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### Missing Trans Gerah hikers found safe

Police confirm contact made with mountain guide accompanying group; rescue operation underway.

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# US tariff threat

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Automated US customs systems may flag local factories simply for sourcing raw materials from China.



Stranded passengers wait at the terminal yesterday as Soekarno-Hatta International Airport closed its operations due to the eruptions of Mount Anak Krakatau in Tangerang, near Jakarta. — REUTERSPIC

## Lecturer proposes social harmony law to replace Sedition Act

Total abolition could expose Malaysia to new risks without safeguards for race, religion and royalty.

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## 270,000 stranded as volcanic ash shuts seven airports in Indonesia

M'sian tourists and bikers among thousands caught in mass flight cancellations and accommodation scramble.

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BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysian manufacturers could be caught in Washington's crackdown on Chinese goods allegedly rerouted through third countries, with legitimate exporters potentially facing the same scrutiny as companies which are deliberately using Malaysia as a halfway house to evade US tariffs.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia Centre for Asian Studies head Dr Muhammad Faliq Abd Razak said the risk has become real after the White House classified Malaysia as a Tier 2 country in its latest assessment of alleged illicit transshipment.

"It is a clear indication that greater scrutiny will be applied, and our industries must be prepared to demonstrate our compliance seamlessly."

The international trade and investment expert said the concern is particularly acute for Malaysian electronics, semiconductors and rubber products industries which routinely use parts and raw materials sourced from China.

"In today's globalised economy, it is entirely normal for a Malaysian factory to import intermediate components from China, add significant domestic value through manufacturing, and legally export the finished product to the US."

He said under Washington's tougher scrutiny, making a product in Malaysia may no longer be enough to satisfy US customs authorities, with exporters potentially required to provide detailed evidence of where their components originated from and how much value was added locally.

# 'US blitz on illicit transshipment could affect local exporters'

➤ After Washington classified Malaysia as Tier 2 country, manufacturers potentially face same scrutiny as companies deliberately using nation as halfway house to evade tariffs, says expert

"That could mean customs delays, additional paperwork and greater pressure on manufacturers to prove that their products are genuinely Malaysian rather than Chinese goods merely carrying a Malaysian label."

Muhammad Faliq pointed out the growing use of advanced technology by US Customs and Border Protection to trace the origins of goods and components.

He said automated systems could flag Malaysian exporters simply for buying inputs from China - a common practice within Asean's deeply interconnected manufacturing networks.

"This underscores the necessity for our exporters to maintain impeccable, contemporaneous documentation of their manufacturing processes to quickly

resolve any automated flags."

He was commenting on the White House identifying Malaysia among more than 40 countries allegedly used to circumvent high US tariffs on Chinese goods by routing exports through third countries.

In its 24-page report, "The Great Transshipment Scam", the White House placed Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Brazil, Thailand and Turkiye in Tier 2, describing them as having significant illicit transshipment volumes and deep ties to China-related supply chains, input sourcing and logistics systems.

Legal and trade analysts have noted that the report is a policy document rather than a binding directive. It carries no legal force on its own and does not itself change Malaysia's existing tariff obligations to the US.

Malaysia has repeatedly pushed back against US claims of unfair practice this year.

In June, Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani disputed a separate US allegation that Malaysian manufacturers held excess production capacity.

He said Washington's concern may have stemmed from goods entering via third countries rather than genuine domestic overcapacity.

Johari told Parliament that Malaysia continues to face several US trade actions under various American legal provisions, and that halting engagement with Washington would only expose the country to greater economic risk.

The US remains one of Malaysia's most important export markets for its electrical, electronics and semiconductor sectors.

The ministry took over full control of issuing Non-Preferential Certificates of Origin for all US-bound exports in May 2025, closing a loophole that had allowed goods from higher-tariff countries to be relabelled as Malaysian-made before export.

The ministry has maintained that

transshipment itself is not against any country's laws as it is part of normal global business strategy.

Abuse of the Certificate of Origin system to dodge import duties, however, is a separate matter that does breach regulations.

Muhammad Faliq said simply rejecting the allegations would not be enough.

He called for stronger industry self-policing, tighter controls over the issuance of Certificates of Origin, and independent reviews when specific allegations emerge.

He said the issue goes beyond the immediate risk of tighter US customs checks as it could test Malaysia's strategy of maintaining strong economic ties with China while positioning itself as a manufacturing hub serving Western markets.

"Repeated allegations of transshipment threaten to undermine Malaysia's hard-earned reputation as a strict, rules-based trading nation."

Muhammad Faliq said Malaysia need not choose between its economic relationship with China and access to the US market but it must make the origins of its products easier to verify.

## Country needs to develop own technologies, says PM

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**SHAH ALAM:** Malaysia must shed its dependence on technology developed by others and become a nation that creates, owns and masters its own technologies, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday.

He said the country is at a crucial stage of its development and could no longer afford to remain merely a consumer of technology, particularly as it grapples with mounting challenges involving food and water security, energy, public health, climate change and artificial intelligence.

"Malaysia is at an important point in its development journey. We cannot forever be consumers of technology created by others. We must become a country that creates, owns and masters technology."

Anwar said this in his speech read by Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Chang Lih Kang at the closing of the National Science Challenge (NSC) 2026.

He said stronger scientific knowledge, evidence-based decision-making and a robust science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) talent pipeline are critical to tackling these challenges and strengthening Malaysia's global competitiveness.

Anwar said while STEM enrolment rose from 40.95% in 2021 to 50.83% in 2024, enrolment in pure sciences remained low at about 15.8%.

"This shows there is still a gap between interest in STEM and readiness to delve deeper into it."



Chang visiting an exhibition held in conjunction with the National Science Challenge 2026 in Shah Alam yesterday.  
- AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THE SUN

He said the priority is not simply to encourage more students to choose STEM but to ensure that they stay the course, develop their capabilities and ultimately succeed in these fields.

Anwar said science education must also move beyond memorising formulae and chasing examination results to nurturing critical thinking, curiosity, experimentation and the ability to learn from failure.

He called for the NSC to evolve

from an annual competition into a continuous talent development platform, particularly for promising students from rural areas, Sabah and Sarawak and low-income families.

He said such students should be connected with mentors, laboratories, scholarships, universities, research institutions, industries and innovation networks to help transform their ideas into research, technologies, innovations and businesses that address real-

world problems.

"Talent is everywhere. Our responsibility is to ensure that opportunities are also available everywhere."

Anwar said the government, schools, universities, industries and communities must work together to nurture young STEM talent and build a generation capable of advancing science and technology while ensuring that progress remains aligned with human values.

## Anwar to chair MA63 Implementation Action Council meeting

**KOTA KINABALU:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is scheduled to chair the Malaysia Agreement 1963 (MA63) Implementation Action Council meeting at the Sabah International Convention Centre on Friday.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak) Datuk Mustapha Sakmud said Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg and Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor are also expected to attend the meeting which will be hosted by Sabah.

"For everyone's information, the MA63 Implementation Action Council meeting will be held on Sept 11, chaired by the prime minister and attended by the Sarawak premier, with our chief minister hosting the meeting."

"There will also be a special MA63 session. I will address the relevant matters then," he said when asked to comment further on MA63-related issues at a contribution presentation ceremony for fire victims at Kolej Tingkatan Enam Praunivarsi Kota Kinabalu yesterday.

Mustapha said the meeting is one of the main platforms for discussing matters related to the implementation of MA63 between the federal government and the Sabah and Sarawak governments. - Bernama



# Call to replace **Sedition Act** with updated legislation

➤ Substitute law should balance protecting political, social discourse with preventing inflammatory speech: Academic

■ BY HARITH KAMAL  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia should scrap its colonial-era Sedition Act but abolishing it without a replacement law to guard against racial, religious and royal tensions could expose the country to a different kind of risk.

Taylor's University law lecturer Dr Wilson TV. Tay said the Sedition Act 1948 was a prime example of a colonial-era law whose reform was "long overdue", with its broad provisions potentially being used to stifle legitimate expression in modern Malaysia.

However, he said abolition should not mean removing all legal limits on speech, particularly in a multi-ethnic society in which sensitive issues could be exploited to provoke unrest.

"If the Sedition Act 1948 is abolished, there needs to be a replacement law, perhaps a 'Social Harmony Act', to preserve safeguards for sensitive aspects of our multi-ethnic society.

"This includes race relations, religious matters and the position of our Rulers, while allowing serious and constructive discourse on governance."

Tay's proposal comes after DAP Bukit Gelugor MP Ramkarpal Singh called for the Sedition Act to be repealed, describing it as an "archaic, outdated and draconian" legacy of British colonial rule.

Ramkarpal's call followed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's call for colonial-era laws to be reviewed and abolished where necessary.

Ramkarpal said the Act had no place in Malaysia nearly seven decades after independence and urged the government to abolish it.

However, Tay said any replacement would have to strike a delicate balance between protecting legitimate political and social discourse and preventing speech that could inflame Malaysia's most sensitive fault lines.

"Freedom of speech and expression has its limits – even the Federal Constitution provides for this in Article 10(2)(a).

"We are a diverse society in which ethnic, religious and even linguistic fault lines could be exploited by troublemakers seeking to gain traction at the cost of provoking social unrest."

He added that the Sedition Act had originally been enacted to deal with forms of subversion used by

communist agitators and insurgents, but said its broad provisions were no longer suited to the present day.

"There are some very wide and stifling provisions of the Sedition Act which are not particular to the maintenance of social harmony, but were really enacted to keep the colonial authorities at the time in power against left-wing agitators."

He also said that legacy created a danger that the law could be turned against legitimate political criticism by whoever happened to be in power.

"This obviously creates a risk that these provisions could be weaponised by any subsequent government to keep itself in power against legitimate criticism, and that is why the Act should be either significantly reformed or replaced."

Tay's comments underscore the difficulty of simply removing laws because of their colonial origins.

While supporting reform of the Sedition Act, he said this was an example in which Malaysia could pursue case-by-case legal reform rather than wholesale abolition.

Tay said the key question should be whether a law remained relevant and necessary to contemporary Malaysia, rather than simply when or under whose rule it was enacted.

He added that in the case of the Sedition Act, its wide reach meant it could suppress legitimate debate on political ideas, socio-economic

proposals and visions for the country.

He also said a replacement law should therefore protect Malaysians from genuinely harmful forms of agitation while allowing robust debate, particularly among younger Malaysians.

Tay said Malaysia's legal framework needed to reflect not only its current constitutional and social context but also where it aspired to be heading as a nation.

Ramkarpal had also pointed to Britain's repeal of its Sedition Act in 2009 and Singapore's abolition of its equivalent legislation in 2021 as examples of countries moving away from such laws.

He added that Malaysia should do the same as part of its broader post-Merdeka legal reform agenda.

Tay agreed that the Sedition Act should be treated as a priority for reform, but cautioned against viewing colonial provenance alone as sufficient reason for a law to disappear.

"Actually there is no real correlation between a country's independence and its continuing to operate colonial-era laws."

He said the continued existence of such laws reflected decisions made by Malaysia as a sovereign country rather than an instruction left behind by Britain.

"These laws operate because we, as a sovereign and independent nation, still have use for them and not because the British (or anyone else) told us to operate them."

## Malacca CM hints at polls

■ BY THE SUN TEAM  
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**MALACCA:** Malacca voters could go to the polls sooner than expected, after Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusof hinted the state assembly could be dissolved "in two more Fridays".

His latest remark accelerated the election countdown, a day after he had already signalled that dissolution was drawing near.

"People ask what will happen to us. Don't worry. Today is Datuk Rais' birthday. In two more Fridays, it will be our birthday.

"We are indeed waiting for the date when we can hand the power to the people to choose whom they want," he was quoted as saying by media reports.

Ab Rauf was speaking while wishing state executive councillor Datuk Rais Yasin a happy 42nd birthday, at the groundbreaking ceremony for a religious primary school under the Malacca Islamic Religious Affairs Department in Sungai Udang.

The timing has become a key political talking point, with the Umno general assembly underway this week, sharpening focus on preparations for the coming state polls, including Malacca, and on the direction of political cooperation among Barisan Nasional (BN) and its allies.

On Sunday, BN chairman and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi rallied support around what he described as a potential "blue wave" in Malacca, referring to the political understanding between BN and Perikatan Nasional (PN) seen in Johor and Negeri Sembilan.

Zahid said he believed the momentum could be replicated in Malacca, citing support among young voters and the wider electorate.

He also urged Ab Rauf to expedite the announcement on the dissolution of the state assembly.

## Ministerial collaboration for rural economic development to be finalised: DPM



Ahmad Zahid said the coordination should be based on mutual understanding and respect to ensure that agreed decisions translate into effective implementation. – BERNAMAPIC

**CYBERJAYA:** The collaboration between the Rural and Regional Development Ministry and the Communications Ministry on coordinating the Rural Community Centres and National Information Dissemination Centres (Nadi) must be finalised for Cabinet consideration within a month.

Deputy Prime Minister and Rural and Regional Development Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said issues involving human resources, assets, finances, programmes, data sharing and service schemes must be resolved within that period to ensure they do not hinder the coordination of the two ecosystems.

"We must jointly establish a clear timeline, schedule, division of responsibilities and outcome indicators.

"I hope that after this workshop, (Communications Minister) Datuk Seri Fahmi (Fadzil) and I can sit down and finalise the Cabinet memorandum between our ministries for it to be presented to the Cabinet within a month from today," he said at the opening of the PKD-Nadi Strategic Collaboration Workshop yesterday.

Ahmad Zahid said the coordination should be based

on mutual understanding and respect to ensure that agreed decisions translate into effective implementation.

He also called for the agreed PKD-Nadi ecosystem to be maintained even if there were changes in ministers or government in the future.

"The secretaries-general of the Communications Ministry and Rural and Regional Development Ministry, please do not change what we agreed on at today's workshop once it has been endorsed by the Cabinet."

He also emphasised that PKD-Nadi coordination should be viewed as more than simply bringing two platforms together but as creating an ecosystem capable of strengthening rural development and local economies.

He added that the rural economy should no longer be regarded merely as a complement to the national economy, as rural areas possess their own talent, products, land, heritage and resources that could be developed into economic strengths.

"Our responsibility is to connect all this potential with broader economic opportunities." – Bernama





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# Volcanic eruptions leave Malaysian bikers stranded

Five-couple convoy among thousands of travellers affected after ash from Anak Krakatau forces closure of several Indonesian airports

BY FAIZ RUZMAN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** More than 270,000 passengers across Indonesia, including a group of Malaysian bikers, were caught up in mass flight cancellations after Anak Krakatau's eruptions shut down eight airports.

Malaysian traveller and Tenaga Nasional Berhad project supervisor Syamsul Kamal, 56, is among those stranded at Jakarta's Soekarno-Hatta International Airport.

Syamsul said some travellers arriving at their hotel were unable to secure rooms as cancelled and rescheduled flights left passengers scrambling for accommodation near the airport.

"We were fortunate to book our rooms early. By the time we reached the hotel, it was full and other travellers who came looking for rooms could not check in.

"There were many people at the airport, including some Malaysians and many Indonesians whose journeys were also disrupted," he said when contacted yesterday.

Syamsul was among five Malaysian couples scheduled to return on a Batik Air flight on Sunday after a nine-day motorcycle convoy across West Java.

The group arrived at Soekarno-Hatta only to

learn that operations had been suspended. Their evening flight was initially rescheduled to 9am on Monday, prompting them to book rooms near the airport.

"When we returned to check-in the following morning, we were told that the airport was still closed.

"We requested a refund and decided to leave Indonesia through Surabaya because the volcanic activity was not showing signs of subsiding.

"We need to return to Malaysia because our leave has ended. We cannot tell how long the airport will remain closed."

Syamsul said the ash was not clearly visible around their hotel, although members of the group experienced throat discomfort and nasal irritation. Residents there advised them to wear masks while outdoors.

With no certainty over when their flight could depart, the group decided against remaining near the airport and arranged an overnight train journey across Java instead.

Each traveller paid about Rp900,000 (RM206) for a ticket, bringing the group's total cost to approximately Rp9 million (RM2,060).

They were scheduled to leave Jakarta at 11.33pm last night and arrive in Surabaya at about 8am today, before searching for available flights from Juanda International Airport to Kuala Lumpur, as they had been told the airport there remained fully operational.

Syamsul's wife, UiTM Arau lecturer Noraini Ismail, 54, was among those travelling with the group.

They had arrived in Jakarta on Aug 29 for a self-organised reconnaissance ride through the Indonesian districts of Subang, Cirebon, Bandung and Puncak in Bogor, ahead of a future motorcycle programme organised under a group called Adventure Touring Motorsports.

Their ordeal unfolded amid widespread

disruption across Indonesia's aviation network caused by Anak Krakatau's recent eruptions. Situated in the Sunda Strait between Java and Sumatra, the volcano has been erupting since late Friday, with its latest eruption recorded at 8.23pm on Sunday.

As of Sept 6, volcanic ash had reached up to 15,000m on the Sumatra side and 6,000m on the Java side.

Bernama reported that 31 Malaysia-Jakarta flights scheduled that day were cancelled, including 21 at KLIA and six in Penang. The Penang cancellations, involving AirAsia, TransNusa and Batik Air, affected about 1,000 passengers.

Reuters reported yesterday that seven airports remained closed, with some 2,300 flights and about 270,000 passengers affected. Soekarno-Hatta's closure was repeatedly extended and was scheduled to remain in force until 6pm Indonesian time.

Another fellow traveller, Nazri Ridha Sarudin, 52, who also tagged along with his wife, said the uncertainty continued after the group's flight was postponed by a day, only to be cancelled when the airport failed to reopen as anticipated.

"We went to the airport and only then received official confirmation that the flight had been cancelled. After obtaining the refund, we focused on finding another way home through Surabaya.

"We arranged the hotel ourselves, but we understand that this is a problem caused by Mother Nature," said Nazri, who manages a mobile phone store in Kepala Batas, Penang.

Nazri said the group did not contact the Malaysian embassy as its members were able to manage their arrangements independently.

He added that they had travel insurance covering flight delays and cancellations and hoped to return to Malaysia by Thursday.

