fans investing emotional energy in the fortunes of Andrey Santos, when he probably goes in search of first team football before too long?

Naturally, a little transfer fatigue has set in here. This year there was a new genre of story amid the relentless cycle: the non-mover.

Cody Gakpo was linked with Tottenham for weeks only for that to come to naught. Then, for about three days, he was thought to be heading to Manchester City in an £85 million (RM464m) deal.

That didn't materialise either, prompting Fabrizio Romano to tweet a picture of Gakpo with the giant caption "Staying", like this was news.

Now Liverpool are keeping a player who fans know would rather play for their greatest modern rivals.

Selling has become as much of a talking point as buying, and Chelsea's success has been hailed after raising £1 billion (RM5.4b) in sales since BlueCo bought the club four years ago.

They have done it largely by hoovering up young talent for the explicit purpose of selling them on for a profit, to be traded like stocks and shares. Is this fun to support?

Is it really what a healthy football ecosystem looks like?

And amid the churn, the coaching craft of welding a team together from its existing parts is becoming increasingly rare.

Enzo Maresca presumably didn't fancy working with Jack Grealish, Reijnders, Savio, Omar Marmoush or Nico Gonzalez, who spent two years training as Rodri's understudy only to be ushered out when Rodri left.

Could Maresca have made use of what he had? Could he and his coaches have built something from those players? Isn't that part of the job?

It is September, and the feeding frenzy is finally over. Some players will forge new bonds with their clubs, but only if they're given the time.

January will soon roll around. More new signings will arrive. Duds will be sent out on loan or sold.

Players going and then staying will become transfer sagas we didn't need. Here we go, again. – The Independent

Fifa accuses Uefa of 'smear campaign'

FIFA accused Uefa of waging a "smear campaign" against it and President Gianni Infantino, escalating a dispute over the abandoned proposal to sell a stake in the world governing body's commercial rights, according to a court filing seen by Reuters.

Uefa last week submitted an *ex parte* application in the US District Court for the Southern District of New York seeking permission to obtain testimony and documents from US-based entities for use in potential criminal proceedings in Switzerland.

"While these applications are styled as legal pleadings with captions and docket numbers, they are little more than press releases in further support of Uefa's smear campaign against Fifa and its leadership," Fifa said in the filing.

Uefa said it was considering criminal proceedings against Infantino and other Fifa officials over Fifa Forward Enterprise (FFE), a proposed entity that would have held commercial rights linked to the men's and women's World Cups.

Uefa alleged the proposal was developed without adequate consultation with Fifa's governing bodies and 211 member associations.

In a motion to intervene seen by Reuters filed on Sept 1 by Fifa (Americas) Inc and FWC2026 US, Inc, Fifa asked the court to defer ruling on Uefa's application or allow it to oppose the request.

Fifa argued that Uefa was seeking discovery for "purportedly contemplated (but non-existent) Swiss criminal proceedings". The world governing body also alleged Uefa had sought to derail the FFE proposal from the outset.

The proposal was withdrawn on July 31 after opposition from Uefa and other regional governing bodies.

"Rather than participate in that democratic process, Uefa issued a press release, the beginning of a weeks-long smear campaign against Fifa and its leadership," Fifa said in the filing.

Fifa further argued that Uefa's opposition was motivated by a desire to preserve European football's dominance.



Richarlison left out of Spurs' squad

BY FLO CLIFFORD

TOTTENHAM have omitted Richarlison (pic) from their Premier League squad, with the striker reportedly not part of their plans for the season.

The decision comes after proposed talks over Richarlison returning to Everton broke down, resulting in the forward posting an emotional statement on social media, writing that "never again will anyone decide my future for me".

However, the Tottenham hierarchy seem to have decided his future is not at the club, with the transfer windows for Turkish and Saudi Arabian clubs still open and a move away likely.

The 29-year-old was informed of the decision to omit him from the squad before Tuesday's Premier League transfer window deadline amid reports that Turkish side Trabzonspor intend to make a formal approach for him.

Spurs manager Roberto de Zerbi said the Brazilian was left out of the squad for their 2-0 defeat to Newcastle because "too many times he asked to leave".

The club entered talks with Everton on Sunday night over the possibility of Richarlison returning to his former club, while also discussing a move for Toffees star Iliman Ndiaye, who ultimately signed for Manchester City.

Richarlison responded with an emotional

post on social media, writing: "After everything I've been through in the last few years, I've decided that never again will anyone decide my future for me."

"I went through a lot of bad things, and almost all of them happened because decisions were made by other people. Pressure, threats, retaliation – none of that scares me. I've been through far worse, believe me."

"I've always made it clear, every time I had the chance, that leaving for another club would only happen if it was also good for the club. If it wasn't, I would never accept it. Just like I didn't accept it when everything was going badly and they needed me."

"I stayed and gave everything. So, I hope they treat my situation with the same respect I've always shown Spurs and everyone who worked with me during this period. Just don't try to decide for me."

"If they reach an agreement between Spurs and Everton, I will return to my beloved club. My intention was to go back to the place where I was very happy, yes, but the negotiations happened only in the way certain people wanted, and it will no longer be like that."

"Despite all this turmoil, I am under contract at Spurs and will remain at the club's disposal."

Richarlison joined Tottenham from Everton in 2022. – The Independent

I used to play mini-games during matches, says ex-ref Dean

FORMER Premier League referee Mike Dean says he used to set himself mini-challenges during matches "as a laugh".

Appearing on Jamie Vardy's podcast, Dean said he would see how long he could go without blowing his whistle, or stay inside the centre circle.

"We used to say, 'we'll kick off now. Right, see how long we can go without blowing a whistle,'" he added.

"I've done that a few times in the Premier League, before VAR obviously – went 20, 25 minutes without blowing a whistle."

"I used to do another thing. I used to stand in the centre circle – see how long I could stay in the

centre circle before I had to leave. That was just me joking about. I got about 15 minutes once."

Mark Halsey, who refereed in the Premier League between 1999 and 2013, told *BBC Sport* that Dean's comments damaged the reputation of all referees.

Refereeing figures consider Dean's claims to be unfounded, which would be historical and go back to the pre-video assistant referee era before 2019, when Pro Ref was under different leadership.

It is not the first time he has courted controversy for his media statements.

When acting as the video assistant referee

(VAR) for Chelsea's 2-2 draw with Tottenham in August 2022, Dean failed to send the referee to the monitor for a red card for Cristian Romero.

The Spurs defender should have been penalised for pulling Marc Cucurella's hair.

After retiring, Dean said in an interview he did not intervene because he wanted to save referee Anthony Taylor from extra "grief".

"I didn't want to send him up because he is a mate as well as a referee," he revealed.

Dean enjoyed a 28-year career as a professional official, stepping down from on-field officiating in 2022 and retiring after spending the 2022-23 season as a full-time VAR. – Agencies



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PREMIER LEAGUE clubs have smashed their summer transfer record with over £3.3 billion spent. More than half of the Premier League's clubs broke their transfer records in a summer window featuring four of the top flight's five most expensive ever deals.

Manchester City completed the biggest deal on the final hours of the window by signing Enzo Fernandez from Chelsea for £125 million, while Liverpool paid £120 million for Bradley Barcola, Chelsea made Morgan Rogers their record signing for £117 million and Tottenham also broke the £100 million barrier by recruiting midfielder Sandro Tonali.

City were the biggest spenders overall with around £435 million paid in transfer fees, followed by Chelsea (£349.8m) and Tottenham (£315m). Chelsea recouped the most in sales (£385m) with Aston Villa also receiving more than £300m in transfer fees after selling six of the players who started last season's Europa League final.