15 42 11

Informasi Keberangkatan  
Departure Information

Sultan Hassanudin International Airport

| FLIGHT            | TIME  | DESTINATION  | GATE    | REMARKS             |
|-------------------|-------|--------------|---------|---------------------|
| Lion Air JT-909   | 14:55 | Semarang     | 2F      | Last call 15:20     |
| Batik Air ID-6762 | 14:10 | Manado       | 3C      | Delay operational 1 |
| SJ-599            | 14:45 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Check In Close      |
| Lion Air JT-797   | 15:00 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| Lion Air JT-780   | 15:35 | Paku         | 3C      | Delay operational 1 |
| Wings Air IW-1306 | 15:45 | Baubau       | 2F      | Check In Close      |
| Citilink QG-353   | 16:00 | Surabaya     | 2F      | Check In Close      |
| Lion Air JT-980   | 16:05 | Ternate      | 4       | Delay operational 1 |
| Batik Air ID-6143 | 16:50 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| Lion Air JT-885   | 17:15 | Surabaya     | 2F      | Check In Open       |
| Lion Air JT-996   | 17:15 | Kendari      | 2F      | Check In Open       |
| Lion Air JT-793   | 17:50 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| SJ-712            | 18:00 | Yogyakarta   | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| SJ-593            | 18:00 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Scheduled           |
| Batik Air ID-6293 | 18:00 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| Citilink QG-355   | 18:00 | Surabaya     | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| Lion Air JT-665   | 18:15 | Yogyakarta   | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| Citilink QG-341   | 18:15 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| AirAsia AK-335    | 18:20 | Kuala Lumpur | 12      | Check In Open       |
| Batik Air ID-6235 | 18:35 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |
| SJ-567            | 18:50 | Surabaya     | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| Lion Air JT-747   | 18:55 | Denpasar     | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| Batik Air ID-6137 | 19:20 | Surabaya     | 2F      | Scheduled           |
| Lion Air JT-703   | 19:25 | Jakarta      | 04F-27* | Cancel last week    |

Mon, 07 Sep 2026 | Press And ID Card | Welcome To Sultan Hassanudin International Airport

The Sultan Hassanudin International airport is among the seven airports that have cancelled flights. – HIMANSHU BHATT/THE SUN

## Travellers advised to check flight status following disruptions

**JAKARTA:** Malaysian travellers flying from or transiting through Soekarno-Hatta International Airport (CGK) in Jakarta have been advised to regularly check their flight status following disruptions caused by volcanic ash from Mount Anak Krakatau.

The Malaysian Embassy in Jakarta said the volcanic ash had forced the temporary closure of several airports and disrupted international flights, including services to and from Kuala Lumpur.

"Malaysian visitors who have flights from or through CGK are advised to check their flight status with their respective airlines from time to time for information regarding flight rescheduling or alternative routes," it said in an advisory yesterday.

In its latest update, Indonesia's Transport Ministry said Soekarno-Hatta International Airport and six other airports would remain temporarily closed until 8.59am local time on Monday due to volcanic ash from Anak Krakatau.

The other airports are Radin Inten II in Lampung, Halim Perdanakusuma in Jakarta, Husein Sastranegara in Bandung, Budiarto in Tangerang, Pondok Cabe in South Tangerang and M. Taufik Kiemas in Lampung.

The embassy also advised Malaysian visitors to keep abreast of developments and comply with instructions from local authorities, particularly regarding the spread of volcanic ash.

The embassy can be contacted at +62 21 522 4947 during office hours and +62 813 8081 3036 after office hours. – Bernama



Shamsul (centre) with his convoy members. – PIC COURTESY OF SHAMSUL KAMAL.

## 'Parents may not send children to school amid haze concern'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Parents may choose not to send their children to school if they are concerned about their health amid the haze currently affecting the country, said Education Minister Datuk Seri Fadhlina Sidek.

She said parents only need to inform the school if they decide to keep their children at home.

"I understand parents' concerns over the current haze situation. We hear those concerns.

The health and safety of our children remain the priority in every action we take," she said in a Facebook post yesterday.

Fadhlina said the Education Ministry would continue to monitor Air Pollutant Index (API) readings issued by the Environment Department, as well as the latest situation, particularly in affected areas.

She said any measures taken would be based on the National Haze Action Plan.

"When the API reading exceeds 100, all outdoor activities would be suspended. When it exceeds 200, schools would be closed."

According to the Air Pollutant Index Management System portal yesterday morning, Samarahan, Sarawak was the only area to record a very unhealthy reading at 226.

Meanwhile, 40 areas nationwide recorded unhealthy readings, while 24 recorded moderate readings. – Bernama





## Ex-Felda DG remanded five days in power abuse case

**PUTRAJAYA:** A former Felda director-general has been remanded for five days to assist investigations into an abuse of power case involving the appointment of a developer for a Kuala Lumpur project and the sale of land owned by the statutory body.

The remand order, which runs from yesterday until Friday, was issued by Magistrate Ezrene Zakariah after the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) made the application at the Putrajaya Magistrate's Court here.

The suspect, in his late 60s, was one of two men, aged in their 50s and 60s called in by MACC to assist the investigation.

Both are suspected of involvement in the sale of the statutory body's land to a company with interests in the developer, without the knowledge of its board of directors and subsidiary.

MACC detained the two men, including a former statutory body general manager who holds the title "Datuk" at about 4pm on Sept 6 after they appeared at its headquarters here to have their statements recorded.

MACC chief commissioner Datuk Seri Abd Halim Aman confirmed the arrests, saying the case was being investigated under Section 16 of the MACC Act 2009.

Last week, MACC opened seven investigation papers into allegations of misappropriation, abuse of power and corruption involving Felda and its subsidiary, Felda Investment Corporation Sdn Bhd.

Abd Halim was reported as saying that the large-scale special investigation, Op Fella, focused on investment transactions and asset acquisitions by Felda and FIC management between 2010 and 2020.

Six of the seven papers were opened on Aug 24, while the remaining one is an old case still active and undergoing the Mutual Legal Assistance (MLA) process.

The investigations cover the investment in Syarikat Tataran Aras Sdn Bhd, based in Limbang, Sarawak, the acquisition of Grand Borneo Hotel Sdn Bhd in Sabah and the purchase of Grand Plaza Serviced Apartments in London.

They also cover the establishment of Felda Wellness Corporation Sdn Bhd, the acquisition of Felda House and Grand Felda House, and alleged misappropriation in the development of the Kuala Lumpur Vertical City project.

The old investigation into the Park City Grand Plaza property, still active and undergoing the MLA process, is also being reviewed in parallel.

Meanwhile, a source said a remand application for the other individual, currently being treated for a suspected health condition, was made at a hospital yesterday. — Bernama

# Six missing hikers of Trans Gerah expedition found safe

➤ Rescuers managed to establish contact with mountain guide accompanying group, says police chief

**GERIK:** The six hikers reported missing while taking part in the Trans Gerah Expedition at Mount Gerah, Kelantan, have been found safe, police confirmed yesterday.

District police chief Superintendent Abdul Samad Othman confirmed the development after rescuers managed to establish

contact with a mountain guide accompanying the group.

"We have managed to contact the mountain guide, and everyone is safe. All the hikers are safe, and we will carry out the rescue process," he said when contacted by Buletin TV3.

He said a ground rescue team would be deployed to the group's location to assist them, while a separate team would be flown by helicopter to a nearby camp before trekking in to reach the hikers.

"The rescue team will head up as well," he said.

The six — Shafiee Sidek, 49; Hazman Mamat, 43; Wan Ahmad Aslam Wan Zairudin, 39; Siti Zulaiha Norizan, 39; Diya Raisha Wan Ahmad Aslam, 13; and Ahmad Raef

Wan Ahmad Aslam, nine, comprising four members of a family and two mountain guides, had not been seen since Sept 1 after beginning their hike on Aug 29, Bernama reported.

They were due to emerge from the forest on Sept 3, prompting their family to lodge a missing-person report after they failed to return as scheduled.

The confirmation comes after search and rescue teams had been mobilised by water, land and air, with Perak Fire and Rescue Department director Datuk Sayani Saidon earlier saying three boats from the Trojan Jetty in Gerik had been deployed to ferry eight members of the Special Tactical Operation and Rescue Team and five

fire and rescue mountain guides to Pos Kemar. Twelve Forestry Mountain Guides would travel by four-wheel-drive from Sungai Siput to the same forward base.

An aerial survey and canine unit had been placed on standby as part of the multi-agency operation involving police, Forestry Department, Wildlife and National Parks Department, General Operations Force, Fire and Rescue Department and Forestry Mountain Guides.

Kelantan Fire and Rescue Department director Farhan Sufyan Borhan had said his department's Special Tactical Operations and Rescue Team, firefighters and guides were also on standby to assist from the Kelantan side.

## Suspect shot dead in RM27.5m drug syndicate bust

**SEREMBAN:** The Narcotics Criminal Investigation Department (NCID) crippled a drug processing syndicate suspected of producing methylenedioxymethamphetamine (MDMA) worth a total of RM27.5 million in this district and Kuala Lumpur in Op Thraps on Sunday.

Bukit Aman NCID director Datuk Hussein Omar Khan said in the raid, a 52-year-old main suspect was shot dead after he acted aggressively by firing shots at the raiding team at a terraced house in this district at about 1.30pm.

He said the house rented by the suspect had been used as a laboratory to process the drugs since early this year, adding that police seized suspected MDMA comprising 64.49kg of liquid, 5.2kg of drug lumps, 7.9kg of drug pills, 104.8kg of drug powder as well as various drug-processing equipment.

"We believe the suspect obtained the drugs with the assistance of other syndicate members by bringing in drug-processing precursors from abroad.

"The suspect who was shot dead also had the expertise to process these chemicals into MDMA or ecstasy," he said at a press conference at the Seremban district police headquarters here yesterday.

It was believed that the suspect had extensive experience, as his involvement in drug-related activities had been detected since the 1990s, in addition to having three previous arrest and imprisonment records under Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952.



Hussein showing the seized gun at the press conference at Seremban police headquarters yesterday. — BERNAMAPIC

Hussein said the main suspect was also wanted under Section 3(1) of the Kidnapping Act 1961, in addition to having a previous criminal record under Section 448 of the Penal Code.

He added that the syndicate's *modus operandi* was to use residential areas with low population density as locations for processing and distributing drugs to conceal their activities from authorities.

Hussein said the drugs were believed to be intended for the local

and overseas markets.

Police were now actively tracking down several more suspects believed to have fled abroad.

He said police also conducted two separate raids in Seremban 2 and at a house in Kuchai Lama, Kuala Lumpur, which led to the arrest of a 32-year-old woman and a 35-year-old man.

Both the woman and man tested positive for methamphetamine and THC respectively.

Both were also found to have

various criminal records, including drug-related offences. They have been remanded for seven days until Sept 13.

Hussein said police also seized three cars, adding that the case was being investigated under Section 307 of the Penal Code and Section 39B of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952.

He said the seizure could indirectly curb the distribution of drugs to more than 400,000 users. — Bernama

## Two women held over alleged child mistreatment at care centres

**KUANTAN:** Two women have been remanded for six days to assist investigations into alleged mistreatment of children at childcare centres in Kuantan and Temerloh.

Acting Pahang police chief Datuk Azry Akmar Ayob said the two nursery staff, aged 31 and 26, were remanded for six days until Saturday following applications by police at the Kuantan

and Temerloh Magistrates' Courts.

He said the 31-year-old woman was detained on Sunday to assist investigations into the alleged mistreatment of a two-year-old boy at a nursery in Bukit Setongkol here.

"Another woman was detained to facilitate investigations into allegations of mistreatment involving a two-year-old girl at a nursery in

Temerloh," he said yesterday.

Kuantan district police chief ACP Ashari Abu Samah said on Sunday that police had received a report concerning a video showing a toddler being scolded, having his hair pulled and his head shaken by a woman working at the centre.

Meanwhile, Temerloh district police chief ACP Mohd Nasyim Bahron

said police received a report from the child's 29-year-old mother at about 6pm on Sunday over allegations that her two-year-old daughter had been mistreated by a nanny at a nursery near Temerloh.

A video showing the alleged mistreatment has been widely shared on social media, drawing widespread public attention. — Bernama



# Academy empowers youth with drone piloting course

► Institution aims to equip students with practical skills to meet evolving demands

BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Once dismissed as a pathway for students who could not keep up with conventional academics, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) is taking flight into a new era, preparing Malaysians for industries being transformed by drones, artificial intelligence (AI) and other emerging technologies.

At HEE Tech Academy, students as young as 16 are being trained not merely to fly drones, but also to understand how the technology could be applied to real-world challenges, from agriculture and infrastructure inspections to search and rescue.

The academy, which began operations in 2023, offers the Malaysian Skills Certificate Level 2 in Drone Piloting, alongside modular and short courses covering drone technology, repair and maintenance, programming and AI.

Centre manager Ahmad Syazrin Nasaruddin said the focus was on equipping students with practical skills that matched the rapidly changing demands of industry.

"It is not only about learning how to fly a drone. Students need to understand maintenance, operation and how drones could be applied in different industries."

The academy's eight-month programme is designed to produce competent drone operators with technical knowledge, while exposing them to the technology's industrial applications.

Ahmad said the programme follows the National Occupational Skills Standard, which is developed based on industry needs and occupational demand.

He added that the protocol ensures TVET programmes remain aligned with the skills employers require, rather than training



Ahmad said drones could reduce the need for individuals to carry out dangerous or physically demanding work, while improving speed and precision. — BERNAMAPIC

students for jobs that do not exist.

He also said the academy currently has a capacity of about 50 students at a time, with younger students making up most of its full-time intake. However, he said its appeal extends beyond school leavers.

Ahmad said its short courses also attract experienced workers seeking to convert their existing skills and experience into certification, giving them a pathway to remain relevant as technology changes the nature of work.

He added that for students from lower-income families, financing could also make the eight-month programme more accessible.

The academy said eligible students may apply for financing through the Skills Development Fund Corporation, with the programme fee listed at about RM7,850.

Under the financing pathway, eligible students may also receive allowances, including a monthly allowance of up to RM800 and transport assistance, subject to applicable requirements and approval.

The academy also said the financing is a loan rather than a grant and is not automatically guaranteed to every B40 student.

For senior leadership consultant Jude Martin, making such opportunities accessible

is important because not every young person excels in a conventional classroom.

"Some people are talented in studies, while others are talented in skills. TVET gives them another option."

He expressed belief that the perception of vocational education as a route for those who "failed" academically needs to change.

The academy is also looking beyond drones. Its director Tan Heng Meng said it plans to expand into other skills, including welding and areas linked to the oil and gas and construction industries.

He added that the broader objective is to help Malaysians develop at least one practical skill that could complement their academic qualifications.

"Even if you have a degree, you can still have a skill. One person, one skill."

The demand for drone-related skills is being driven by the technology's expanding applications across industries.

Ahmad said drones could reduce the need for individuals to carry out dangerous or physically demanding work, while improving speed and precision.

He said in agriculture, for instance, drones could support precision farming.

## UniMAP TVET ecosystem aligned with industry needs

**DA NANG:** Universiti Malaysia Perlis (UniMAP) has built a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) ecosystem that brings learning closer to industry needs, offering 54 courses, six professional certifications, nine industry laboratories and three teaching factories through its TVET centre.

The Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail, in his capacity as UniMAP Chancellor, said the centre has seven certified instructors and offers training encompassing industrial training, work-based learning, micro-credentials and professional certification, as well as upskilling and reskilling programmes.

"The three teaching factories provide students and trainees with opportunities to undergo learning experiences that closely replicate real-world industrial environments," he said.

He was speaking when granting an audience to Deputy Consul (Education) of the Consulate General of Malaysia Koh Bee Ching in Ho Chi Minh City, in conjunction with UniMAP's International Leadership Mobility (ILM) programme yesterday.

He added that the strength of the "teaching factory" concept lay in its ability to transform the campus into an industrial simulation environment.

"Students do not merely learn theory but are also given opportunities to develop practical skills and gain an understanding of actual industrial workflows."

"The approach complements UniMAP's strengths as a technical university and helps produce graduates who are both job-ready and future-ready."

Meanwhile, Koh said UniMAP's technical and TVET capabilities offered significant potential for expansion through international university-industry networks.

"UniMAP possesses distinct strengths as a technical university, particularly in engineering, technology and TVET, which are closely aligned with industry needs."

"These strengths offer significant potential for expansion through university-industry networks in Vietnam and the wider Asean region."

— Bernama

## 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.



**SINGAPORE:** Top ministers will discuss ministerial salaries in parliament today, a sensitive and closely watched topic in the city-state, where political office comes with high rates of pay to attract talent and deter graft.

Singapore pays its political leaders the highest salary in the world, with a junior minister taking home S\$1.1 million (RM3.5 million) annually and the prime minister earning S\$2.2 million (RM7 million) a year.

The salaries have not been adjusted since 2012, when ministers took a 36% pay cut to allay public discontent about how much they earned.

High ministerial salaries are a sensitive issue among the population, where the median income was just S\$5,775 last year.

Inflation crept up to 2% in July,

# Singapore lawmakers to scrutinise ministerial salaries

➤ Prime minister earns S\$2 million a year

with the central bank expecting the figure to remain elevated until the second half of next year.

According to data from non-profit PoliticalSalaries.com, the Hong Kong chief executive is the second-highest earner globally with US\$719,000 (RM2.9 million) annually, followed

by the Swiss president at US\$606,000.

In comparison, the British prime minister makes US\$230,000 while US President Donald Trump earns US\$400,000.

After the 2012 pay cut, the government reviewed salaries again in 2017 but chose not to adopt a

committee recommendation for a raise.

A second review due in 2023 was deferred till now because of economic uncertainty.

Prime Minister Lawrence Wong and Coordinating Minister for Public Services Chan Chun Sing will provide the government's response today to a committee's recommendations on ministerial salaries. Lawmakers will debate the issue later in the week.

Singapore uses the salary of the top 1,000 Singaporean earners as a benchmark, saying the qualities and abilities of the top 1,000 "reflect the desired calibre of the people whom Singapore needs for good government", according to the Public Service Division website.

The high salaries are meant to attract top talent and prevent corruption, and cases of graft by senior officials have been rare. – Reuters

## Marcos cousin charged with graft

**MANILA:** Prosecutors here filed a criminal charge yesterday against a lawmaker and cousin of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr over his alleged involvement in a corruption scandal involving bogus flood control projects.

The case came more than a year after Marcos put the so-called "ghost" infrastructure projects, believed to have cost Filipino taxpayers billions of dollars, centre stage in a public address.

Several construction firm owners, government officials and politicians have been accused of pocketing funds from the projects.

Ombudsman Jesus Crispin Remulla said yesterday the "plunder" case against Martin Romualdez, the president's congressman cousin, involved a total of 7.4 billion pesos

(RM476.8 million) in alleged bribes, anomalous budget insertions and project allocations.

Romualdez has repeatedly denied wrongdoing.

Plunder is a non-bailable offence referring to large-scale corruption punishable by life imprisonment.

Remulla said prosecutors intended to file additional cases against Romualdez and others implicated in the flood control scandal.

Romualdez's co-respondents include former lawmaker Elizaldy Co and several others accused of conspiring to unlawfully accumulate wealth through government funds.

In a statement to reporters, Romualdez's lawyer said his client would face the allegations against him through the courts. – AFP

## Six killed in Delhi building collapse

**NEW DELHI:** At least six people were killed and several others injured after a building housing students collapsed, the city-state's chief minister said yesterday, as rescuers searched for anyone still trapped in the debris.

The building, in the southern part of the city near colleges and universities, had a basement and five upper floors and was being used to house students, media reported.

"It is certain that there was water in the building's basement. Due to accumulation of water and repair work, the old building collapsed," Chief Minister Rekha Gupta said.

Visuals after the collapse on Sunday showed heaps of bricks and broken concrete pillars at the site, with police, rescuers and locals searching for trapped survivors.