But who got value in the market or which club is now fearing the worst? Here's how every club rated at the end of another hectic transfer window:

Arsenal (Grade: B+)

All the noises coming out of the Premier League champions this summer suggested that Mikel Arteta wanted to add a marquee attacking signing to his title-winning squad. With all due respect to Christos Tzolis, he is not it. Instead, Arsenal were beaten to the signing of Morgan Rogers by Chelsea, saw Vinicius Jr remain at Real Madrid after a very public court-ing, and did not make an approach for Julian Alvarez after Atletico Madrid refused to negotiate with Barcelona. Having sold the popular Gabriel Martinelli, Leandro Trossard and Gabriel Jesus, there is a danger that Arsenal are found short on the left side of their attack, although they have also avoided making expensive splurges on second-choice options. Still, Arsenal's strength and depth across the rest of their squad is surely the envy of the Premier League and in Bruno Guimaraes and Ezri Konsa they have made two shrewd additions. This perhaps wasn't the window Arsenal fans wanted. It is still good enough to win defend their title.

Aston Villa (C-)

This was a painful summer for Villa, of that there is no doubt. Beloved Istanbul heroes have vanished in the shape of Morgan Rogers, Ezri Konsa, Youri Tielemans, Emi Martinez and Ollie Watkins. However, Villa did what they felt was necessary, to safeguard their future and wriggle free of Uefa's FFP regulations. The verdict may take some years, but Johan Manzambi, Ibrahima Mbaye and Zion Suzuki look like pillars for the long-term, while Nicolas Jackson, Joao Gomes, Taylor Harwood-Bellis and the experienced Leon Goretzka bring immediate experience to maintain Unai Emery's ability to compete. Alejandro Garnacho and Aaron Wan-Bissaka may not fall in either camp, though more optimism arrives in the shape of talented youngsters Brian Madjo and George Hemmings. The strategy was probably a little too drastic to realistically compete for a trophy and retain a place in the top four, but Emery is just about the perfect manager to oversee this transition.

Bournemouth (B)

Keeping ahold of Alex Scott was the priority and Bournemouth were resolute in their stance even Arsenal and Chelsea circled. Eli Junior Kroupi may have been sold had it not been for a pre-season foot injury. It means new boss Marco Rose still has a talented squad to work with as he takes over from Andoni Iraola and leads Bournemouth into a history European campaign. The signing of 22-year-old centreback Antonio Silva from Benfica could prove to be a bargain at £21.4 million but Bournemouth's lack of depth could yet be tested by the extra workload of the Europa League.

Premier League transfer window ratings



Brentford and Chelsea have impressed with their business but could Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester United regret not doing more?

Brentford (A+)

Brentford have shopped around Europe this summer and look set to be rewarded for looking further afield. They've pulled off what could be one of the signings of the season in midfielder Mamadou Sangare, bringing the 24-year-old to west London for a club record £39 million after he impressed at French club Lens. The Mali international is already making an impact in the Premier League and may yet prove a bit of a bargain. Leftback El Hadji Malick Diouf was one of few bright lights in West Ham's dire campaign last term and is another eye-catching signing, while the Bees have also brought in reinforcements up front in Callum Wilson for free and winger Jaidon Anthony, who impressed at Burnley last season. Brentford lived up to their reputation as one of the Premier League's most organised clubs by completing their business early and avoided any major sales.

Brighton (B+)

Another window of savvy business from Brighton? Carlos Baleba's loss will be felt and the £70 million fee the Seagulls will get from Manchester United is significantly less than the £115 million or so they were holding out for last summer. But Brighton have been active in strengthening in several areas. The biggest coup was landing highly-rated centreback Luka Vuskovic from Tottenham for a club record fee of £46 million, while the surprise deadline signing of Spain U-21 midfielder Chema Andres from Stuttgart appears a classic piece of Brighton business. The former Real Madrid academy prospect is nicknamed "baby Rodri".

Chelsea (A-)

The sheer number of comings and goings, and scale of their spending and selling, is simply astonishing. But it is hard to argue that Chelsea have not also done some very good business, particularly in receiving £125 million for Enzo Fernandez. With the record buy of Morgan Rogers adding to a devastating front three of Cole Palmer and Joao Pedro, Chelsea have also strengthened key areas by signing centreback Maxence Lacroix from Crystal Palace and addressing the problem position of goalkeeper by swapping the experienced Emiliano Martinez for the error-prone Roberto Sanchez. By managing to move on so many players (33 in total) Xabi Alonso now has a relatively slimmed-down squad that may now have a chance of challenging Arsenal for the title this season. The only regret, however, is their deal for Lamine Camara collapsed at the last minute after agreeing to sell Fernandez to City – and that was hardly their fault, with Monaco pulling out of an agreed deal.