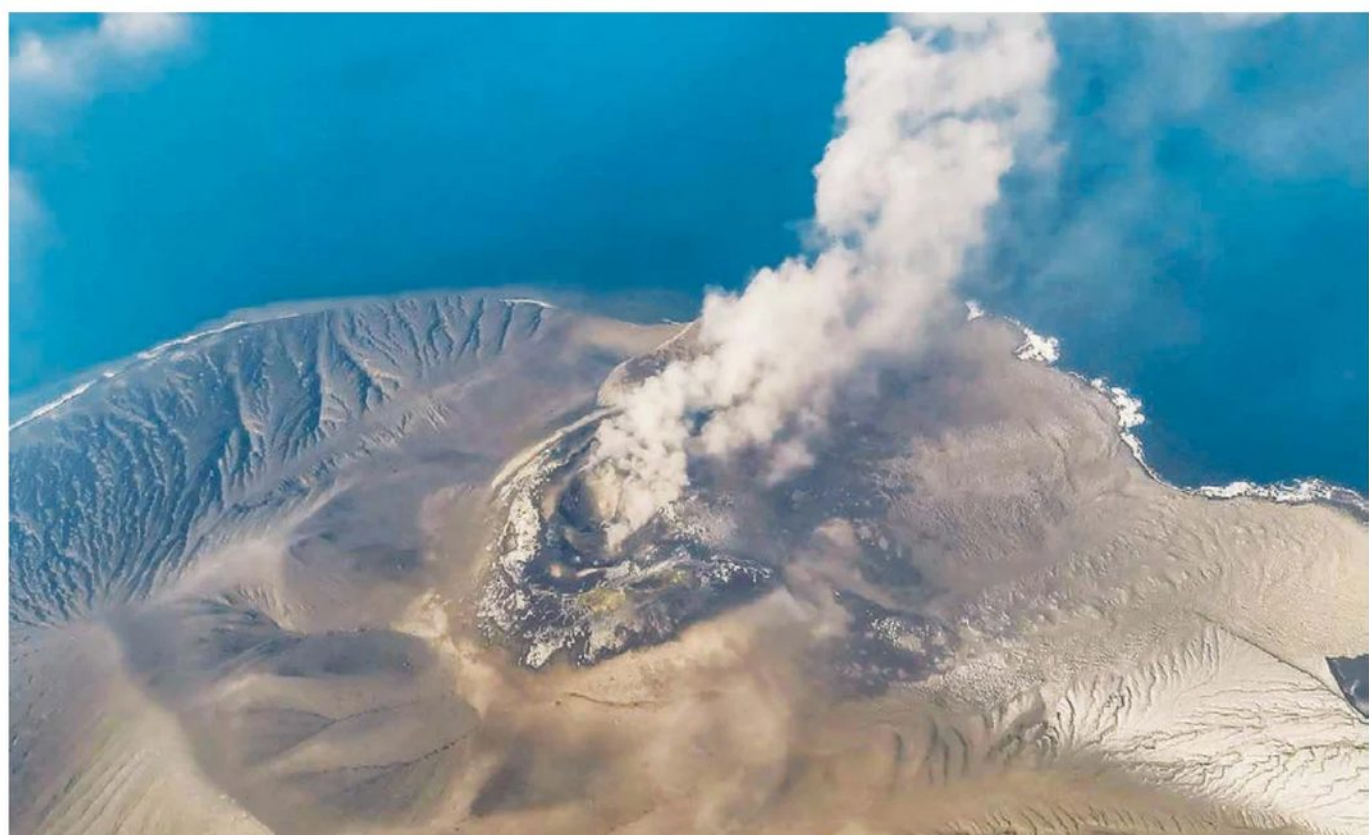
Six people, who were taken to a nearby hospital after being rescued alive, were stable, Gupta said.

Police were searching for the owner of the building, television channels reported.

Building collapses occur frequently in India, especially in crowded urban neighbourhoods where unauthorised construction is widespread and law enforcement is weak. – Reuters



Rescuers at the scene in New Delhi on Sunday. – REUTERS/PIIC



Krakatau in the Sunda Strait spewing smoke and volcanic ash. – AFPPIC/ INDONESIA'S CENTRE FOR VOLCANOLOGY AND GEOLOGICAL Hazard Mitigation HANDOUT

## Seven Indonesian airports remain shut

**TANGERANG:** Seven Indonesian airports, including two serving Jakarta, remained closed because of volcanic ash from eruptions at Mount Anak Krakatau.

Ash from Anak Krakatau has blanketed Jakarta and several surrounding areas since it erupted late on Friday, leading to the closure of the airports for safety reasons.

The Transport Ministry said more than 270,000 people have been affected by the delay, diversion, or cancellation of 2,300 flights.

Jakarta's main airport will remain closed, the ministry said, along with six other airports. One other airport in

South Sumatra has been reopened.

"We cannot say when this will end due to dynamic weather conditions," said Transport Minister Dudy Purwagandhi.

On Monday, passengers at Jakarta's main airport, the Soekarno-Hatta, which is in the city of Tangerang near Jakarta, were scurrying around, frantically looking for their flight status on information boards.

Carlos Zabala, 24, was travelling to his native Spain after a vacation when he learned his flight was repeatedly delayed. Expressing his frustration, he blamed operators for the lack of clarity.

"All we have to do is wait, and wait, and wait," he said.

Renowned volcano expert Surono said windy and dry conditions were blowing the sulphur and silica-laden ash all over the place and pose risks to plane engines.

"For Anak Krakatau, the recent eruption was unusual," he said.

Anak Krakatau is one of about 130 active volcanoes in Indonesia, which straddles the "Pacific Ring of Fire", a highly seismically active zone where different plates on the earth's crust meet to create a large number of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions. – Reuters

## Philippines raises alarm over defence exercise cuts

**SEOUL:** China could see recent cuts to US-South Korean military exercises as an opportunity to reassert itself in the Indo-Pacific, Philippine Defence Secretary Gilberto Teodoro said yesterday, though he said Washington had assured Manila that its commitments to the Philippines remained unchanged.

Speaking on the sidelines of the Seoul Defence Dialogue, Teodoro said there had been no reduction in US-Philippine military activities.

President Donald Trump's decision last month to scale back military

exercises with South Korea has prompted debate among security analysts over the credibility of US deterrence in Asia and whether rivals such as China could perceive a weakening of US resolve.

"It is a possibility, of course. China is very quick to exploit gaps," Teodoro said when asked whether Beijing could seize on the move.

"If we're talking about the Indo-Pacific as a whole, then it may signal some opportunity for China to reassert itself."

Teodoro said, however, that Manila

had received "definite assurances" from Washington and that there was "no indication" that the changes in South Korea would affect US-Philippines Mutual Defence Treaty commitments.

Manila has deepened defence cooperation with the United States under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, including expanded joint exercises and greater access for US forces to Philippine military facilities.

Teodoro said Manila was also broadening security ties with other partners. – Reuters





# Five killed in Miami Airport cargo plane crash

## Amazon Prime Air flight overshoots runway

**CHICAGO:** At least five people died when an Amazon Prime Air cargo flight overran a runway and crashed while landing at Miami International Airport on Sunday.

Prime Air Flight 7598 overran the airport's diagonal runway shortly before 2pm EDT (Monday 2am in Malaysia) and struck vehicles on the ground, officials said during a news conference.

Five people were also injured in the crash, including three who are in critical condition, said Miami-Dade Fire Chief Ray Jadallah.

At least two people were trapped in vehicles that were struck by the plane, and the pilot and co-pilot were trapped inside the plane by the crash, Jadallah said.

Officials declined to identify those who died.

More than 60 rescue units and about 200 personnel responded to the incident, Miami-Dade Fire Rescue said in a statement.

As of late afternoon, emergency personnel were still dealing with a fuel leak from the aircraft, Jadallah said.

Although the airport halted all flights immediately after the crash, flights had resumed by Sunday evening.

The plane, which departed from San Juan, Puerto Rico, was a 32-year-old Boeing 767-300 freighter that had operated as a passenger jet

for various airlines from 1994 to 2015, according to flight tracking service Flightradar24.

Cargo airline 21 Air operated the plane for Amazon, an Amazon spokesperson said in a statement.

"We are devastated by the accident involving one of our aircraft in Miami," 21 Air said on its website. "Our deepest condolences are with the families and loved ones of those who lost their lives."

Flightradar24 said the plane was travelling at 207 kph when it exited the usable runway.

The National Transportation Safety Board, which investigates US civil aviation accidents, said it had sent a team led by Chairwoman Jennifer Homendy to investigate the accident. - Reuters



An Amazon cargo plane overshoot a runway as it landed in Miami. - AFP/PIIC

## China top court sets rules for deepfakes

**BEIJING:** A familiar face on a video call may not be who it appears to be. Artificial intelligence (AI) can replicate people's faces and voices with startling realism, creating new challenges for the law.

China's top court issued guidelines spelling out when such AI-generated content can lead to legal liability, Xinhua news agency reported.

The guidelines, released by the Supreme People's Court (SPC), address a range of emerging disputes, including AI deepfakes and voice cloning, algorithmic price discrimination and AI-generated false information.

They make clear that people cannot use AI to create or distribute recognisable digital replicas of others without their consent, including cloned faces and voices. Such use can infringe individuals' rights, while using AI-generated faces or voices to spread false claims or damage someone's reputation can also result in legal liability.

The rules come as AI-generated impersonation becomes increasingly easy to create and difficult to distinguish from authentic content. A handful of photographs or a short voice recording can provide enough material to produce a convincing digital replica.

The guidelines also address algorithmic discrimination against consumers. Businesses that use algorithms to offer different prices or other transaction terms for the same goods or services without reasonable justification may be held liable if the practice causes harm to consumers.

"We cannot expect every consumer to become an expert at spotting deception. The law must step in promptly to protect consumers' legitimate rights and interests," said Zhou Jiahai, head of the research office of the SPC.

The guidelines also provide a way for people to seek swift protection when AI-generated content threatens to cause serious and irreversible harm. For example, someone whose face has been digitally altered and used to spread false and defamatory sexual claims may ask a court for an injunction if waiting to act could cause harm that would be difficult to repair later. - Bernama

## Nepal tunnel rescues face new challenge

**KATHMANDU:** Nepal's flood disaster posed an unprecedented challenge, Australian rescue expert Arnold Dix said yesterday.

The Aug 26 mountain collapse on the China-Nepal border killed at least 1,385 people, with more than 5,500 missing across the two countries.

Hundreds of hydropower workers are among the missing, with rescue efforts now in their 13th day.

"We are facing something I have never faced before," said Dix, president of the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association.

"Not one rescue but multiple potential rescues, unfolding at the same time, in different places, each with its own dangers, uncertainties, and lives that may still be saved."

Nepal is holding a national day of mourning in line with traditional Hindu rituals.

But rescue efforts continue "with the same tempo we had on day one", said Nepal Army spokesman Raja Ram Basnet.

"Our focus is on search and rescue at three levels: on ground, by air and in the tunnels. We are making sure that no one is still stranded."

The rescue of three workers from deep inside tunnels - two Nepalis on Friday and a Chinese man on Saturday - buoyed hopes of finding other survivors.

Foreign experts are aiding Nepali teams in rescue efforts, among them Dix.

"We are measured not only by the lives we save but by the lives we refuse to abandon," said Dix. - AFP

## UN rights chief warns of AI risk to humanity

**GENEVA:** The UN rights chief warned yesterday that artificial intelligence could pose an "existential threat to humanity", demanding immediate action to reduce the risks.

Speaking before the UN Human Rights Council, Volker Turk warned that humans faced "unfamiliar, even unprecedented" threats to their rights.

"The need for AI governance is widely acknowledged but where is the action?" he asked, warning that "delay only benefits the tech companies, their owners and enablers".

Turk decried that "a handful of men has almost unlimited power over AI, which we are repeatedly told has unimaginable computing capacity".

"They talk about freedom, but on closer inspection, this turns out to be little more than

the freedom to exploit our data," he said.

Turk warned that "AI that escapes its testing environment or blackmails developers to prevent itself from being turned off, is AI that is too powerful".

He appeared to be alluding to revelations in July that OpenAI agents had escaped supposedly controlled environments and had broken into servers of Hugging Face, a widely used platform where programmers share AI software.

That episode shook the tech world and revived calls for tighter rules and oversight of AI.

Anthropic, Meta and other companies have reported similar incidents while testing agents.

"I share the concerns of industry insiders that advanced AI could pose an existential risk to humanity," Turk said.

"I am calling here, today, for an all-out effort to put cast iron guarantees in place around the safety and security of AI, before it is too late."

The UN rights chief said he would be writing to AI companies in coming days "to urge them to take the steps that are within their control to reduce risks now".

At a minimum, he said, "we need countries hosting AI and those involved in its supply chains to come together around agreed red lines".

"We need independent verification, and much stronger collaboration on security within the industry."

"We also need to consider the human rights impacts of AI on employment practices, on fundamental principles of democracy and on our environment." - AFP



# Toss out genocide case, Germany tells UN court

➤ Nicaragua to respond today

**THE HAGUE:** Germany urged yesterday the UN top court to throw out a case against it by Nicaragua, which has accused Berlin of "facilitating genocide" in Gaza with its support of Israel.

Julia Monar, representing Germany at the International Court of Justice, said judges lacked the jurisdiction to rule on the case and dismissed Nicaragua's accusations as "inaccurate and distorted".

Nicaragua has dragged Germany before the ICJ, arguing that its backing of Israel, notably in terms of arms exports, contravenes the 1948 UN Genocide Convention.

Opening four days of hearings, Monar told ICJ judges that "the conditions on which this court's jurisdiction is based are not met in this case".

"For the first time, it is being asked to adjudicate a case that is twice removed from a classic bilateral dispute," Monar told the court, which rules on legal

arguments between countries.

"Neither Nicaragua nor Germany is a party to the conflict that forms the real subject matter of this case, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict."

This meant that the court should declare itself incompetent to rule on the case, argued Monar.

The case dates back to 2024, following the start of Israel's offensive in Gaza. Nicaragua urged ICJ judges to impose emergency measures to force Berlin to halt all aid to Israel, in particular military equipment.

The court threw out Nicaragua's request in April of that year, saying "the circumstances, as they now present themselves" did not justify emergency orders.

The case is nevertheless ongoing and Germany is seeking to have it removed, either by persuading judges they do not have the power to rule in the case or that Nicaragua's argument does not stack up.

Berlin has filed "preliminary objections to the jurisdiction of the court and to the admissibility of

certain claims" presented by Nicaragua, according to an ICJ statement.

Addressing that "admissibility", Monar said: "Nicaragua's factual statements are not only inapposite but also create an inaccurate and distorted picture."

"All German exports of military technology and equipment to Israel, as to any country, are subject to strict licensing requirements which exceed international requirements."

Monar noted Germany's "unwavering support for the existence and security of the State of Israel" but also said it was one of the world's largest bilateral donors to the Palestinian Territories.

Germany seeks a "lasting peace" in Gaza, a goal Monar said was shared by Nicaragua.

"However, Germany has serious doubts that the case would in any way bring us any closer to this shared goal," she said.

"By way of consequence, Germany respectfully requests the court reject Nicaragua's claims," concluded Monar.

During hearings at the court in April 2024, Nicaragua said Germany was "pathetic" to provide aid to Gaza while also furnishing Israel with weapons.

Nicaragua's ambassador to the Netherlands, Carlos Jose Arguello Gomez, told the court at that time: "Germany seems not to be able to differentiate between self-defence and genocide."

The court will hold four days of hearings at the Peace Palace, with Nicaragua responding today.

It takes on average six months for the court to hand down a ruling in such cases.

The court could either side with Germany and throw out the case or rule against Berlin, meaning the case would then be considered "on the merits" in more detail.

This procedure is separate from a high-profile case also before the ICJ, in which South Africa has accused Israel of perpetrating genocide in Gaza, which Israel denies.

The ICJ's rulings are binding but it has no power to enforce them. – AFP

## Two-state solution fades

**ABU DHABI:** A top official within the US-backed Board of Peace said yesterday that a failure to move forward in Gaza paired with rising violence in the West Bank are making a two-state solution "impossible".

Nickolay Mladenov, the high representative for Gaza under the US backed "Board of Peace" tasked with implementing an October ceasefire plan, was speaking at the Hili Forum in Abu Dhabi.

"If Gaza continues the way it is now, or does not move into implementing ... the plan that we have under the comprehensive plan, the two-state solution will become practically impossible," he said.

"Because, with everything that is happening in the West Bank, and with more than 50% of Gaza now under the control of the Israeli army and less than 50% under the control of Hamas, there is no credible pathway forward to a political resolution of the conflict."

A roadmap agreed by Hamas on July 30 said that the decommissioning of weapons would be supervised by the International Stabilisation Force, the nascent unit that aims to deploy to Gaza if the situation calms. It is led by US Major General Jasper Jeffers.

Hamas had pledged to hand over its weapons to a new Palestinian governing body.

On Sunday, Jared Kushner, US President Donald Trump's son-in-law and a US envoy, told a press briefing in Kyiv that the Israeli elections were making Israeli leaders "a little irrational" on Gaza.

"We agree with them on the end state," Kushner said. "They just have a crazy election and that makes them a little irrational in certain regards but we're very determined and we're working through these things." – AFP

## Iran to announce restricted zone

**DUBAI:** Iran said it will announce a new restricted zone in the Gulf in the coming days, along with maps of a new shipping corridor through the Strait of Hormuz.

The new restricted zone will begin from where the US blockade of Iran begins and extend into areas of the Gulf, Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, said on Sunday.

Few details were provided on the plan, but Rezaei said any ship entering the new zone would be added to a sanctions list.

In addition, maps detailing passage routes for the strait would also be approved soon, Rezaei said.

"The maps of a new international corridor which lies in Iranian and Omani waters and in which Iran will have management have been agreed and should be signed soon," he said.

"We will only commit to the Strait of Hormuz being open when they stop the sabotage, threats and attacks."

Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf said the US should understand that the rules of the game have changed "before it is too late".

"From now on, any attack against Iran's interests and security will receive a faster, heavier and more painful response," he said.

Qalibaf said that alongside the military front, Iran's main battle was now over production and people's livelihoods. – Reuters



Mourners paying their respect at St Lukas church in Belgrade yesterday. – AFP/IC

## Thousands gather in Belgrade for Mladic funeral

**BELGRADE:** Thousands of people gathered in front of a church in Belgrade to pay their respects to former Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic who died last week while serving a life sentence for genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

Mladic remains a revered figure among many Serbs in Serbia and in Bosnia's autonomous Serb Republic, despite his convictions.

People carrying Serbian flags and

pictures of Mladic wearing a traditional Serbian military cap arrived in front of the church to light candles early yesterday.

Mladic's coffin was displayed inside the church and six men, mainly war veterans from Serbia and Bosnia, took turns guarding it.

Mladic's wife, son and grandchildren stood inside receiving condolences.

"Time will tell, time is the best judge who will show what kind of

person is who and to whom," said Belgrade resident Jovan Vincic, who had come to the church.

Mladic's death has stirred up strong feelings linking back to the break-up of Yugoslavia and the ethnic conflicts that ensued in the Balkans.

Mladic was found guilty by the UN International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia of genocide for his role in the 1995 Srebrenica massacre, in which about

8,000 Bosniak men and boys were killed after Bosnian Serb forces overran the UN-designated enclave.

He was also convicted over the 43-month siege of Sarajevo, during which about 10,000 people were killed.