Coventry (B-)

Ambitious. Frank Lampard has been backed without totally disrupting the group that impressively won the Championship last term. Well over £100 million spent, which might now just be a necessary entry point to a promoted side having a realistic chance of survival. But Caleb Yirenkyi is an exciting addition and Taiwo Awoniyi could prove a shrewd buy with

the Nigerian striker's disruptive presence and potential for more goals than his recent time with Forest, should Lampard afford him a run of games.

Crystal Palace (C)

Palace have lost a couple of key figures this summer. The departures of Maxence Lacroix and Daniel Munoz are blows, and while they have kept ahold of Jean-Philippe Mateta and Ismaila Sarr, you fear their burning desire to leave may end up impacting their performance. They didn't spend big to fill the voids – their biggest acquisition being Anan Khalaili, Munoz's replacement at right wingback – and it took until deadline day for them to get particularly active. But after the signings of Honest Ahanor and Quinten Timber among other late acquisitions, Palace fans won't be complaining too much.

Everton (D)

The Toffees will come out of this summer with a sour taste in the mouth. Yes, they got the return of Jack Grealish they wanted, but it came at the almighty cost of losing Iliman Ndiaye on deadline day. That departure by itself arguably leaves Everton in a worse place to where they ended last season, which isn't a great reflection on the window. They did look to spend some of the Ndiaye money before the deadline, only to see their pursuit of Folarin Balogun fall through at the very last moment due to the player having a change of heart. They sold Beto expecting to sign a striker on deadline day, but haven't. Now, they go into the season short in important positions.

Fulham (C-)

Harry Wilson and Raul Jimenez leave a huge amount of production in their departures. Alvaro Arbeloa's arrival and an appetite to do things differently is exciting, but the unknown brings a certain trepidation. How quickly can the Real Madrid Castilla group settle? Gonzalo Garcia looks both a top talent and character, but more needs to be done to dismiss any fear of relegation. WC

Hull City (B+)

Hull went into this window, first of all, needing to sell. Their promotion through the playoffs had triggered bonus clauses in players' contracts that meant their overspend was on course to leave them in breach of financial regulations, which could have led to a points deduction. They did sell to avoid this, with outgoings including their first-choice keeper Ivor Pandur, but they've since stocked heavily to prepare for a first season back in the Premier League. Nobel Mendy and Konstantinos Tzolakis headline a summer that has seen 18 additions, and after the Tigers notched two wins in their first two games, both already look like steals for club-record fees of £20 million. Hull were quickly written off when they got promoted, possessing a squad that had been tipped for relegation into League One at the beginning of last season. They've seemingly done all they can to strengthen, adding six more on deadline day, but will it be enough? And will it perhaps be too

much of a personnel shake-up for manager Sergej Jakirovic to handle?

Ipswich (B)

You certainly can't accuse Ipswich of failing to give it a go this summer, given they've spent around £170 million – breaking the record for the most by a newly-promoted club in Premier League history. Of course, they splashed the cash after promotion two years ago and still recorded just four wins all season as they slipped to a limp relegation... But there has been a concerted effort to bring in some attacking talent with Paraguayan livewire Julio Enciso already looking dangerous in the heavy defeat to Manchester United and the likes of former Toulouse striker Emersonn and ex-Leicester winger Abdul Fatawu also offering exciting young quality. Exequiel Palacios, signed from Bayer Leverkusen, should bring a touch of class in midfield, while Sasa Lukic and Issa Diop offer Premier League experience and ex-Celtic man Daizen Maeda is also a veteran of British football. They may not stay up but the Tractor Boys have at least taken a big swing.

Leeds United (A-)

An aggressive window from Leeds and one that puts faith in Daniel Farke. A massive move for James Trafford provides a foundation and sign that the Whites intend to be a Premier League side for years to come, given the England shot-stopper's best years are ahead and the lack of stability so far in his short but promising career meant his next move would have to be highly convincing. To be an attractive free agent destination, for Harry Wilson, and then to acquire the talented centreback Tarik Muharemovic, with the older Pascal Struijk going out for a lesser fee, shows Leeds have spent with intent, while not operating in a reckless way like some of their rivals. A couple late loans to add depth to the left flank also doesn't go amiss.