The funeral service was conducted by the Patriarch of the Serbian Orthodox church at noon after which Mladic was buried in a cemetery beside his daughter, who died in 1994. – Reuters





COMMENT by Eminder Kaur Kawan Singh

# Coolcations: Trending human behaviour

**W**HEN THOUSANDS of Europeans swapped the beaches of Spain, Italy and Greece for the cooler landscapes of Norway, Scotland and the Baltic states this summer, the travel industry quickly coined a new term: “coolcations” – holidays chosen not for sunshine but for milder temperatures.

Yet, this shift tells a far more important story than changing holiday preferences. It raises a question that governments around the world, including Malaysia's, should begin asking: What happens when climate starts influencing not only where we travel but also where we choose to live, work and invest?

Climate has always shaped civilisation. Rivers gave birth to cities, fertile land sustained empires and coastlines became centres of trade. What is changing today is not the relationship between climate and human mobility but the speed at which that relationship is evolving.

Rising temperatures, prolonged heatwaves, more frequent floods and worsening droughts are steadily becoming factors in everyday decisions once driven primarily by economics or lifestyle.

At first glance, it appears to be another seasonal tourism trend. Yet, beneath the changing holiday itineraries lies a more significant story.

As climate change intensifies, people are beginning to make decisions, however small, based on environmental comfort and resilience. The destinations chosen for a two-week vacation today may offer an early glimpse into how climate will influence where people choose to work, invest and live tomorrow.

The significance of “coolcations” is, therefore, not tourism itself; it is what the trend reveals about changing human behaviour.

For decades, countries have competed by offering better infrastructure, lower business costs, skilled labour and access to markets. Increasingly, another consideration is entering that equation: climate resilience.

This does not mean investors or skilled professionals will choose a country based solely on its weather. Economic fundamentals will always matter. But when businesses compare locations with similar advantages, factors such as extreme heat, flood risks, water security, energy reliability and the quality of urban environments may shape their decisions.

Climate, in other words, is becoming part of the competitiveness conversation. This shift is already visible across multiple sectors.

Insurance companies are reassessing risks associated with extreme weather.

Cities are investing in cooling strategies, flood mitigation and green infrastructure to remain attractive places to live and work.

Employers are paying closer attention to the effects of heat stress on worker productivity and public health. The discussion is no longer confined to environmental policy; it is influencing economic planning.

For Malaysia, this should prompt a broader conversation. As a tropical nation, Malaysia is accustomed to heavy rainfall and warm temperatures. However, climate change is amplifying existing challenges through more frequent flooding, rising urban heat and increasing pressure on infrastructure.

These developments affect more than environmental sustainability. They influence business continuity, public health, logistics, insurance costs and the overall attractiveness of cities.

The question is not whether Malaysia can avoid climate change. It cannot. The more important question is whether Malaysia can adapt faster than many of its competitors. That requires thinking beyond emissions targets alone.

Climate resilience should become an integral part of national competitiveness. Urban planning must prioritise cooler, more liveable cities. Infrastructure should be designed to withstand more frequent climate extremes.

Reliable water and energy systems will become valuable to investors. Public transport, healthcare and digital infrastructure must all be planned with a changing climate in mind. Such investments are often viewed as environmental expenditures. In reality, they are investments in long-term economic resilience.

Malaysia has already taken meaningful steps through the National Energy Transition Roadmap, the National Adaptation Plan and broader sustainability initiatives.

The next challenge is to integrate climate resilience more deeply into economic development strategies. This means recognising that adaptation is not simply about reducing future losses; it is also about creating future advantages.

This perspective is particularly relevant for Southeast Asia. As the region competes to attract advanced manufacturing, digital industries and high-value investment, countries will



As climate change intensifies, people are beginning to make decisions based on environmental comfort and resilience. – AI-GENERATED IMAGE

increasingly differentiate themselves not only through incentives and infrastructure but also through their ability to provide safe, resilient and liveable environments.

This shift is already influencing how governments and businesses plan for the future.

Copenhagen has invested extensively in climate adaptation through green infrastructure, flood-resilient urban design and liveable public spaces, reinforcing its reputation as one of the world's most attractive cities for residents, businesses and global talent.

Closer to home, Singapore has committed billions of dollars to long-term climate resilience, from strengthening coastal protection to enhancing water security and urban cooling measures, recognising that environmental resilience is integral to its economic competitiveness.

Meanwhile, international organisations, such as the World Bank and the OECD, have repeatedly warned that climate change could impose significant economic costs through reduced productivity, infrastructure damage and supply chain disruptions if countries fail to adapt.

The message is becoming

increasingly clear: investing in climate resilience is no longer solely about protecting the environment; it is about safeguarding future prosperity.

In the coming decades, competitiveness may be measured not only by the ease of doing business but also by the ability to withstand a changing climate.

That is why Europe's “coolcations” deserve more than a passing glance. They are not simply about tourists escaping the summer heat. They are an early reminder that climate is beginning to influence choices once driven almost entirely by economics or convenience.

The countries that thrive in the future are unlikely to be those with the lowest costs alone. They will be those that combine strong institutions, economic dynamism and the capacity to adapt to a warming world.

Climate resilience is no longer only an environmental ambition. It is becoming an economic advantage.

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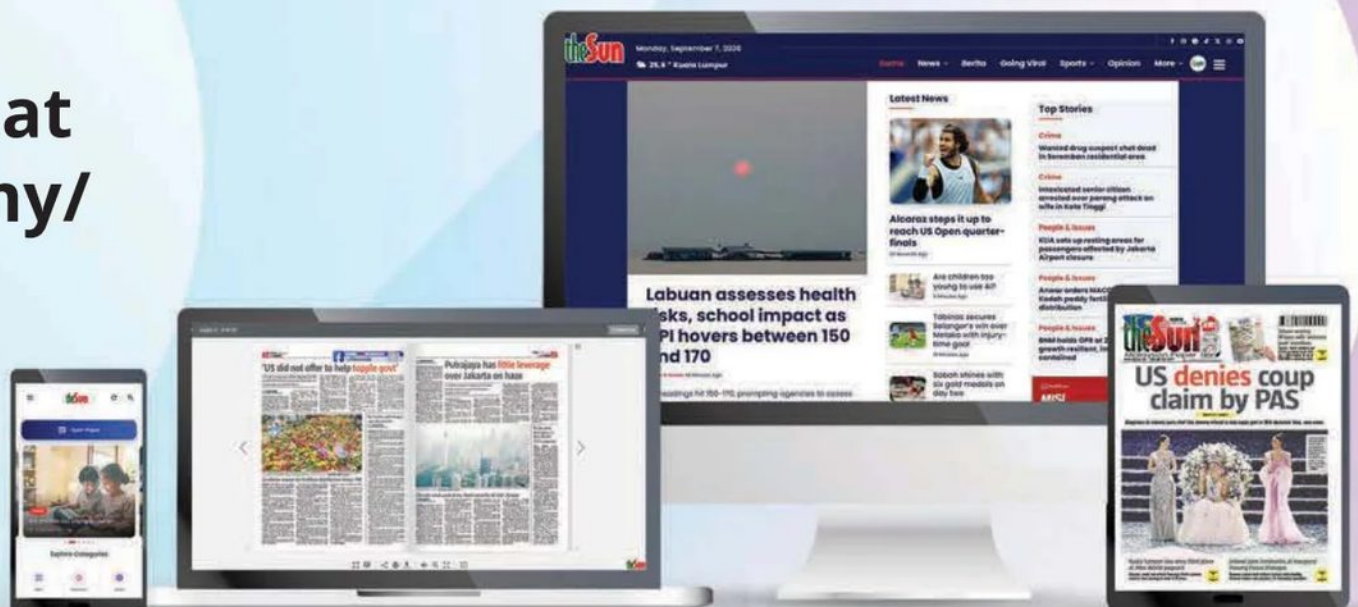
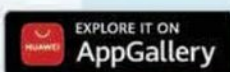
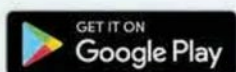
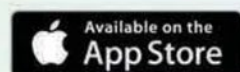


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# KPI done, but boss says *lagi-lah*

**L**ADIES and gentlemen, welcome to the 30th Annual KPI Hunger Games: Malaysian Corporate Edition. May the odds be ever in your appraisal.

This is the only competition where everyone enters the arena full of hope, armed with colourful PowerPoint slides, beautifully formatted Excel spreadsheets and enough coffee to keep a small nation awake. The objective sounds simple: Meet your Key Performance Indicators (KPI).

Easy, right? Wrong. Because somewhere, hidden deep inside the corporate jungle, lives a magical creature called "stretch target." It appears every time you think you have finally made it.

"Congratulations, Ahmad! You achieved 100%."

Ahmad smiles. "Now let's see if you can do 130." Ahmad's smile leaves the building.

Welcome to the arena.

## Meet the tributes

Every department has sent its bravest souls. Sales walks in carrying impossible monthly targets and a smile that is hanging by a thread.

"Boss, target this month very aggressive-*lah*."

"That's why we call it a stretch target, Mei Ling."

Mei Ling stares into the distance and updates her LinkedIn profile.

Customer Service arrives with a headset, infinite patience and the emotional resilience of someone who has been called "useless" three times before lunch.

"Thank you for your feedback, Sir."

Translation: I have heard your complaint, your life story, your neighbour's complaint and possibly your family tree. Please, Sir, allow me one remaining nerve.

Finance enters clutching calculators while being asked to reduce costs after everyone else has already spent the budget.

"Arvind, can we reduce operating expenses?"

"Sure. Which expenses?"

"All of them."

"Okay. Including the ones you approved?"

Suddenly the meeting requires another meeting. HR carries employee engagement surveys that everyone insists are anonymous but somehow still answers like they are applying for national security clearance.

"Please be honest. Your responses are confidential."

Siti types: My manager needs to communicate better. Deletes.

Types: There are opportunities for improvement. Deletes.

Finally submits: Good. Diplomacy: Malaysian Level 100.

Marketing is told to "go viral" with a budget that wouldn't even buy *nasi lemak* for the team.

"Jason, make it exciting!"

"With what budget?"

"Be creative."

And IT? IT enters the arena only after everyone has clicked the suspicious email titled: "Free holiday voucher!!! Click now!!!"

Kumar clicks. Aisyah clicks. Jason clicks. Mei Ling clicks because she thought Kumar had already checked it. Then everyone messages IT: "Urgent!!! System down!!!"

IT closes his eyes. "May the servers be ever in my favour."

## The game masters strike again

The rules of the KPI Hunger Games are simple: Hit your target. Receive another target. Exceed expectations. Receive higher expectations.

Finish your work early? Congratulations. Here is Kevin's work, too because: "You are so efficient."

It is the corporate version of being rewarded for running the fastest by being asked to carry everyone else's luggage. And this is where Ahmad learns an important lesson: Never look too free. Because the moment you finish your work at 4.15pm, somebody appears from behind a monitor like a workplace ghost.

"Ahmad, since you're free..."

Ahmad was not free. Ahmad was efficient. There is a difference, boss.



KPIs are not meant to be weapons. They provide direction, accountability and a way to celebrate meaningful progress. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

## The corporate magic trick

Every year, management proudly announces that KPIs are designed to motivate employees. Employees hear something slightly different.

"We noticed that you are coping well. Let's see how much more we can pile on."

Somewhere in the distance, work-life balance quietly volunteers as tribute. And poor Kavitha is still wondering why her KPI now includes a project that wasn't even invented when the KPI was signed.

"Don't worry, Kavitha. It's only a small additional responsibility."

In corporate language, "small additional responsibility" is often the opening ceremony for an entirely new job description.

## The sponsorship package

Contestants in the original Hunger Games received gifts from sponsors. Staff also receive sponsorship. Usually in the form of pizza.

Nothing says: "Thank you for six months of unpaid overtime" quite like two slices of slightly cold Hawaiian pizza and a company email declaring: "We appreciate all your hard work."

If you are particularly lucky, there may even be a motivational mug – not a bonus – a mug. The coffee inside costs more than the appreciation.

And somewhere, one employee is staring at the mug thinking: "Can I

pay my car instalment with this?"

## The scoreboard nobody asked for

Corporate scoreboards are fascinating things. Green means you are meeting expectations. Amber means: "Let's have a quick chat."

Red means your calendar suddenly fills with meetings that all begin with: "We are just checking in."

Nobody believes this sentence anymore. It's the corporate equivalent of: "Don't worry, this won't hurt."

The funny thing is nobody ever measures the invisible KPIs. Who stayed back to help a struggling colleague? Who calmed an angry customer without making headlines? Who trained the new staff member while still finishing their own work? Who helped Ahmad fix his presentation at 11.47pm because the boss suddenly decided the font looked "too corporate"?

Those achievements rarely appear on dashboards. But somehow they are the glue holding the whole place together. Funny how the most valuable things often don't fit neatly inside a spreadsheet.

Here is the twist the game makers never saw coming. Employees have started creating their own KPI: Keep inner peace intact.

Suddenly, people are not just asking: "Does this job pay well?"

They are asking: "Can I sleep on

Sunday night without dreading Monday morning?"

Because no salary increment feels quite as generous if every notification makes your nervous system audition for the Olympics.

And sometimes the greatest promotion isn't a bigger title. It is simply working for a manager who says: "Go home. You have done enough today."

Such words, such poetry – some employees may even frame them.

## Final cannon

KPIs were never supposed to become weapons. They provide direction, accountability and a way to celebrate meaningful progress. At their worst, they become numbers that people chase until they forget they are human beings.

Perhaps it is time organisations remembered a very simple equation. People are not machines with software updates. They get tired, get discouraged and burn out. Unlike spreadsheets, human beings don't automatically refresh every Monday morning.

So, to every manager designing next year's KPIs, here is a suggestion. Make them ambitious, measurable but for goodness' sake, make them human too. Because the ultimate prize in the KPI Hunger Games shouldn't be surviving another quarter. It should be building a workplace where nobody feels like volunteering as tribute every Monday morning.

May the odds be in your favour, my fellow Malaysians. And if your reward for smashing every KPI this year is an even bigger KPI next year, well, the cannon has already fired.

Now excuse this *Makcik*. My calendar says: "Team bonding activity."

The title alone has already exhausted me. And if Ahmad, Mei Ling, Arvind, Siti, Kumar, Kavitha and Jason are all mysteriously "working from home" that day, *Makcik* saw nothing. *Makcik* knows nothing. But, *Makcik* understands.

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

## COMMENT by Irham Zulkernain

# When parental protection goes too far

**POST-COVID** Malaysia has seen greater parental involvement in children's education. While well-intentioned, the rapid digitisation of education and convenience of platforms such as WhatsApp have also made it easier for parents to overstep teachers' roles.

We have heard how our parents would punish us for being disciplined by a teacher. Today, some parents are likely to confront the teacher for disciplining their children. It is a gross generalisation but one that is not entirely without basis.

The stakes go beyond pride. When parents argue away a punishment or second-guess every decision a teacher makes, the lesson children absorb is that consequences are negotiable if someone advocates hard enough for them.

This extends beyond discipline. It

can be as mundane as a teacher asking students to bring a box of clay for next week's art class. Instead of listening and remembering, a child can simply rely on a parent to message the teacher later for the details. The child never had to pay attention in the first place.

This instinct to shield rather than hold accountable has found an official channel. In 2014, the Public Complaints Bureau under the Prime Minister's Department introduced Sispaa, transforming how citizens lodge complaints against civil servants.

Before Sispaa, complainants had to navigate a decentralised, largely manual process just to be heard. Now, it takes only a few taps. I have used it myself to report an unhygienic restaurant, which was subsequently closed for inspection. It is proof that, when used well, Sispaa can hold those

in power to account.

But that convenience comes at a cost when it comes to education. As the National Union of the Teaching Profession (NUTP) recently warned, some parents have used Sispaa to lodge complaints against teachers over disciplinary actions, including the confiscation of mobile phones and vape devices.

NUTP cautioned that unreasonable complaints could weaken teachers' willingness to enforce discipline and ultimately affect students' character development. The problem, then, is not Sispaa itself but the use of accountability mechanisms to shield children from legitimate consequences.

Ultimately, perhaps the most damaging form of parental overreach is making excuses for children.

We must not pretend children and

teenagers are incapable of thinking for themselves. Their cognitive development is still ongoing but they are capable of basic reasoning. Constantly shielding them from the consequences of their actions risks stunting their transition into responsible adults.

Take a child who habitually skips class. Rather than holding them to attend, a parent making excuses for them is an absurdity on its face.

It bears repeating: a teacher's duty starts and stops at the school gate, for eight hours a day. Beyond that gate, it is the parent's duty to ensure their child gets to school safely and to instil the discipline that keeps them there.

This is not to say every absence is negligence. Poverty, illness or other genuine hardships are not excuses; they are reasons and deserve to be treated as such. But an excuse offered

simply to spare a child discomfort should be rejected. Education must not be compromised.

The duty to educate the nation's future does not stop at school; it begins at home. Failure to make that distinction produces a generation raised to believe that consequences can always be argued, excused or complained away.

That lesson serves no one when university and the workplace demand the independent thinking that school was supposed to build. That preparation cannot begin the day the SPM certificate is handed out. It must begin now, at home, before the world stops making excuses for them.

**Irham Zulkernain** is a student at Universiti Teknologi Mara. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com





Yong spent two full days assembling and editing the music video for Many Colours, One Heart. – COURTESY PIX

## Educator's Merdeka song strikes national chord

■ BY THE SUN TEAM  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**MIRI:** A personal dream has become a musical tribute to the nation, after Miri educator Ken Yong released an original song ahead of this year's Merdeka celebrations that has already drawn more than 22,000 views online.

Titled *Many Colours, One Heart*, the song carries a simple but urgent message — that Malaysians may speak different languages, celebrate different festivals and come from different backgrounds but they share one home and a common hope for a peaceful, united nation.

"I wanted to create something for Malaysia — something that could carry a message of love, harmony and unity," he said.

Yong, who has more than 15 years of experience in education, public speaking and youth development, works closely with young people and believes strongly in the importance of communication, empathy and understanding across differences. The idea for the song grew from this belief.

He developed the song's concept, message and overall musical direction himself, using AI-assisted music tools as part of the creative production process to bring his ideas to life.

He also personally assembled and edited the accompanying music video, spending two full days experimenting, testing and piecing the visual elements together.

"AI was simply one of the tools I used. The message, concept and creative direction came from me. I wanted the final work to reflect how I feel about Malaysia," he said.

Since its release on YouTube, the song has been discovered and shared by Malaysians across social media and community platforms, surpassing 22,000 views.

For Yong, however, the number matters less than the message reaching people.

"Every view represents someone who has taken a few minutes to listen. If the song makes even a few people feel more connected to Malaysia, then it has already achieved something meaningful," he said.

The song celebrates Malaysia's diversity while reminding listeners that unity does not require everyone to be the same.

Yong is now inviting Malaysian media organisations, journalists, radio stations, digital publications, educators and community platforms to help share the story and introduce the song to a wider audience.

# UM to lead first Asean network for geriatric dentistry

■ BY THE SUN TEAM  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Universiti Malaya (UM) has secured RM100,000 in seed funding to set up the secretariat of the first Asean-level academic network dedicated to geriatric dentistry and healthy ageing, positioning the university at the forefront of the region's response to a rapidly ageing population.

The funding, approved by the Universiti Malaya Management Committee (JKPU), will support the establishment of the Asean University Network - Geriatric Dentistry Thematic Network (AUN-GDENT) Secretariat at the UM Faculty of Dentistry.

AUN-GDENT was formally approved by the Asean University Network (AUN) Board of Trustees,

➤ RM100,000 seed fund to set up secretariat as varsity partners regional universities to tackle ageing population challenges

with its establishment endorsed at the 17th Asean University Network Rectors' Meeting.

UM leads the network in collaboration with its founding partners — the National University of Singapore, Universitas Indonesia and Khon Kaen University — to tackle the mounting healthcare challenges posed by ageing populations across the region.

The RM100,000 seed fund will drive the network's initial activities, covering governance, collaborative programmes, digital platforms, research planning and regional

engagement.

As a regional platform, AUN-GDENT will strengthen education, research, capacity building, policy engagement and community outreach in geriatric dentistry.

Through collaboration among Asean universities and strategic partners, the network aims to harmonise geriatric dentistry curricula, promote joint research, facilitate faculty and student mobility, support evidence-informed policymaking and build a skilled workforce capable of improving the oral health and

quality of life of older adults across Asean.

As the Secretariat, UM will provide academic leadership in coordinating regional initiatives, forging partnerships and advancing innovative solutions to support healthy ageing.

The establishment of AUN-GDENT reinforces UM's commitment to internationalisation, interdisciplinary collaboration and impactful research addressing emerging regional and global healthcare priorities.

It also cements UM's position within the Asean University Network and reflects its continued dedication to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Good Health and Well-being, Quality Education, Reduced Inequalities and Partnerships for the Goals.

## Five educators redefine learning beyond classrooms

■ BY THE SUN TEAM  
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

**PETALING JAYA:** A teacher using drones and artificial intelligence (AI) to keep a displaced Orang Asli community's education alive and another turning Science lessons into viral parody songs, are among five finalists named for the RISE Educator Award 2026.

According to a statement by Taylor's College, each finalist had found their own way to help students learn, grow and believe in what was possible, going beyond the classroom to create new opportunities and make a lasting difference.

Dr Zul Faizuddin Osman, from SK Sungai Rual, Jeli, Kelantan, transformed a remote Orang Asli school into a hub of digital innovation and Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) excellence.

He founded the School of NFT initiative in 2021, integrating digital art, AI and STEM into classroom learning to equip students with future-ready skills.

His efforts lifted student attendance from 70.7 per cent to 82.8%, with 81% of students actively using the DELIMa platform.

Mohamad Safuan Rozak, a Science teacher from SK Desa Jaya, Pahang, created more than 40 educational parody songs to make complex Science concepts easier to understand, memorable and engaging, turning lessons into experiences that extended beyond the classroom.

His creative approach has reached millions online, drawing more than four million YouTube views and a growing digital community across platforms.

Muhammad Hafizu Aiman Jusoh,



Students take part in a learning activity. – COURTESY PIX

from SK Pulat, Kelantan, believed a community's future should not disappear even when its home did.

With the Orang Asli Temiar community of Pos Pulat facing relocation due to the Nenggiri Dam project, he chose to focus on preserving his students' access to meaningful education and future opportunities.

Through Rumah Belajar Tanpa Loceng, a self-directed learning model based on heutagogy, he built a learning ecosystem combining STEM, AI, digital skills and Temiar heritage.

Teh Zhen Kiat, from SJK(C) Sungai Buloh, Selangor, believed education was not only about academic achievement but about empowering students to discover their potential.

Guided by his philosophy of "Think · Navigate · Create", he has spent 12 years transforming classrooms into spaces where curiosity, creativity and innovation thrive.

He established the school's AI Drone Team and AI Digital Junior Leaders, nurturing young innovators while building a culture of peer learning.

Veronica, from SMK St. Bernadette's Convent, transformed STEM education into a sustainable school culture where students were inspired to innovate, think critically and solve real-world problems.

As the school's STEM Coordinator and Head of Department, she redesigned Biology, Science and Mathematics lessons through

inquiry-based and project-based learning, hands-on investigations, digital technology and authentic applications.

Her efforts contributed to a 100% pass rate in all Science subjects, with four of six subjects recording their best examination performance in five years.

The RISE Educator Award 2026 winner will receive a grand prize of RM5,000 in cash, while the nominator will receive RM500.

The winner's school will also receive RM50,000 in sponsorship to support further development initiatives.

The four other finalists will each receive RM1,000 in cash, RM10,000 in school sponsorship and RM250 for their nominators.





# M'sia pushes aviation modernisation

➤ Aim is to develop ecosystem that is well governed, commercially attractive, operationally reliable and trusted by public: Loke

BY JOHN GILBERT  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia will continue to strengthen the nation's position as a resilient and competitive regional aviation hub, with a focus on enabling the domestic aviation sector to grow with modern infrastructure, efficient airspace, strong regulatory institutions, a highly skilled workforce and policies that support investment while safeguarding the national and public interest.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke Siew Fook said the initiatives require not only additional capacity, but also an aviation ecosystem that is well governed, commercially attractive, operationally reliable and trusted by the public.

"Our commitment is to ensure that growth is pursued responsibly. Safety and security must remain absolute priorities, with sustainability must be embedded in long-term planning, and efficiency must translate into better connectivity and a stronger passenger experience.

"This direction is reflected in the continued modernisation of Malaysia's air navigation system.

"Initiatives such as direct route operations across the Kuala Lumpur and Kota Kinabalu flight information regions demonstrate how smarter use of airspace can reduce flight distances, fuel consumption and emissions while improving operational efficiency," he told local and foreign delegates at the 61st Directors General of Civil Aviation Conference Asia and Pacific Region (DGCA/61) yesterday.

For an open and trading nation such as Malaysia, Loke said, aviation

is not simply a mode of transport, but a strategic pillar of national development.

"The scale of opportunity before us is considerable. In July last year alone, Malaysian airports handled 9.3 million passengers, bringing total passenger traffic for the first seven months of the year to 61.2 million.

"That monthly figure had reached 96.8% of the level recorded in July 2019. This renewed momentum gives us confidence, but it must also encourage us to plan beyond recovery and prepare for sustained long-term demand," he added.

Loke said the government is taking a long-term view of aviation's environmental responsibilities.

The Malaysia Aviation Decarbonisation Blueprint has established a pathway to net-zero carbon emissions for international aviation by 2050, aligned with the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) long-term aspirational goal.

"For Malaysia, the transition to lower-carbon aviation is not only an obligation; it is also an opportunity to attract investment, develop domestic expertise and participate in new value chains, including sustainable aviation fuel and cleaner aviation technologies," the minister said.

Loke noted that emerging technologies are expanding the possibilities of flight, with artificial intelligence, unmanned aircraft and advanced air mobility having the potential to transform logistics, public services and connectivity.

He said governments and regulators must provide clarity and confidence as these technologies develop, ensuring that innovation proceeds responsibly and continues to serve public interest.



Loke (centre), Mohamed Sharil (third, right) with other dignitaries and guests, flanked by Malaysia Airlines staff, at the launch of DGCA/61. – CAAM PIC/BERNAMA

"Capacity development, technical assistance and the sharing of experience must therefore remain central to our regional agenda. The strength of Asia-Pacific aviation will ultimately be determined not only by its most advanced systems, but by the resilience of the entire network."

Loke said Malaysia looks forward to contributing constructively to the discussions and to working with all ICAO member states to translate shared priorities into tangible regional progress.

Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) chairman Datuk Mohamed Sharil Tarmizi said Malaysia has been working with fellow member states to strengthen collaboration in the use of safety data.

"Meaningful regional cooperation therefore requires both technological capability and institutional trust. We must also prepare for the next frontier: the Low Altitude Economy.

"Unmanned aircraft systems and advanced air mobility offer enormous potential, but they also raise

new questions involving airspace, certification, traffic management, infrastructure and accountability.

"These questions must be addressed before the technologies reach scale. Regulatory sandboxes and controlled environments can give us the space to test innovation safely, gather evidence and develop proportionate rules without compromising established aviation operations.

"At the same time, we must ensure that sustainability remains integral to every discussion about growth and innovation. A smarter aviation system must also be a more efficient and sustainable one – capable of meeting rising demand while managing its environmental responsibilities," he said.

Hosted by CAAM, DGCA/61 brings together more than 500 participants from 35 countries, including directors general of civil aviation, senior government officials, regulators, international organisations, and aviation industry leaders from across the Asia-Pacific region.

The theme, "Smart Skies: Emerging Technologies for Safe, Secure, Sustainable and Efficient Aviation," reflects the aviation community's shared commitment to harnessing innovation and emerging technologies while ensuring that the highest standards of safety, security, sustainability and operational efficiency remain at the heart of the sector's continued growth.

Over the five-day conference, delegates will deliberate on key priorities shaping the future of civil aviation, including aviation safety and air navigation, aviation security and facilitation, environmental sustainability, economic development, capacity building and regional co-operation.

Discussions will also focus on the responsible adoption of emerging technologies, digitalisation and innovation to strengthen regulatory capabilities, improve operational resilience and support the sustainable growth of air transport across the region.

## Sidec: Technology convention is now known as AiSEM@Selangor

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Selangor's flagship technology convention, formerly known as the Selangor Smart City & Digital Economy Convention (SDEC), has been rebranded as AiSEM@Selangor, the AI & Semiconductor Summit, reflecting the state's stronger focus on artificial intelligence (AI) and semiconductors.

Its organiser Selangor Information Technology and Digital Economy Corporation (Sidec) said the summit's 11th edition will be held from Oct 14-17 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre and Grand Hyatt Kuala Lumpur, as part of the Selangor International Business Summit 2026 (SIBS 2026).

The Advanced Semiconductor Academy of Malaysia (Asem) will be the co-organiser of the summit, Sidec said in a statement.

"As the digital economy matured,

AI and semiconductors became the bigger opportunity. AiSEM@Selangor carries that forward, spotlighting homegrown Malaysian chips powering robotics, autonomous systems, and the low-altitude and low-orbit economies," it said.

Sidec said the summit will feature more than 60 speakers, with ShunSin Technology Holdings Ltd chairman and Hon Hai Precision Industry Co Ltd (Foxconn) board member Chiang Shang Yi headlining the lineup.

They will be joined by FuriosaAI founder and CEO June Paik, Synopsys Taiwan global vice-president and chairman Robert Li, Amazon Web Services head of cloud solutions for semiconductor and high-tech Umar Shah and TCab Tech CEO Yon Wui Ng, it said.

It added that the summit will also feature more than 150 technology exhibitors, including global chip-makers Intel and Sandisk, homegrown players such as Oppstar, SkyeChip and Maistorage Technology, as well as

national agencies including Malaysian Investment Development Authority, Malaysian Research Accelerator for Technology and Innovation, and several Selangor local councils.

"For job seekers, the draw is the Malaysia Semiconductor Recruitment

Day, where more than 50 industry employers -- including Sandisk, Sophic MSC and Tektronix -- will meet directly with engineering and technical talent, from students to experienced professionals," it said.

The summit will open with the Triple Accelerator Programme Grand Final Demo Day at the Plenary Theatre, KLCC, on Oct 14, featuring 24 finalists comprising the top eight companies from each of Selangor's Deep-X, Retail-X and Token-X tracks.

Sidec said the programme has run 11 cohorts since its inception and drawn nearly 1,900 applications, and backed 380 companies that have collectively raised RM212 million in funding.

Sidec CEO Yong Kai Ping said the

summit would contribute to Malaysia's efforts to build a globally competitive AI and semiconductor ecosystem by bringing together talent, technology and investment.

"Selangor sees itself as one part of a national semiconductor story, and AiSEM -- designed by Malaysia, for Malaysia -- is our contribution to writing it, by putting talent, technology and investment in the same room, in the same week," he said.

Admission to the exhibition and Malaysia Semiconductor Recruitment Day is free, while conference passes are priced at RM399 for a two-day all-access pass or RM299 for a one-day pass.

The public can find relevant information about AiSEM@Selangor at <https://www.sidec.com.my/aisemselangor/>. – Bernama





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# Govt mulls 31% Bumiputera GDP contribution benchmark

➤ New, higher target by 2035 reflects shift in emphasis from simply increasing participation and ownership to ensuring businesses develop sufficient scale and capability: Akmal Nasrullah

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government is exploring a potential benchmark to raise the contribution of Bumiputera enterprises to Malaysia's gross domestic product (GDP) to 31% by 2035, more than double the existing 15% target under the Bumiputera Economic Transformation Plan (PuTERA35).

The proposed benchmark, discussed at the Bumiputera Wealth Creation and Corporate Control Forum here yesterday, would represent a significant increase from the current Bumiputera enterprise contribution of 8.1%.

Economy Minister Datuk Seri Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir said the higher benchmark reflects a shift in emphasis from simply increasing Bumiputera participation and ownership to ensuring businesses develop sufficient scale and capability to exert greater economic control.

"We have reached a stage where participation and ownership alone are no longer sufficient. Our focus now needs to shift towards stronger and more meaningful Bumiputera economic control," he said at the forum.

He said the 31% figure would serve as a benchmark for building larger and more competitive Bumiputera companies capable of gaining control of high-value sectors.

The 31% figure is currently being explored as a potential benchmark and has not been

formally adopted as a revised PuTERA35 target. Its feasibility will be assessed based on growth across 11 sectors, with wholesale and retail trade, halal and food, agriculture and agro-based industries, information technology, tourism, business services and logistics identified as seven strategic sectors.

The scale of the private sector is expected to be critical to achieving the higher contribution, with Akmal Nasrullah noting that the public sector accounts for only about 17% of the economy compared with about 78% for the private sector.

"The opportunity is actually larger than what the government, GLCs and GLICs can support," he said, adding that government assistance must ultimately help businesses compete beyond the government ecosystem.

He cautioned against creating companies that remain dependent on government contracts and support, saying assistance that does not lead to higher capabilities could leave businesses at the same level even after 10 years.

The government is therefore looking at whether procurement can be used more deliberately to build business capabilities, including technology, machinery and skilled manpower, rather than focusing solely on completing projects at the lowest cost.

Akmal Nasrullah said an emphasis on the lowest price could make it harder for companies to invest in technology and skilled workers. "If the procurement is only about the lowest price, then how do we expect companies to invest in technology and skilled manpower?"

He cautioned against imposing mandatory requirements on private-sector companies, saying this could produce unintended consequences for the economy.

Instead, Akmal Nasrullah said, the government needed to strengthen the continuity between government-supported programmes and opportunities in the private sector so that companies could graduate into broader markets.

Ekuini Nasional Bhd (Ekuinas) CEO Aliff Omar Mohamad Omar said the challenge was not a shortage of Bumiputera entrepreneurs, but the ability to scale businesses beyond the small and medium-sized enterprise stage.

"Malaysia does not lack Bumiputera entrepreneurs. The challenge is scaling SMEs into national and regional players."

He said while access to capital had become increasingly broad, leadership, governance, talent and organisational management remained important determinants of whether companies could scale.

Akmal Nasrullah said this was particularly important as the government sought to encourage more Bumiputera participation in high-growth, high-value industries.

He said Bumiputera players were beginning to gain traction in areas such as semiconductors and electrical and electronics, but the transition into more sophisticated industries required stronger technology and skills foundations.

"Listing is not the end game. It is a beginning. What matters is whether these companies can use the opportunity to raise capital, grow and achieve greater economic control."

Access to public capital should allow companies to continue expanding after listing, rather than treating an initial public offering as the final measure of success, he added.

The minister also said the government wanted to move away from assessing PuTERA35 primarily through programme implementation figures.

Internal government reporting currently puts PuTERA35 implementation at about 66%, but Akmal Nasrullah said the year-end assessment would examine whether the initiatives had produced tangible economic outcomes.

"We want to look at the actual achievements, not just the numbers."

He said the comprehensive assessment, expected at the end of the year or early next year, would also determine whether the existing targets remained achievable and what adjustments were needed for the remainder of the plan to 2035.

The forum was jointly organised by Teraju, Ekuinas and UDA Holdings and brought together government agencies, GLCs, GLICs, financial institutions, capital market players, property developers and private-sector representatives.

PuTERA35 comprises three pillars, 12 drivers and 132 initiatives, with wealth creation, equity ownership and greater participation by private companies, GLCs and GLICs among the areas targeted for accelerated implementation.



Akmal Nasrullah (right) during a dialogue session at the Bumiputera Wealth Creation and Corporate Ownership Forum in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. On the left is moderator Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar.

## August foreign inflows into M'sian govt bonds hit RM11b: Kenanga IB

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Foreign inflows into Malaysian government bonds totalled RM11.1 billion in August, according to Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB).

"Foreign investors turned net buyers of Malaysian government bonds, with RM11.1 billion of inflows in August and RM5.6 billion of that in the final week," it said in its Bond Market Weekly Outlook yesterday.

Kenanga IB said Malaysian Government Securities (MGS) and Government Investment Issues (GII) yields rose across the curve by between 1.3 basis points (bps) and 11.1 bps.

The 10-year MGS yield rose 11.1 bps to 3.985%, while the 10-year GII yield increased 10.1 bps to 3.953%, with the sell-off concentrated in the seven- to 10-year segment, it said.

"External rates led the move. Cautious remarks from US Federal Reserve chair Kevin Warsh at the Jackson Hole symposium tempered expectations for near-term Fed rate cuts, while escalating United States-Iran tensions lifted front-end US Treasury securities yields and oil prices," it said. — Bernama

## Minister proposes greater transparency in salary offers

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Economy Minister Datuk Seri Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir has raised greater transparency in salary offers as a potential way to strengthen workers' bargaining power.

Speaking at the Bumiputera Wealth Creation and Corporate Control Forum here yesterday, he said workers were often presented with salary offers without sufficient information to determine whether the remuneration was appropriate based on their qualifications and skills.

He added that some workers face a "take it or leave it" approach to salary offers, leaving them with limited bargaining power.

Akmal Nasrullah said the issue was particularly relevant to young people and job seekers entering the labour market, as workers were generally represented by unions but there was less clarity on how the voices of younger workers and those seeking employment were reflected in salary negotiations.

He questioned whether employers' salary offers were based on merit or other factors, saying such information was generally not shared because there was no clear mandate for employers to disclose it.

Akmal Nasrullah stressed that greater salary transparency was not about establishing an absolute salary level. "It is not about an absolute number. It is about openness and transparency in the salary offer."

He said he would bring the issue back to the Economy Ministry for consideration.

Akmal Nasrullah said wage-setting involved three parties, namely employers, the government and workers, with the government already having tools such as the minimum wage and Progressive Wage Policy.

However, raising the minimum wage alone did not necessarily resolve the broader issue of wage progression, particularly for workers with higher qualifications. "When the minimum wage goes up, does it mean the salary of someone with a diploma or degree also goes up?" Akmal Nasrullah said.

This, he added, raised the issue of wage compression, where increases at the bottom of the wage scale could narrow the gap with workers who had higher qualifications without corresponding increases in their salaries.

Akmal Nasrullah said wage reviews needed to take place periodically, while workers also needed access to industries offering stronger income prospects.

He pointed to high-growth, high-value industries such as electrical and electronics and semiconductors, while stressing the importance of strengthening science, technology, engineering and mathematics participation to prepare more Bumiputera talent for such sectors.

Akmal Nasrullah said reports received by him indicated that fresh semiconductor graduates could earn starting salaries of about RM5,000 to RM5,500 after training.