Liverpool (B)

The long-awaited signing of Bradley Barcola brings an injection of excitement into Liverpool's window but described like buying a Ferrari while your house is burning to the ground. The Reds remain conspicuously short in defensive midfield and at rightback, though they did strengthen in central defence with Jeremy Jacquet and Ronald Araujo. Victor Munoz looks a strong wing option further forward – but it is somewhat questionable that they've not brought in a left-footed wide option to replace Mohamed Salah.

Manchester City (A-)

There has been a lot of change at the Etihad in what is Enzo Maresca's first window in charge – nine signings and 33 departures. A new midfield trio of Enzo Fernandez, Elliot Anderson and Ayyoub Bouaddi is extremely exciting but the exit of Rodri – the favourite to claim a second Ballon d'Or – is unequivocally a huge blow. Club stalwarts like Bernardo Silva, John Stones and Nathan Ake have also left and Maresca may have quite the job on to get all his big-money signings to gel in the absence of such huge squad characters.

Manchester United (B+)

Another Manchester club, another extensive midfield rebuild. Yet while the Red Devils missed out on Anderson, Sandro Tonali and Mateus Fernandes, there is an abundance of potential in the acquisitions of Carlos Baleba, Andrey Santos and Youri Tielemans. And yet... the highest of hopes for Michael Carrick's squad this campaign is a return of one of their own. Marcus Rashford, now adorning the No. 9 jersey, is back after steering his career back on track at Barcelona last season. Should Carrick unlock Rashford's quality, United could be potent up top. But could failing to sign a left back, despite a late effort to bring Rayan Ait-Nouri from Manchester City on loan before the deadline, come back to haunt them?

Newcastle (C)

On paper, Newcastle have been hit very hard, losing star players like Tonali, Bruno Guimaraes and Anthony Gordon, as well as their manager Eddie Howe midway through pre-season. However, new boss Matthias Jaissle has impressed in his opening two games – a draw against Liverpool and a win at Spurs – and new signings such as Nico Gonzalez, Amar Dedic and goalkeeper Lukas Hornicek have been crucial to that positive start. They've also signed highly-regarded Belgian attacker Matias Fernandez-Pardo at the eleventh hour.

Nottingham Forest (C+)

A new manager in Oliver Glasner and an offer they couldn't refuse in Elliot Anderson. The £116 million fee, considering a lack of Champions League football, was monstrous, although losing your best player puts a limit on your window rating. They've spent a decent amount, as they always tend to do, and the upheaval is remarkable, no matter the manager, but somehow the players fit: Daniel Munoz is one of the best right-backs/right wingbacks in the League and Xaver Schlager, who proved himself with Austria at the World Cup and joins on a free transfer, should fit in nicely. While Liam Delap's fee is lofty, there is a disruptive presence in there and with game time, the goals should return. Ousmane Diomande could have gone to a bigger club, too. Safety is a solid bet and Glasner might have the Tricky Trees dreaming of a cup run.

Sunderland (C+)

Sunderland went above and beyond last summer to stay up, spending £161 million on 15 signings. They didn't just stay up – they got European football, completely exceeding expectations. But this year, have they rested on their laurels? It certainly looked like that before deadline day, by the morning of which they only had three senior signings on board. But after the last-minute arrivals of Malick Fofana – holding off an attempted Crystal Palace hijacking – along with Kevin Danso and Juan Riquelme Angulo, Sunderland's ranks do now look improved. Regis Le Bris also didn't lose any of his key stars from last term; a win.