He also linked wage growth to productivity, saying workers should see better returns as productivity and economic value increase.

Malaysia's formal-sector employees earned a median monthly wage of RM3,027 in March 2026, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia. The bottom 10% earned RM1,700 or less, while the 90th percentile earned at least RM11,500.

The government is also implementing the Progressive Wage Policy to encourage wage increases alongside productivity improvements.

As at end-2025, 4,025 employers involving 51,363 employees had participated in the policy and met the conditions for salary increases. — by HAYATUN RAZAK





# Smart logistics modernises cross-border freight: FedEx

► Operators are integrating AI and remote monitoring technology across their ground networks

**PETALING JAYA:** Express logistics operators are integrating artificial intelligence (AI) and remote monitoring technology across their ground networks to boost cross-border freight efficiency ahead of the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) integration.

FedEx Malaysia managing director Woon Tien Long said that as trade volumes expand across the southern corridor, industry players are moving beyond traditional manual processes to digital platforms that support customers around the clock and secure cargo in transit.

He said digital innovation, particularly AI-driven customer operations, is essential to managing the increasing complexity of cross-border trade movements.

"For us, AI is about the ability to do multiple things at one time and the possibilities that it creates for our customers.

"Yes, productivity improves, and costs come down, but that is not the whole story," Woon told Bernama during the FedEx Johor-Singapore Cross-Border Media Tour at the FedEx South Pacific Regional Hub in Singapore.

"Historically, when you chat with us, there used to be a human behind it. But it is not practical to have someone staying up at two in the morning just to reply to a customer.

"When you build in technology to support your customers 24/7, the customer is able to self-serve and have that conversation," he added.

Woon said physical security and ground infrastructure are undergoing a parallel digital upgrade to safeguard freight moving along the

vital FedEx Asia Road Network, a 3,800-kilometre cross-border road corridor with over 100 weekly schedules connecting Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand.

He said the network's existing monitoring capability gives FedEx a head start as cross-border volumes grow under the JS-SEZ.

"We have the know-how, the technology and the infrastructure already set up.

"We have the ability to remotely monitor, and in the worst-case scenario of a highway hijack, we have the ability to remotely lock down that vehicle to protect the personnel, the driver, as well as the contents inside the truck.

"You cannot replace the experience that we have under FedEx when it comes to cross-border trucking.

"We have a view from the ground in each location and a macro view because we operate across multiple points," he added.

Woon said facilities along this corridor are already built for high-volume automated sorting, anchored by the FedEx South Pacific Regional Hub in Singapore, a 26,265-square-metre facility capable of sorting up to 12,000 packages per hour and the 2,676-square-metre FedEx Senai facility in Johor, which sorts up to 1,600 packages per hour using automated conveyor systems.

He said that to absorb seasonal demand surges during end-of-year peak periods, FedEx can dynamically scale up its cross-border routes into Singapore by up to 10% through flexible fleet deployment, ensuring uninterrupted trade connectivity across the corridor.

According to FedEx, alongside operational scaling, the integrator has committed to carbon-neutral global operations by 2040 and is transitioning 30% of its 140-vehicle fleet in Singapore to electric vehicles (EVs), with 43 EVs deployed across Malaysia.

Meanwhile, Woon said environmental stewardship remains integral to modern supply chains, noting that FedEx boxes are designed to be easy to recycle and that around 30% are made from recycled materials.

"The first step, long before everyone started,

was making sure the composite of our corrugated boxes made them easy to recycle.

"The next and more difficult step was injecting recycled material back into the boxes. That is a good example of trying to close the loop," Woon said.

He said plastics remain a challenge, with some materials such as aircraft-use sheeting subject to thickness requirements driven by compliance, while stretch wrap is collected and recycled and pallets are repaired for reuse where possible.

According to FedEx, to further eliminate border bottlenecks without compromising national security, logistics providers are advocating for the wider implementation of automated drive-through X-ray inspection tunnels at customs checkpoints.

FedEx Singapore managing director Eric Tan said such systems, showcased by Singapore Customs and the Immigration and Checkpoints Authority at their annual work plan seminar, allow heavy goods vehicles to be screened en route without manual offloading.

"The lorry drivers drive through what is almost like a tunnel, and the best part is that they do not need to disembark and open the tailgate to allow officers to look inside, which takes a lot of time.

"Honestly, it is quite forward-thinking and quite game-changing," Tan said.

Tan said that a second initiative, automated cargo permit clearance, is being shared with Malaysian counterparts, with both sides working towards collaboration that benefits traffic in both directions.

Additionally, Woon said the industry's push is for cargo to move as smoothly as passengers already do, while keeping enforcement controls intact.

"We are advocates for the cargo, in case people forget that cargo also needs to cross on time.

"What we want to push for is seamless trade for any legitimate business, and the controls that need to be in place, we are in full support of ensuring those are still there," Woon noted.

## LPNM records RM2.3 billion potential pineapple investments at Maha 2026

**SERDANG:** The Malaysian Pineapple Industry Board (LPNM) recorded potential investments worth more than RM2.3 billion through memoranda of understanding (MoUs) signed during the 10-day Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism Exhibition (Maha) 2026, which ended on Sunday.

LPNM director-general Mohd Khairuzamri M. Salleh told Bernama the figure represented more than 25% of the RM8 billion investment target set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security through Maha 2026.

He said the achievement was driven by a new industry development strategy focusing on downstream processing and high-value products in line with market demand.

"This includes an innovative natural sweetener made from pineapple extracts of the SG1 and MD2 varieties to replace sugar and stevia, specifically for the health market."

The product was developed through market-driven research involving LPNM, researchers and industry players from the early stages.

Under the 13th Malaysia Plan, LPNM will continue focusing on increasing the productivity and value of the pineapple industry, as export supplies remain limited despite the country's pineapple self-sufficiency ratio reaching 102%.

Mohd Khairuzamri said Malaysia produces more than 500,000 tonnes of pineapples annually from about 20,000 hectares of cultivated land, but limited land in the peninsula means technology and new varieties must be adopted to raise yields.

"We cannot increase production by expanding the cultivated area or opening up new areas because land in the peninsula is limited. Instead, we are introducing technology that allows us to achieve significantly higher production on the same amount of land.

"For example, the SG1 variety can be planted at a higher density and has a shorter cultivation period. It can produce up to 30 tonnes per acre, compared with about 20 to 25 tonnes for varieties such as MD2," he said.

He added that Malaysia would focus on premium-quality pineapples that offer higher returns for growers.

## Paydibs goes beyond payments with merchant financing

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Paydibs Sdn Bhd, a Malaysian fintech and digital payment provider, has launched its merchant financing proposition with Anchor Capital Sdn Bhd as its first financing partner.

Anchor Capital is a company licensed by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government.

The new facility extends Paydibs' role beyond payment acceptance by giving eligible merchants access to working capital through a fully digital experience.

Repayments are automatically deducted from weekly payment settlements and adjust according to the merchant's transaction performance, helping businesses better manage cash flow while continuing to operate and grow.

The launch marks Paydibs' first partnership with a financing provider and an important step in expanding the financial solutions available through its merchant ecosystem.

It brings the company's proposition, "Payment Inclusion. Beyond Transactions.", to life by supporting merchants beyond their everyday payment needs and across different stages of their business journey.

"Payments are where our relationship with merchants begins, not where it ends," said Paydibs CEO Tee Kean Kang (pic).

"Merchant financing is a natural extension of our mission to go beyond transactions. By

leveraging the transaction insights and relationships we have built with our merchants, we can help make access to working capital more relevant, convenient and seamless for eligible businesses."

Paydibs' broader ecosystem already includes solutions designed to help merchants operate, protect and grow their businesses.

These include the NEO all-in-one payment terminal for SME merchants and a partnership with Great Eastern General Insurance to provide complementary business protection.

The addition of merchant financing further strengthens Paydibs' ambition to become a more complete financial solutions partner for SMEs.

Access to working capital remains an important priority for many micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs).

SME Bank's 2H 2025 Sentiment Index found that 81% of respondents planned to obtain financing for working capital or business expansion.

However, access to financing can still involve lengthy processes and significant administrative requirements.



A survey by the Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) found that 61.1% of businesses cited complexity and lengthy processes as key difficulties in accessing government financing programmes.

For small and medium-sized businesses, timely access to working capital can support a range of needs – from preparing for peak seasons and fulfilling larger orders to purchasing equipment, hiring employees and managing day-to-day expenses.

Paydibs' merchant financing facility is designed to reduce some of this friction.

After maintaining at least 90 days of continuous digital transaction activity on the Paydibs platform, eligible merchants will receive a financing offer directly through their merchant portal, subject to final assessment and approval.

The offer is assessed using the merchant's transaction performance, KYB information and automated credit assessment, allowing financing to be better aligned with the merchant's business performance and repayment capacity.

Eligible merchants can review and accept the offer, digitally sign the financing agreement and,

subject to final approval and completion of the required documentation, receive the approved funds on the same day.

The entire journey is completed digitally through the Paydibs merchant portal.

The facility features a six-month, or 26-week, a percentage-based repayment structure linked directly to the merchant's transaction activity. Rather than making a fixed weekly instalment, merchants repay an agreed percentage of their weekly payment settlements.

As transaction volumes change, the repayment amount adjusts accordingly—higher during stronger trading periods and lower when sales slow.

"This is what it means to go beyond payments. We are leveraging the transaction relationships and insights built through our platform to make financial services more accessible and relevant to our merchants. Once a merchant has established a transaction track record, eligible financing offers can be made available through the same platform they already use to manage their payments," said Tee.

He added they see Paydibs evolving from a payment provider into a more complete fintech growth partner for merchants.

Tee said their focus is to support merchants throughout their business journey – from getting paid, to protecting their business, to accessing capital when they are ready to grow.





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## Kospi ends at highest since late July, Nikkei up 2%

**SEOUL:** South Korean shares rose more than 4% yesterday to notch their highest close since late July, as chipmakers rallied on optimism around strong demand for AI investments.

The benchmark Kospil closed up 308.18 points, or 4.61%, at 6,995.39, its highest closing level since July 23 and the biggest daily percentage rise since Aug 20.

Wall Street weakened on Friday, but the Philadelphia Semiconductor Index was a clear outperformer, gaining 3.4%.

South Korea's exports so far this year have already surpassed last year's annual record, as the economy rides high on booming global demand for AI chips.

Chipmaker Samsung Electronics rose 5.68% and peer SK Hynix gained 8.26%, leading the benchmark index higher.

Among other index heavyweights, battery maker LG Energy Solution climbed 1.12%, while Hyundai Motor and sister automaker Kia Corp were up 2.48% and up 1.50%, respectively.

Steelmaker Posco Holdings shed 0.45%, while drugmaker Samsung BioLogics rose 1.31%.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei share average closed more than 2% higher yesterday, led by chip and AI-linked stocks after gains in US semiconductor shares.

The Nikkei rose 2.12% to 66,399.84, its highest close since Aug 28. The broader Topix climbed 0.55% to 4,125.8.

"With us Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent seemingly curbing bond yields and stemming the fall of the yen, market volatility has fallen," said Mamoru Shimode, chief strategist at Resona Asset Management.

"That has made it easier for stock investors to shift to risk-on mode."

Chip-testing equipment maker Advantest and chip-making equipment maker Tokyo Electron rose more than 4% each. Technology investor SoftBank Group jumped 11.22%. Memory maker Kioxia rose 9.31%.

Wall Street fell on Friday as a robust jobs report raised the probability of the US Federal Reserve increasing rates this month, but the semiconductor index rose 3.4%.

Kokusai Electric jumped 7.64% after the Nikkei, the publisher of the 225-stock average, said on Friday it would add the chip equipment maker to the benchmark from October in a regular reshuffle.

Camera and audio equipment maker Sony Group slipped 2.7%.

Of the more than 1,500 stocks trading on the Tokyo Stock Exchange's prime market, 40% rose, 56% fell and 2% traded flat. — Reuters

# China insurer capital injections could boost stock investments

**BEIJING/SHANGHAI:** BEIJING'S plan to inject capital into big state-owned insurers is expected to ease capital constraints and solvency pressures that have held back insurers from investing more long-term funds into the stock market, analysts said.

Five state-owned insurers and three banks said on Sunday they would raise up to a combined 360 billion yuan (RM217 billion) through capital injections from the Ministry of Finance and other shareholders.

The finance ministry said it would issue 300 billion yuan in special bonds to fund the injections, according to state-run Xinhua News Agency.

It would mark the first time China has used special bonds to support insurers, extending a financing tool previously reserved for state-owned banks.

The recapitalisation could help bolster state insurers that were directed to support the stock market with medium- and long-term funds, while positioning them to help regulators manage smaller, higher-risk insurance companies.

"The state-led injection will

➤ First use of special bonds to recapitalise insurance companies, extending tool used for banks

make it easier for insurers to buy equities and meet solvency requirements," said Gary Ng, senior economist for Asia-Pacific at Natixis, noting Beijing had asked them to invest 30% of new premiums into stocks from the beginning of last year.

The share of assets invested in equities was only 21% at the end of 2025 based on five major listed mainland insurers, he said.

Zhongtai Securities analysts said in a note that in the short term, the fresh capital would ease pressure on solvency ratios, particularly core solvency, that were negatively affected by a decline in government bond yields used to value liabilities.

Over the medium term, it removes a constraint on insurers boosting long-term equity investments, and longer term it

strengthens the capital base of state-owned insurers, they said.

The broader CSI300 blue-chip index was up 0.6% yesterday, though the insurance sector fell 2.5% and the banking sector fell 1.5% amid concerns about dilution from the capital injections.

The state funds for insurers arrived sooner than anticipated. The finance ministry said in March it would issue special bonds to recapitalise banks, and many in the market had expected capital support for insurance groups would not materialise until 2027.

Five state insurers will receive a combined 70 billion yuan in capital from the ministry.

China Life Insurance (Group) Co said it will receive 35 billion yuan and China Taiping Insurance Group 7 billion yuan, while PICC Group plans to raise up to 15 billion yuan

through a private A-share placement to the finance ministry.

The 60 billion yuan going to the four commercial insurance groups among the five — excluding policy insurer China Export & Credit Insurance Corp — is expected to support roughly 100 billion yuan of additional equity exposure, said Cheng Tan, founder of Beijing-based consultancy GMF Research.

"The recapitalisation could be seen as a roundabout way of aiding the equity market," said Christopher Beddor, deputy China research director at Gavekal Dragonomics, noting that equities are a high-risk asset class, and at some level the companies would require state support to continue to increase their equity investments.

The injections mirror a parallel policy push in the banking system, where officials are leaning on larger banks to absorb smaller, higher-risk peers to consolidate the industry, Beddor said.

The scale of the state insurers' recapitalisation is significantly smaller than the 200 billion yuan the market had expected earlier, Citi analysts said in a report. — Reuters



**TARIFFS KICK IN ...** A truck crosses into the United States on the Gordie Howe International Bridge, connecting Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan, on Sunday. Canada announced on Aug 25 counter-tariffs on US goods ranging between 15% and 50%, intensifying the trade war between the historically close allies. Ottawa's retaliation will take effect today, a time frame earlier outlined by Prime Minister Mark Carney after US President Donald Trump's 50% duties came into place Aug 22 — **AFP/PIIC**

## TotalEnergies to reduce stake in Papua LNG JV

**GDANSK:** TotalEnergies will sell a 9.1% stake in the Papua LNG joint venture to its partners and hand the project's operatorship to ExxonMobil, the French energy major said yesterday.

The company, which co-owns the project with Exxon, Santos, Kumul Petroleum/MRDC and Eneos Xplora, said it would sell shares to its partners in proportion to their existing interests, while retaining a 20% stake. It did not provide a sale price.

TotalEnergies also said it was nearing a final investment decision on the liquefied natural gas facilities, with contractual and commercial hurdles having now been cleared. CEO Patrick Pouyanné had said in July he was targeting a final decision by November.

Papua LNG is part of TotalEnergies' portfolio of projects to grow lower-cost LNG supplies, producing 5.6 million metric tons per year (Mtpa) from the Elk and Antelope fields in Papua New Guinea's Gulf Province, mainly for Asian buyers.

Exxon, which already runs the neighbouring PNG LNG plant, will take over as the operator of the project. TotalEnergies' offtake share, which gives it access to 1.5 Mtpa of LNG for its portfolio, remains unchanged.

TotalEnergies has completed the tendering process for engineering, procurement and construction work for the project, it said, with contracts now pending its partners' approval. — Reuters

## Ailing Australian builder Bathla gets short-term funding, 200 staff 'stood down'

**SYDNEY:** Administrators for troubled Australian home builder Bathla Group secured two weeks of funding yesterday but "stood down" more than 200 staff in a bid to avert liquidation.

Bathla, one of the country's biggest affordable housing developers operating in Sydney's western suburbs, entered administration last month owing more than A\$3 billion (RM8.75 billion) to scores of private lenders, leaving thousands of homes under construction in limbo.

Its problems have shone a spotlight on the risks in Australia's fast-growing A\$200 billion private credit sector and raised questions around whether the government can meet its ambitious housing construction targets.

Administrators Teneo Australia said short-term funding arrangements had been agreed with five lenders, allowing operations to continue for another two weeks. The funding amount and the participating lenders were not disclosed.

"Our immediate priority has been to secure sufficient short-term funding to maintain a minimum viable operating structure," administrator Stephen Longley said in a statement.

Construction on projects associated with the lenders providing the funding would continue, while other projects would be suspended. Teneo said 213 staff would be "stood down" as a result. During a stand-down an employee stays employed but the employer is not required to pay the employee.

"Significant work remains to secure the funding required to progress and ultimately complete all projects currently under construction," the statement added.

Australia's corporate regulator has described Bathla's crisis as the "first real test" of the local private credit market, which is heavily exposed to property construction and development.

Bathla, founded in 1997, said on its website it has 22,000 apartments and 3,500 homes under development. — Reuters



## S. Korea, US agree on US\$22b gas plant investment in Texas: Media

**SEOUL:** South Korea and the United States have agreed on the size of Seoul's planned investment in a gas project in Texas at around US\$22.3 billion (RM90.3 billion), Korean media outlet *Edaily* reported yesterday, citing unidentified officials and politicians.

The project, which would be Seoul's first US investment under last year's trade agreement, aims to build a 6.3-gigawatt gas plant in Encinal, Texas, to meet rising power demand for AI data centres, the reports said.

The investment would be part of the trade deal signed by the two allies last year, under which Seoul pledged US\$350 billion worth of US investments in exchange for favourable US tariffs on imports of South Korean goods.

The reports did not say whether Seoul would shoulder the whole cost of the Texas project.

Seoul is also considering other potential projects in the United States, including building a large-scale nuclear power plant or a liquefied natural gas project in Alaska, the reports said.

South Korea's Industry Ministry said reports on the Texas gas project were inaccurate and that consultations between Seoul and Washington were continuing.

The South Korean government would make an announcement after completing negotiations with the US and taking into account procedures such as parliamentary approval, the ministry added. – Reuters

## Lloyds data: UK house prices fall for first time since November 2023

**LONDON:** British house prices recorded their first annual fall in nearly three years in August as some buyers have held back on purchases due to higher borrowing costs following the US-Iran war, monthly figures measured by Lloyds showed yesterday.

Lloyds house price data – previously released under its Halifax brand – showed a 0.4% annual drop in August, the first such decline since November 2023, compared with economists' median expectation in a Reuters poll for a 0.2% rise.

In August, prices fell 0.2% versus expectations for a 0.1% rise, while July's initial reading of 0.1% growth was revised down to show a 0.1% fall.

"The housing market has faced a more difficult backdrop in recent months, with the impact of global events on inflation and borrowing costs creating greater economic uncertainty," said Andrew Asaam, mortgages director at Lloyds.

"What we're not seeing is a rush of homeowners cutting prices. But more are choosing to sit tight, with sellers reluctant to accept offers they feel are too low while some buyers are waiting to see how conditions develop," he added.

By contrast, figures last week from rival mortgage lender Nationwide Building Society showed 1.6% annual growth in house prices in August and a 0.2% rise on the month.

The most recent official data on house prices, from the Office for National Statistics, showed that prices had risen 2% in the 12 months to June, down from 3% growth in the year to May. – Reuters

# ECB set to increase interest rates as Iran war flares anew

► European Central Bank in June delivered its first hike since 2023 but then hit pause at its last meeting in July

**FRANKFURT:** The European Central Bank (ECB) is expected to raise interest rates again this week as renewed fighting in the Middle East pushes up energy costs and risks further stoking inflation.

Some of the heaviest clashes in weeks in the US-Iran war erupted in recent days, sending oil prices soaring and dimming hopes that energy flows through the Strait of

Hormuz will return to normal anytime soon.

Inflation in the 21-nation eurozone, which is heavily dependent on energy imports, hit a three-year high of 3.3% in August, substantially above the ECB's 2% target.

And with fears growing prices will spiral even higher, the central bank is set to hike its benchmark rate for the second time this year when it meets on Thursday.

"The ECB governing council looks certain to raise its deposit rate from 2.25% to 2.5%," said Andrew Kenningham, chief Europe economist at Capital Economics.

The ECB in June delivered its first hike since 2023 to tame surging prices, but then hit pause at its last meeting in July to see how the conflict would develop.

But with Tehran and Washington now seemingly at an impasse, Isabel Schnabel and Joachim Nagel – both members of the ECB's rate-setting governing council – have signalled in recent days policymakers will resume increasing rates.

The eurozone economy has also proved resilient, growing faster than expected in the second quarter, leaving policymakers with some room to lift borrowing costs without inflicting major damage.

The ECB will be armed with fresh growth and inflation forecasts for the next few years to guide its decision, although analysts don't expect major changes to the projections.

Despite rising inflation, some economists nevertheless believe a rate hike is not the right decision.

"We consider another hike a mistake because there is almost no evidence of knock-on effects," Felix Schmidt, senior economist at Berenberg bank, told AFP.

"You can't tackle a supply shock with tighter monetary policy."

The surge in prices has been almost exclusively driven by energy, and there has been little sign of inflation seeping more broadly into other areas of the economy.

While higher borrowing costs typically help tackle inflation by depressing demand in an economy, observers argue it won't do much to blunt the impacts of the current oil supply shock.

For Schmidt, the ECB is simply "very worried about being behind the curve because of the experiences of 2021-2022".

At that time, the central bank faced criticism for moving too slowly as eurozone inflation surged on the back of post-Covid pandemic supply chain woes and then the energy shock from Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

However, most analysts expect the ECB to pause its increases after this week's meeting.

ECB president Christine Lagarde is, as usual, expected to give little away at her press conference after the rate call and insist that future decisions will be based on incoming data.

ECB council member Nagel, also the head of the German central bank, echoed this cautious stance, saying this week he was "reluctant" to give guidance on future decisions.

"Oil and gas prices keep going up and down. Financial markets are highly volatile. There are many uncertainties," he told France's *Le Monde* newspaper.

"It is an uncomfortable situation – also from a monetary policy perspective. But our meeting-by-meeting approach has served us well in the past and will certainly do so in the future." – AFP



People buy clothes at a fashion store at the Gran Via of Madrid, Spain, on Sunday. Despite rising inflation, some economists nevertheless believe a rate hike is not the right decision. – REUTERSPICT

## UAE building alternative trade, energy routes after Iranian attacks, says presidential adviser

**DUBAI:** The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is building alternative routes for its energy exports and trade to ensure they are not "held hostage" by the ongoing war with Iran, UAE presidential adviser Anwar Gargash said yesterday.

The conflict has significantly impacted the oil-rich Gulf Arab states, including the UAE as Tehran fired missiles at the country and attacked its oil tankers in the Strait of Hormuz.

"Our energy exports will not be held hostage, nor will our trade and economic activity," Gargash told the Hili Forum in Abu Dhabi.

The UAE has been expanding port capacity along its eastern coast, as well as pipelines, railways and trade routes for alternative corridors,

he said.

Gargash added that while relations with Iran could be restored, rebuilding trust with its neighbours after the attacks may take decades.

"A functional relationship with Iran can and must be restored, but rebuilding trust is another matter," Gargash said.

The UAE, a critical economic lifeline for Iran, had suspended all financial and economic transactions with the Islamic Republic in August, citing military escalation by Tehran and missile threats.

Gargash also criticised the Gulf Arab states for their response to the Iranian attacks, saying their collective action fell short.

"For many years we broadly agreed on the nature of the

challenge posed by Iran," he said.

"The problem was therefore not a lack of understanding. Where we fell short in confronting this historic challenge was translating this shared understanding into sufficiently united and strategic response."

Oil prices were near six-week highs yesterday as tit-for-tat strikes between the US and Iran on vessels sailing in the Strait of Hormuz and other areas kept crude oil flows in the Middle East low.

Brent crude rose around 8% last week, while West Texas Intermediate gained nearly 10% after the US and Iran resumed attacks.

US forces struck three Iranian oil tankers on Saturday, the US Central Command said, including one off

the coast of Kharg Island, near Iran's key oil export hub.

The navy of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps said on Saturday it targeted three oil tankers that were travelling through unauthorized routes in the Strait of Hormuz as well as three additional US vessels in other areas.

The Saturday attacks represented a "major escalation," said Marisks, a maritime intelligence firm.

"Commercial tankers are now being deliberately used as instruments of reciprocal economic pressure, substantially weakening the previous distinction between military confrontation and commercial shipping," it added. – Reuters





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## India's central bank withdraws over six trillion rupees after record liquidity

**MUMBAI:** The Indian central bank absorbed more than six trillion rupees (RM257 billion) through cash withdrawal operations yesterday, a day after banking liquidity surged to a record high.

The Reserve Bank of India received offers worth 3.53 trillion rupees at an overnight auction, right after banks parked 2.59 trillion rupees through a 30-day auction.

The RBI had aimed to withdraw seven trillion rupees through the 30-day operation, which saw weak participation due to technical glitches, five traders said.

However, a person familiar with the matter said there were no glitches and that all bids went through the RBI's e-Kuber system, which is used for such auctions. The person requested anonymity as they are not authorised to speak to media.

The RBI did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Large liquidity surpluses, if sustained, risk raising inflation and boosting financial assets.

The RBI last month hinted that rate hikes could be ahead as inflation and growth firm up.

"Even though the response was not up to the mark, we could see another long duration reverse repo later in the week," a treasury official said.

India's banking system liquidity surplus hit 11.6 trillion rupees on September 6, amounting to nearly 4% of the banking system deposits.

The spike comes after India received a steeper-than-expected US\$136 billion under special one-off schemes aimed at boosting India's external balances.

The RBI's total liquidity withdrawals have topped 8.5 trillion rupees, and these funds will come back to the system as the operations mature.

IDFC First Bank expects the central bank to use a combination of instruments given the level of excess liquidity that needs to be drained.

"The preferred option would be a combination of MSS (market stabilisation scheme bonds) and sell-buy swaps.

"These two tools would be the least disruptive but are also associated with their own challenges," Gaura Sen Gupta, chief economist at IDFC First Bank said.

The RBI has been conducting overnight to 15-day reverse repos.

Longer-tenor auctions see less interest as banks are reluctant to park funds for extended periods. — Reuters

# AI data centres are less thirsty now, say tech giants

**NEW YORK:** Data centres are running into a wall of public anger in the United States over their thirst for water and power.

The tech giants spending billions of dollars on them say the water part, at least, is solvable.

Data centres are the warehouses full of computer servers that run the internet and increasingly artificial intelligence.

The computers get hot, and keeping them cool takes water.

American chip giant Nvidia said in a June report that it can eliminate water consumption almost entirely at some facilities when deploying DSX, its newest system for designing and managing AI data centres.

It is a bold claim, and one the industry is under mounting pressure to make good on.

In 2025, data centers consumed 222 billion litres of water worldwide for cooling, according to consultancy Rystad Energy.

Without adaptive measures, the figure could nearly triple to 644 billion litres by 2030, Rystad estimates. Steps to limit the growth could keep it under double.

Nvidia's new method uses a closed-loop cooling system in

➤ Nvidia says it can eliminate water consumption almost entirely at some facilities

which liquid flows directly through the servers, as close as possible to the chips, whose temperature can rise above 80°C.

The problem is that "there's a pretty direct trade-off between how much water is used and how much energy is used" for temperature control, said Andy Masley, an independent researcher who covers AI and data centres.

Cutting back on water use usually means more power as the liquid in those sealed pipes still has to be cooled down somehow, usually by blowing air over it — and that takes electricity.

Nvidia gets around some of this by letting the liquid enter the servers warmer than usual, at 45°C.

Most other closed-loop systems ran at about 32°C in 2024, according to the Uptime Institute, which certifies data centers.

By starting with warmer water, Nvidia does not need to pump in cooled air year-round.

"Simple fans circulating the air" are often enough, though sometimes a mix of methods is needed, said Josh Parker, Nvidia's head of sustainability.

At sites in extreme climates, or during a heat wave, chill airflow or water evaporation is still necessary.

Microsoft, Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Meta told AFP that they also use closed-loop systems, which they said involve no net water loss.

The two cloud computing giants, which have been expanding their already huge data center footprints, used more water overall between 2022 and 2025, but their water use efficiency improved by 25 per cent at Microsoft and 37 per cent at AWS, according to their most recent sustainability reports.

There is no industry-wide consistency, however, in how companies report data on so-called environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts.

Elon Musk's SpaceX, now a major player in data centres after it

acquired his artificial intelligence company xAI, has never published an ESG report.

In June, ratings agency MSCI gave SpaceX its lowest ESG score.

"Because water is generally much cheaper than electricity," companies have less incentive to cut water use on cost grounds alone, said Shaolei Ren, an engineering professor at the University of California, Riverside.

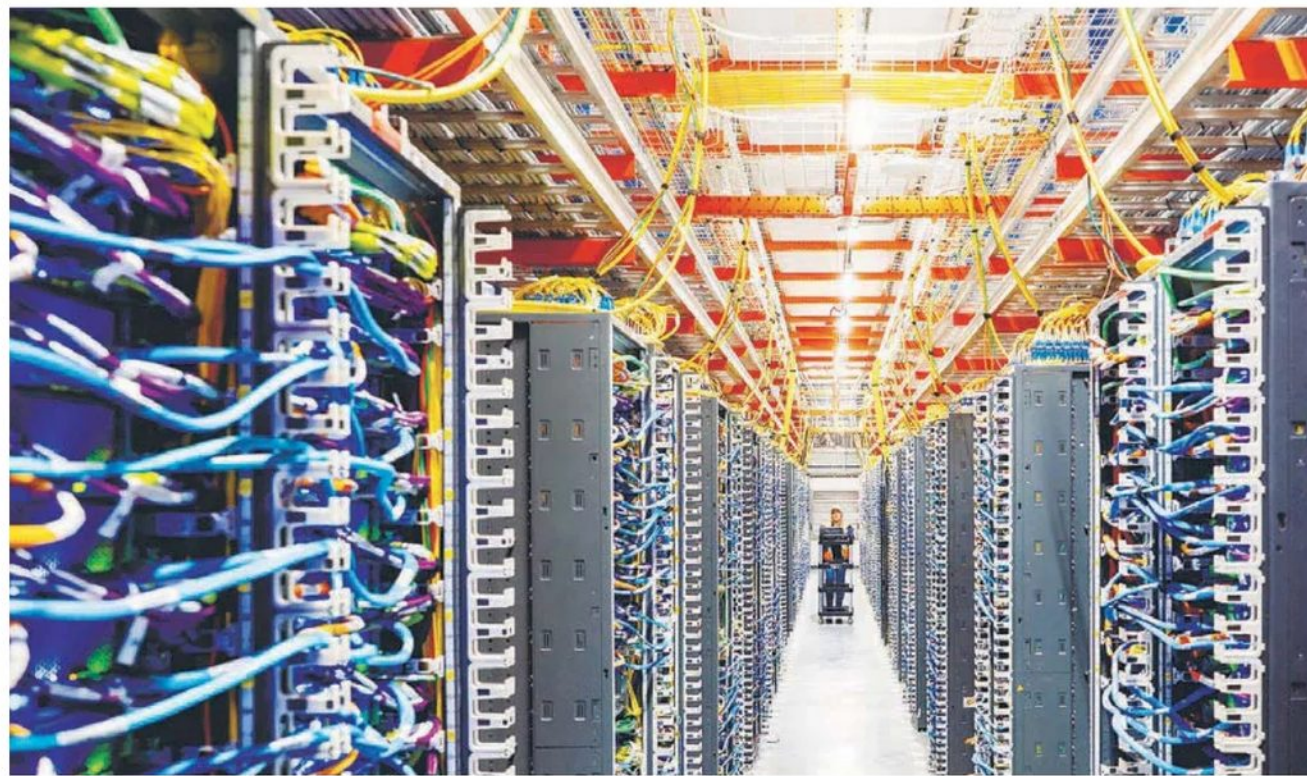
"There are incentives," Ren said, but they have more to do with public relations amid the growing backlash to data centres across the US.

Another obstacle is that upgrading an older data centre to newer, less thirsty technology is expensive. That may matter less than it sounds.

Older data centres are smaller and less powerful than the enormous new ones being built now, so they need less cooling in the first place, said Minh K. Le, who leads data centre and hydrogen research at Rystad.

And the water a data centre uses directly is only part of the story.

Water is used to generate the electricity that powers the data centre, and to manufacture its chips and servers. — AFP



A technician works at an Amazon Web Services AI data centre in New Carlisle, Indiana. — REUTERS/SPIC

## Huawei launches new foldable smartphone

**BEIJING:** Huawei launched a new version of its flagship foldable smartphone yesterday as it seeks to defend its lead in the Chinese market for premium handsets against Apple and Xiaomi, both of which are also unveiling new products.

The new Mate XT2 folds out twice to open into a tablet-sized screen and features Huawei's new Kirin 9050 Pro chip.

Huawei says the chip's design allows it to deliver more computing power while using less electricity, helping the company overcome US restrictions on access to advanced technology.

Xiaomi launches a rival foldable phone later yesterday, while Apple unveils its latest iPhone series tomorrow, with expectations high that it too will be unveiling a foldable phone.

The Mate XT2 features a redesigned folding mechanism, improved water resistance as well as an optional screen that prevents people nearby from seeing what is displayed.

It also has upgraded cameras and delivers 42% better overall performance than its predecessor, based on company tests.

Huawei leads the smartphone market in China with a 22.6% share in the second quarter. — Reuters

## South Korea pension fund suspends FX hedging

**SEOUL:** South Korea's National Pension Service (NPS) has suspended foreign exchange hedging operations, a market source told Reuters yesterday, as the won strengthened to a near two-year high.

The NPS, the world's third-largest public pension fund and a major player in domestic financial markets, had been conducting currency hedging operations flexibly this year after raising its hedging limit to help policymakers curb weakness in the won.

The pension fund's hedging operations effectively lift dollar supply

in the onshore currency market.

"FX hedging by the NPS has been suspended. It seems there is dollar buying demand today," said the source, declining to be identified due to the sensitivity of the matter.

Another market source said the pension fund's dollar buying could be conducted via both regular and "market average rate" trading.

The NPS declined to comment on foreign exchange policies.

The move came as a sharp rebound in the won has raised worries about one-sided market volatility.

Foreign exchange authorities

recently bought about US\$20 billion in dollars that chipmaker SK Hynix sold after its US share listing.

"The NPS conducted extensive strategic hedging in the first half and dollar-won exchange rates have fallen greatly, so if it suspends hedging and gradually unwinds its hedging from the first half, that would generate a huge amount (of dollar buying) capping the bottom end of exchange rates," said Lee Min-hyeok, a foreign exchange analyst at Kookmin Bank.

"Given large trade surpluses, the direction (of dollar-won rates) will still be downwards in the long run, but the

pace will become slower," Lee said.

Earlier yesterday, the won strengthened as much as 1.15% to 1,334.7 per dollar to hit its strongest level since October 4, 2024, before cutting gains to 1,341.5 as of 0635 GMT (2.35pm in Malaysia).

The currency has strengthened 16% against the dollar so far this quarter, reversing its course after weakening for four straight quarters to 17-year lows.

The NPS held 1,865.6 trillion won (RM5.6 trillion) of assets at the end of June, with overseas assets accounting for 54% of the total. — Reuters



## MARKET ROUND-UP: SEPT 7

7-Sept-2026

Bursa Malaysia

# Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million): Participation

Retail +85.40 31.08%

Local Institution -145.19 40.01%

Foreign Institution +59.79 28.91%

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research

Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to [www.bursamalaysia.com](http://www.bursamalaysia.com).

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- Quick updates on market news, statistics & information
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SUNBIZ presents a summary of the day's trading activity on Bursa Malaysia and other markets in an easy to digest format.

Sources: Bursa Malaysia, Bernama, [shareinvestor.com](http://shareinvestor.com) and websites

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| Bursa Indices       |           |                   |
|---------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| INDEX               | CHANGE    |                   |
| FBMEMAS             | 12,660.49 | +35.04            |
| FBMKLCI             | 1,714.79  | +6.69             |
| CONSUMER PRODUCTS   | 482.11    | -1.20             |
| INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS | 186.96    | -0.00             |
| CONSTRUCTION        | 309.12    | -1.74             |
| FINANCIAL SERVICES  | 20,188.74 | +27.25            |
| ENERGY              | 809.21    | +3.59             |
| TELECOMMUNICATIONS  | 400.87    | -2.55             |
| HEALTH CARE         | 1,497.75  | +10.37            |
| TRANSPORTATION      | 1,022.86  | -6.99             |
| PROPERTY            | 1,082.35  | +1.39             |
| PLANTATION          | 9,388.68  | +50.76            |
| FBMSHA              | 12,410.53 | +49.83            |
| FBMACE              | 5,258.31  | +40.84            |
| TECHNOLOGY          | 72.62     | +0.17             |
| TURNOVER: 3.60 bil  |           | VALUE: RM2.45 bil |

## Bursa rises on buying interest in banking and telco stocks

BURSA Malaysia traded higher yesterday, supported by renewed buying interest in selected banking and telecommunications heavyweights.

At 5pm, the FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) rose 6.69 points, or 0.39 per cent, to 1,714.79, compared with Friday's close of 1,708.10.

The benchmark index opened 1.60 points higher at 1,709.70 and fluctuated between 1,708.26 and 1,715.29 throughout the trading session.