Tottenham (B-)

It's an A+ for intent and aggression, yet the exact nature of the strategy might be where Spurs fall apart. They've acquired some good players, undoubtedly, but more than £300 million on players that the existing top four or five clubs would not leap to sign, save Mateus Fernandes, could bring problems down the line when a similar splurge might be required to elevate this group back into Europe. The deadline day double signing of Chelsea deadwood Tosin Adarabioyo and Mykhailo Mudryk raised even more eyebrows. Still, back-to-back 17th place finishes understandably sparks panic and the need to overhaul a dreadful group across two seasons. Roberto De Zerbi certainly cannot complain, there's a lot to work with and a top-half finish is the minimum requirement.

Selangor chase Para Sukma glory

Home advantage fuels 60-gold target but defending champs Sarawak, ambitious Sabah stand in way

FRESH from clinching the overall title at the Malaysia Games (Sukma) 2026 last month, Selangor now face another challenge as they target 60 gold medals at the Selangor Para Sukma, which officially begins today.

The Games, running until Sept 10, will feature 369 events across 10 sports, with most competitions taking place in Petaling Jaya and Klang at venues adapted to meet the accessibility requirements of para athletes.

The 10 sports are athletics, swimming, badminton, table tennis, bowling, lawn bowls, archery, chess, bocchia and powerlifting.

The opening ceremony will be held at Dewan Agung Tuanku Canselor (DATC), Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam tomorrow, with most competitions beginning tomorrow before the Games conclude at the same venue on Thursday (Sept 10).

Among the main venues are Sultan Suleiman Field for athletics, Selangor Aquatics Centre for swimming, Sunway Mega Lanes for bowling, Selangor International Trade Centre for powerlifting and Bayuemas Indoor Stadium for lawn bowls.

Selangor, who finished fourth at the 2024 edition in Sarawak with 30 gold, 42 silver and 40 bronze medals, have set their sights on doubling their gold-medal tally on home soil.

Their confidence has been boosted by their Sukma success last month, when the Selangor contingent topped the standings with 101 gold medals, an achievement the state hopes will inspire its para athletes.

However, the hosts face a stern challenge from defending champions Sarawak, who dominated the 2024 edition with 82 gold, 53 silver and 74 bronze medals.

Sabah are also expected to mount a strong challenge after finishing runners-up in 2024

with 62 gold, 42 silver and 32 bronze medals.

The state, which won the overall title at the 2022 Kuala Lumpur edition, has set an ambitious target of 66 gold medals as it bids to reclaim the crown.

Beyond the overall medal race, the Games will also provide an important platform for identifying emerging talent for Malaysia's para sports programme.

Athletics, swimming and powerlifting are among the disciplines offering the largest number of gold medals and will provide a valuable gauge of the next generation of para athletes.

With Selangor enjoying home advantage, Sarawak defending their crown and Sabah determined to reclaim it, the 2026 Para Sukma promises a fiercely contested battle for overall honours while providing a platform for the emergence of Malaysia's next generation of para sports talent. – Bernama



Malaysians break new ground in Shenzhen

FROM LEFT: National mixed doubles pairs Hoo Pang Ron, Lai Pei Jing, Shevon Lai Jemie and Goh Soon Huat.

MALAYSIA celebrated a double breakthrough at the China Masters yesterday after Hoo Pang Ron-Lai Pei Jing and Goh Soon Huat-Shevon Lai Jemie advanced to the mixed doubles semifinals at Shenzhen Arena.

World No. 85 Pang Ron-Pei Jing secured their maiden Super 750 semifinal berth after defeating Taiwan's Liu Kuang Heng-Hsu Yin Hui 24-22, 21-5 in 36 minutes.

The Malaysians were made to work hard in the opening game as both pairs traded points in a closely fought battle before Pang Ron-Pei Jing held their nerve to edge it 24-22.

They then took control in the second game, racing away to a 21-5 victory to complete a convincing straight-game win.

Pang Ron-Pei Jing will face China's Zhu Yi Jun-Li Qian today after the Chinese pair defeated Taiwan's Wu Guan Xun-Lee Chia Hsin 24-22, 21-12 in the other quarterfinal.

Goh-Shevon, the world No. 11 pair, became the second Malaysian mixed doubles combination to reach the last four after silencing the home crowd with a 21-15, 21-11 victory over world No. 29 Gao Jia Xuan-Wu Meng Ying in 35 minutes.

The husband-and-wife pair, who had not progressed beyond the quarterfinal stage in any World Tour event this year, produced a con-

fident display and remained in control throughout the contest.

They will face top seeds Feng Yan Zhe-Huang Dong Ping in the semifinals after the Chinese world No. 1 pair defeated Taiwan's Ye Hong Wei-Nicole Gonzales Chan 21-10, 15-21, 21-12 in their quarterfinal, which lasted just under an hour.

The double success means Malaysia will have two pairs in the last four of the mixed doubles at the Super 750 tournament in Shenzhen.

In the men's doubles, China's He Ji Ting-Ren Xiang Yu defeated Malaysia's Soh Wooi Yik-Aaron Tai in just over an hour.

The national scratch pair, who are playing in their first tournament together as part of a national reshuffle and evaluation exercise to test new combinations ahead of the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics, went down 21-16, 17-21, 21-16 in the quarterfinals.

Soh was omitted from Malaysia's badminton squad for the upcoming 2026 Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games.

Soh and Aaron Chia are scheduled to reunite and resume their main partnership – starting with the European tour at the Denmark Open – after the Asian Games as they gear up for LA28. – Bernama/Agencies

Young Tigers fight back

MALAYSIA'S Under-19 squad showed tremendous fighting spirit to hold Australia to a 2-2 draw in a dramatic Group H match of the 2027 AFC U-20 Asian Cup Qualifiers at the Lao National Stadium in Vientiane, Laos, on Thursday night.

The match, which was suspended for two hours due to heavy rain and lightning, saw Australia take an early lead through Marcus Neill in the fourth minute.

Australia almost doubled their advantage two minutes later when Neill found himself with another opportunity, but his effort failed to trouble the Malaysian goal.

Malaysia had a golden chance to equalise in the 20th minute when Muhammad Syazani Yussairi Yusnazairi met Tengku Hasyri Shah Meerza's corner, but his effort went wide.

The match was halted in the 31st minute due to the adverse weather and resumed two hours later, with the Young Tigers returning with greater attacking intent.

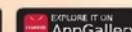
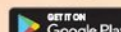
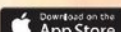
Their pressure paid off in the 50th minute when Fadhlul Hadi Zulkarnain found the equaliser before Izzuddin Afif Nazarudin completed Malaysia's comeback by putting them ahead in the 70th minute.

However, Malaysia were denied a memorable victory when Alaat Abdul-Rahman rescued a point for Australia with the equaliser in the 82nd minute.

The result leaves Malaysia with two points from two matches following their goalless draw against Indonesia on Aug 31, while Australia moved to four points.

The top team from each group and the seven best second-placed teams will qualify for the 2027 AFC U-20 Asian Cup finals in China, with hosts China receiving an automatic berth.

Malaysia will conclude their Group H campaign against hosts Laos tomorrow. – Bernama



Acid test for Gunners

Arsenal's rock-solid defence faces biggest challenge yet as Chelsea's new-look attack puts perfect start on the line

SOMETHING has to give when Arsenal host Chelsea tomorrow (11.30pm Malaysian time), with both sides putting their perfect Premier League records on the line in the weekend's standout fixture.

Defending champions Arsenal have begun their title defence in typically uncompromising fashion, beating Coventry City 3-0 and Aston Villa 1-0 without conceding a goal.

The victory at Villa Park was their sixth clean sheet in seven League matches and goalkeeper David Raya has faced just one shot on target in their two games, suggesting Mikel Arteta's side have quickly rediscovered the defensive resilience that carried them to the title.

Arsenal conceded only 27 goals in 38 League games last season and Chelsea's new-look attack will provide their first serious examination.

Xabi Alonso's Chelsea have scored seven goals in victories over Fulham and Brighton & Hove Albion but have also conceded five, producing a thrilling but sometimes chaotic start to the Spaniard's reign.

Their approach could hardly be more different from Arsenal's. Chelsea were restricted to just 26% possession against Brighton but repeatedly hurt their opponents after winning the ball, attacking quickly through the wings and exploiting Pedro Neto's pace.

Joao Pedro, Cole Palmer and Morgan Rogers have scored five of Chelsea's seven League goals,

with Palmer already showing signs of returning to his best after a difficult previous campaign.

Alonso, however, is not concerned about possession statistics.

"The data is not important," he said after the Brighton victory. "I don't say today we need to have 60% or 20%. I never talk about those things."

Tomorrow's contest will test whether that philosophy can work against Arsenal's ability to control games without giving opponents opportunities.

Chelsea have not beaten Arsenal in their last nine Premier League meetings and are winless in 11 matches against them in all competitions.

The Gunners will therefore start as favourites, but Chelsea's attacking form makes this a far more intriguing contest than the recent record suggests.

Manchester City will also look to preserve their perfect start when they host Coventry City today (10pm).

City have undergone another dramatic rebuild, with their summer spending reaching £458 million (RM2.5 billion) after a deadline-day spree that included Enzo Fernandez from Chelsea for £125 million (RM685m) and Iliman Ndiaye from Everton.

The scale of the spending has raised expectations around a side looking to reclaim the title, while Coventry have lost both of their



PREMIER LEAGUE PREVIEWS & PREDICTIONS

TODAY

(10pm Malaysian time unless stated)

Newcastle vs Bournemouth (7.30pm)
Brentford vs Sunderland
Brighton vs Leeds
Fulham vs Crystal Palace
Manchester City vs Coventry
Nottingham Forest vs Tottenham

TOMORROW

Hull City vs Aston Villa (12.30am)
Everton vs Man United (9pm)
Arsenal vs Chelsea (11.30pm)

opening matches.

Newly promoted Hull City are the other surprise members of the four-team group with 100% records. They welcome Aston Villa tomorrow (12.30am) in a meeting of sharply contrasting fortunes.

Hull could hardly have imagined a better return to the top flight, while Villa have lost to Brighton and Arsenal and are still without a point or a goal.

For Unai Emery's side, another defeat would begin to turn a poor opening into a genuine

concern following a major overhaul of the squad.

Tottenham Hotspur are already facing that kind of pressure when they travel to Nottingham Forest.

Roberto De Zerbi's side are bottom after 3-0 and 2-0 defeats by Brentford and Newcastle United and have yet to score, despite spending more than £350 million (RM1.9b) during the transfer window.

High-profile arrivals including Sandro Tonali, Mateus Fernandes and Savio have yet to produce the immediate transformation Spurs supporters expected.

De Zerbi admitted after the Brentford defeat that his new-look side were "not a team yet", while acknowledging they had failed to match their opponents physically. "We could fight stronger than we did today," he said. "We lost too many duels, we made too many mistakes in the timing when we wanted to push the pressure higher."

"We arrived second for the second ball, we didn't win one second ball, one duel, one tackle, and it's tough."

Forest have only one point from their opening two games but held Liverpool to a 2-2 draw last weekend. Manager Oliver Glasner says he is relaxed despite his side's slow start and will hope to exploit

Spurs' fragility.

Manchester United travel to Everton tomorrow for another intriguing meeting.

United's opening campaign has offered encouraging moments but consistency remains the issue, while Everton have started with a win over Crystal Palace and a draw against Bournemouth.

David Moyes will be facing his former club at Everton's new Hill Dickinson Stadium, adding another storyline to a match both sides will see as an opportunity to build momentum.

The remaining fixtures could also have a significant bearing on the early table.

Newcastle United host Bournemouth after their impressive victory over Tottenham, with both sides looking to establish themselves among the early contenders.

Brentford welcome Sunderland, while Brighton host Leeds United in a meeting between sides who have shown attacking promise in the opening weeks.

Fulham face Crystal Palace in a London meeting between two teams still searching for their first League win.

The weekend therefore offers contrasting tests across the division: Manchester City and Hull seek to maintain perfect records, Villa and Spurs desperately need points, while United and Everton will look to turn promising starts into something more substantial. But the main event remains at the Emirates. - AFP/Reuters



Story on page 27



Elena Rybakina (left), Coco Gauff (center) and Naomi Osaka in action in Flushing Meadows yesterday. - AFPPIC

Story on page 28