The broader market, however, was negative with losers outpacing gainers 611 to 488, while 580 counters were unchanged, 1,109 untraded and 25 suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said major regional indices ended mixed after a weaker lead from Wall Street last Friday, although technology stocks remained resilient as renewed artificial intelligence optimism spurred demand for chipmakers.

Meanwhile, he said sentiment in China received some boost after Beijing announced a 360 billion yuan capital injection into state-owned banks and insurers, including 300 billion yuan to be funded through special Treasury bonds.

This came as the republic's policymakers stepped up efforts to strengthen financial institutions and sustain credit growth.

"As for the local bourse, we remain cautious despite today's positive close, given elevated crude oil prices and the rise in the United States 10-year Treasury yield," he told Bernama.

Thong also said higher energy prices could keep global inflationary pressures elevated, while rising bond yields may continue to weigh on risk appetite as investors reassess the outlook for US interest rates.

| Top 20 Actives |              |          |         |              |
|----------------|--------------|----------|---------|--------------|
| STOCKS         | CLOSING (RM) | +/- (RM) | +/- (%) | VOLUME ('00) |
| ZETRIX         | 0.270        | +0.015   | +5.88   | 5,795,840    |
| HHRG           | 0.205        | +0.060   | +41.38  | 1,848,140    |
| INGENIEU       | 0.035        | -0.010   | -22.22  | 1,196,678    |
| KEYASIC        | 0.070        | +0.005   | +7.69   | 600,541      |
| ZETRIX-CBK     | 0.005        | -        | -       | 507,001      |
| CAPITALA       | 0.290        | -0.020   | -6.45   | 375,423      |
| NIHSIN         | 0.295        | +0.015   | +5.36   | 369,902      |
| HSI-CWSO       | 0.160        | -0.050   | -23.81  | 353,968      |
| JAKS           | 0.125        | +0.015   | +13.64  | 342,385      |
| ZETRIX-CBQ     | 0.005        | -        | -       | 331,003      |
| AAGB           | 0.680        | -0.025   | -3.55   | 313,235      |
| HSI-CWS6       | 0.120        | -0.050   | -29.41  | 285,696      |
| XPB            | 0.220        | +0.015   | +7.32   | 280,656      |
| MAG            | 0.150        | -0.005   | -3.23   | 280,572      |
| KRONO          | 0.155        | +0.010   | +6.90   | 267,018      |
| CUSCAPI        | 0.045        | -        | -       | 265,972      |
| M&G            | 0.305        | +0.005   | +1.67   | 260,277      |
| NOTION         | 0.690        | +0.005   | +0.73   | 259,578      |
| SALUTE         | 0.150        | -0.005   | -3.23   | 244,211      |
| NATGATE        | 1.740        | -0.030   | -1.70   | 242,513      |



| Top 20 Gainers (By RM) |              |          |              |
|------------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| STOCKS                 | CLOSING (RM) | +/- (RM) | VOLUME ('00) |
| PETGAS                 | 17.700       | +0.440   | 4,072        |
| MPI                    | 39.820       | +0.420   | 1,559        |
| KLK                    | 22.500       | +0.240   | 5,099        |
| TENAGA                 | 13.840       | +0.220   | 62,634       |
| NIKKEI-C10             | 0.815        | +0.200   | 108          |
| UMSINT                 | 8.240        | +0.140   | 480          |
| UTDPLT                 | 32.200       | +0.140   | 7,731        |
| SLVEST                 | 3.300        | +0.130   | 53,886       |
| PEKAT                  | 2.010        | +0.110   | 32,748       |
| CEPCO                  | 4.000        | +0.100   | 30           |
| TM                     | 7.900        | +0.100   | 28,451       |
| UMCCA                  | 6.050        | +0.100   | 54           |
| AMBEST                 | 1.430        | +0.090   | 31,558       |
| NIKKEI-C18             | 0.685        | +0.085   | 319          |
| MI                     | 5.780        | +0.080   | 9,513        |
| UWC                    | 6.400        | +0.080   | 16,074       |
| SERNKOU                | 0.850        | +0.075   | 2,774        |
| SAM                    | 4.340        | +0.070   | 7,598        |
| SWKPLNT                | 4.840        | +0.070   | 2,915        |
| UNISEM                 | 4.230        | +0.070   | 6,200        |

| Top 20 Gainers (By %) |              |         |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| STOCKS                | CLOSING (RM) | +/- (%) | VOLUME ('00) |
| AAGB-C43              | 0.010        | +100.00 | 13,205       |
| DNONCE-WB             | 0.010        | +100.00 | 2,501        |
| RHBBANKC74            | 0.010        | +100.00 | 1            |
| SPSETIA-C1K           | 0.030        | +100.00 | 1,541        |
| HLT                   | 0.025        | +66.67  | 1,326        |
| AHB-WC                | 0.015        | +50.00  | 1,117        |
| GUH-WA                | 0.030        | +50.00  | 345          |
| UEMS-C2G              | 0.015        | +50.00  | 1            |
| YTLPOWER-C2G          | 0.220        | +46.67  | 7,972        |
| HHRG                  | 0.205        | +41.38  | 1,848,140    |
| SLVEST-C2             | 0.140        | +40.00  | 2,398        |
| PCHEM-C2C             | 0.135        | +35.00  | 348          |
| KPJ-C41               | 0.020        | +33.33  | 16,945       |
| SLVEST-CZ             | 0.040        | +33.33  | 21,453       |
| NIKKEI-C10            | 0.815        | +32.52  | 108          |
| HHRG-WB               | 0.150        | +30.44  | 196,217      |
| YTL-C3E               | 0.195        | +30.00  | 8,024        |
| AP                    | 0.110        | +29.41  | 80,229       |
| MNHLDG-CE             | 0.190        | +26.67  | 19,106       |
| BJFOOD-WB             | 0.025        | +25.00  | 55           |

| World Stocks/Commodities          |           |              |                  |
|-----------------------------------|-----------|--------------|------------------|
| INDEX                             | CLOSING   | DAILY CHANGE | DAILY CHANGE (%) |
| DJIA (US)                         | 53,414.25 | -271.86      | -0.51            |
| S&P 500 (US)                      | 7,718.60  | -29.11       | -0.38            |
| NASDAQ (US)                       | 26,506.99 | -77.07       | -0.29            |
| NYSE (US)                         | 24,639.25 | -80.90       | -0.33            |
| EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)               | 6,392.93  | +10.34       | +0.16            |
| FTSE 100 (UK)                     | 10,831.09 | -0.43        | -0.00            |
| DAX (GER)                         | 26,046.40 | +43.08       | +0.17            |
| NIKKEI 225 (JPN)                  | 66,399.84 | +1,378.90    | +2.12            |
| TOPIX (JPN)                       | 4,125.80  | +22.57       | +0.55            |
| HANG SENG INDEX (HK)              | 25,413.12 | -237.75      | -0.93            |
| CSI 300 (CHN)                     | 4,575.02  | +26.97       | +0.59            |
| MSCI ASIA PACIFIC                 | 279.26    | +2.41        | +0.87%           |
| SH SE COM (CHN)                   | 3,932.70  | +2.58        | +0.07            |
| KOSPI INDEX (SK)                  | 6,995.39  | +308.18      | +4.61            |
| SENSEX INDEX (IND)                | 76,584.03 | +13.68       | +0.02            |
| ASX 200 (AUS)                     | 9,020.09  | +41.68       | +0.46            |
| ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)         | 9,198.29  | +37.96       | +0.41            |
| FBM KLCI                          | 1,714.79  | +6.69        | +0.39            |
| STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)      | 5,792.28  | -9.68        | -0.17            |
| WTI (US\$/BBL)                    | 91.69     | +0.21        | +0.23            |
| BRENT (US\$/BBL)                  | 96.87     | +0.59        | +0.61            |
| GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)          | 4,451.60  | -25.00       | -0.56            |
| SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)        | 66.36     | -0.39        | -0.58            |
| PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)              | 1,750.33  | +23.84       | +1.38            |
| COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)     | 659.10    | -11.80       | -1.76            |
| COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)        | 14,076.00 | -27.50       | -0.19            |
| CORN (US CENTS/BU.)               | 536.75    | -4.00        | -0.74            |
| WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)              | 658.25    | +7.75        | +1.19            |
| SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.) | 67.88     | +0.51        | +0.76            |
| COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)             | 5,895.00  | +12.00       | +0.20            |
| RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)     | 240.90    | +7.50        | +3.21            |

As at 6pm, Sept 7.

| Top 20 Losers (By RM) |              |          |              |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------|--------------|
| STOCKS                | CLOSING (RM) | +/- (RM) | VOLUME ('00) |
| NESTLE                | 93.900       | -0.940   | 241          |
| CARLSBG               | 12.760       | -0.260   | 7,396        |
| HLIND                 | 17.400       | -0.220   | 765          |
| ALLIANZ               | 21.380       | -0.200   | 45           |
| HLFG                  | 18.820       | -0.180   | 715          |
| PETDAG                | 19.980       | -0.180   | 1,906        |
| NIKKEI-CZ             | 0.095        | -0.165   | 120          |
| F&N                   | 24.600       | -0.160   | 228          |
| HEIM                  | 14.680       | -0.160   | 5,790        |
| KGB                   | 8.550        | -0.140   | 24,839       |
| HSI-CWSV              | 0.015        | -0.135   | 660          |
| SUNCON                | 7.830        | -0.120   | 11,758       |
| VITROX                | 9.040        | -0.120   | 18,973       |
| FRONTKN-C56           | 0.160        | -0.115   | 205          |
| HENGYUAN              | 2.820        | -0.110   | 84,276       |
| HSI-CWS4              | 0.625        | -0.110   | 200          |
| MCEMENT               | 6.030        | -0.110   | 12,016       |
| HSI-CWSQ              | 0.355        | -0.105   | 35,620       |
| HENGYUAN-WA           | 1.830        | -0.100   | 18,172       |
| NIKKEI-H15            | 0.720        | -0.100   | 942          |

| Top 20 Losers (By %) |              |         |              |
|----------------------|--------------|---------|--------------|
| STOCKS               | CLOSING (RM) | +/- (%) | VOLUME ('00) |
| HSI-CWSV             | 0.015        | -90.00  | 660          |
| ZETRIX-CBC           | 0.005        | -83.33  | 2,000        |
| MISC-C59             | 0.015        | -76.92  | 952          |
| NIKKEI-CZ            | 0.095        | -63.46  | 120          |
| IOIPG-C48            | 0.010        | -60.00  | 1,000        |
| MRDIY-C72            | 0.060        | -60.00  | 2,000        |
| KOSSAN-C91           | 0.020        | -55.56  | 960          |
| IOICORP-C81          | 0.070        | -53.33  | 2,000        |
| AAGB-C42             | 0.005        | -50.00  | 32,070       |
| GENTINGC4L           | 0.005        | -50.00  | 34,684       |
| MAYBANKC2I           | 0.005        | -50.00  | 1,389        |
| MLAB-WD              | 0.005        | -50.00  | 2            |
| PCHEM-C2M            | 0.005        | -50.00  | 3,255        |
| SIME-C10             | 0.010        | -50.00  | 5,021        |
| SUNWAY-C54           | 0.005        | -50.00  | 980          |
| ZETRIX-CB5           | 0.005        | -50.00  | 1,033        |
| HSI-CWS2             | 0.030        | -45.46  | 60,167       |
| HSI-CWSN             | 0.020        | -42.86  | 1,359        |
| FRONTKN-C56          | 0.160        | -41.82  | 205          |
| HSI-CWSR             | 0.055        | -38.89  | 19,032       |









# In conversation with **Nana**

Artiste dishes on life, family, work – **P22**

## WEEKLY FOCUS

### MONDAY

Technology and  
social media

### TUESDAY

Family  
and parenting

### WEDNESDAY

Fashion  
and beauty

### THURSDAY

Home  
and living

### FRIDAY

Travel  
and leisure

### SATURDAY

Food  
and beverage





# Navigating life with Nana

BY ASHIQIN AHMAD

Malaysian artiste also talks about family, work

FOR years, Siti Nordiana, better known as Nana, has been singing about love, heartbreak and the ups and downs of life. From *Memori Berkasih* and *Hatiku Milikmu* to *Paling Comel*, her songs have become familiar to generations of Malaysian listeners. But behind the songs, Nana has her own story about navigating life, work and family.

As a singer, actress and television personality, she is used to a busy schedule. At home, she is also a mother, which means there is always someone else to think about before herself. Like many women, Nana admits finding that balance has not always been easy.

"I try to balance everything through simple steps. As women, especially when we have a lot of responsibilities, we naturally tend to put other people first because we want to take care of everyone. But I've learnt we also need to prioritise ourselves. When we take care of ourselves, we can take better care of the people around us too," she told *theSun*.

It was a lesson that came after years of putting herself at the bottom of her own list.

## Listening to her body

For Nana, one of the first signs that she needed to pay more attention to herself was fatigue. There were times when she felt tired but simply carried on, telling herself she would deal with it later.

"I did feel tired, but I kept pushing it aside because I always felt like I didn't have enough time. When you have so many things to take care of, it's easy to tell yourself that you'll rest later," said the 41-year-old.

Eventually, she realised constantly putting others first was taking its toll.

"After a long time of putting other people first, I realised I also needed to start listening to my body. Sometimes, we only realise how important it is to take care of ourselves when our body starts telling



Nana and her son Muhammad Rayyan Nakhaie (left).

us that something isn't right," she said.

For Nana, the experience also highlighted how complicated conversations around women's bodies can be, particularly when you are constantly in the public eye. As a celebrity, she knows people will naturally comment on her appearance, but she wishes there was

more understanding behind those conversations.

"When you're in the spotlight, people tend to focus a lot on your weight, especially when you're a woman. Sometimes, they may not realise words can carry a lot of meaning and that what seems like a simple comment to them can actually affect someone quite deeply.



For Nana, balance is not about having it all figured out but learning when to pause, reset and prioritise what matters most. – ADAM AMIR HAMZAH/THE SUN

"Health isn't strictly about weight. There can be other things happening in the body, including hormonal issues, that people may not know about. I just wish people would be more supportive instead of immediately criticising someone because of their weight," she said.

## Making space for herself

Perhaps the hardest part for women who carry multiple responsibilities is not knowing they need to take care of themselves, but actually allowing themselves to do it.

There can be a nagging sense of guilt that comes with taking time away from family or work, even when that time is necessary. For Nana, that guilt is something women need to let go of.

"We shouldn't feel guilty for prioritising ourselves. Taking care of yourself doesn't mean you're neglecting the people around you. Sometimes, you need to take a step back, rest and look after yourself so that you can come back with more energy," she said.

It does not necessarily mean making huge changes either. For Nana, balance comes down to small, manageable choices rather than trying to completely overhaul her life.

"You don't have to do everything at once. Sometimes, it's just about making small changes and giving yourself a little bit of time and space. We have to remember we are also important," she said.

That may sound simple, but for

someone accustomed to putting her family and career first, it can be easier said than done.

## Being kinder to ourselves

Nana's message is ultimately less about achieving a perfect balance and more about being kinder to ourselves along the way. There will be busy days when work takes priority and other days when family needs more attention. And sometimes, self-care might simply mean getting enough rest, listening to your body or knowing when to ask for help.

"We can't do everything perfectly all the time. The important thing is to listen to yourself and recognise when you need to slow down or get help," she said.

It is also why she hopes people will think twice before making comments about someone else's appearance.

"We don't always know what someone else is going through. So we should be a little kinder with our words and with each other," she said.

After spending much of her career giving audiences songs they could see themselves in, Nana now finds herself speaking about something equally relatable: the difficulty of remembering to put yourself first.

Her advice is straightforward. Look after yourself, ask for help when you need it and do not feel guilty for taking a little time for yourself.

"You have to take care of yourself too. It's not selfish. If you're healthy and happy, you can be there for the people you love," she said.



Nana urges women to also take care of themselves. – PICS FROM INSTAGRAM @SITINORDIANA



# Beyond bedwetting

## Understanding urinary incontinence in children without blame

**U**RINARY incontinence in children is a more common condition than parents realise. Most children who are incontinent suffer from daytime urinary incontinence (symptoms of urinary incontinence while awake during the day), nocturnal enuresis (bedwetting at night while asleep) or a combination of the two.

While occasional incontinence is part of normal development, persistent urinary leakage beyond the age of five may begin to affect a child's confidence, school participation and psychological well-being. This is a highly manageable condition with the right guidance. Globally, about 10% to 20% of children experience nighttime bedwetting, while 7% to 10% have daytime symptoms. So, it is not unusual and rarely an issue.

### What is normal, potential red flags for parents to notice

Bladder control develops gradually as children grow. Most achieve daytime control between the ages of two and three,

Constipation could also signal a far more serious issue related to urinary incontinence.

while nighttime dryness can take longer, sometimes up to seven years.

A common belief is that children wet the bed because they sleep too deeply. However, for some children, the signal from the bladder does not reach the brain in time resulting in urinary incontinence. This means a child may not recognise the need to urinate during sleep. Others may produce more urine at night due to hormonal patterns or develop habits of holding urine during the day, which can make things worse.

These are functional issues rather than structural problems.



Addressing bowel habits, including better toilet posture, can significantly improve urinary symptoms.

The bladder is healthy but not yet fully coordinated.

Parents should take note and seek help if the symptoms are frequent and associated with urgency or begin to affect the child's daily life, such as not being able to go more than an hour without having to go to the toilet or more frequent "accidents" at school or at home.

Other signs include constipation or recurring urinary tract infections which could also signal a far more serious issue.

### Overlooked link between bladder and bowel

One of the most important and often overlooked contributors is constipation. The bladder and bowel sit closely together and function as part of the same system. If the bowel is full, it can press against the bladder, reduce its capacity and make it more overactive.

This can lead to urgency, frequent urination and incomplete emptying. In many cases, addressing bowel

habits alone significantly improves urinary symptoms.

Simple factors such as poor toileting posture can also play a role. Children whose feet do not touch the ground when sitting on the toilet may struggle to empty their bowels properly, which can indirectly affect bladder control.

### First steps parents can take at home

The good news is many children improve with simple, consistent routines and habits rather than immediate medical treatment.

Encourage or remind children to urinate regularly, about every two to three hours, avoiding prolonged "holding" and ensuring adequate hydration earlier in the day can help.

Reducing excessive fluid intake in the evening and maintaining good bowel habits through a balanced diet with enough fibre and fluids are also important. These are small changes, but when done consistently, they can make a meaningful difference.

### When medical treatment is needed

For some children, especially when symptoms persist or begin to affect

their confidence, medical support is needed. Treatment depends on the pattern whether it happens during the day, at night, or both.

For nighttime bedwetting, medication may be considered when the condition affects the child's daily life such as school trips or sleepovers. The medicine mimics the natural antidiuretic hormone, helping reduce urine production at night.

For daytime symptoms, treatment focuses on the underlying cause. This may include treating constipation or if needed, medication to relax the overactive bladder. When both are present, daytime symptoms are addressed first.

However, treatment is not one-size-fits-all. Understand how the bladder is functioning before starting medication. Tools such as ultrasound, uroflow studies and bladder diaries may be used.

A common approach to bedwetting involves three months of medication followed by a two-week break in between to assess progress. Many children improve within the first cycle, with most responding well within two to three cycles.

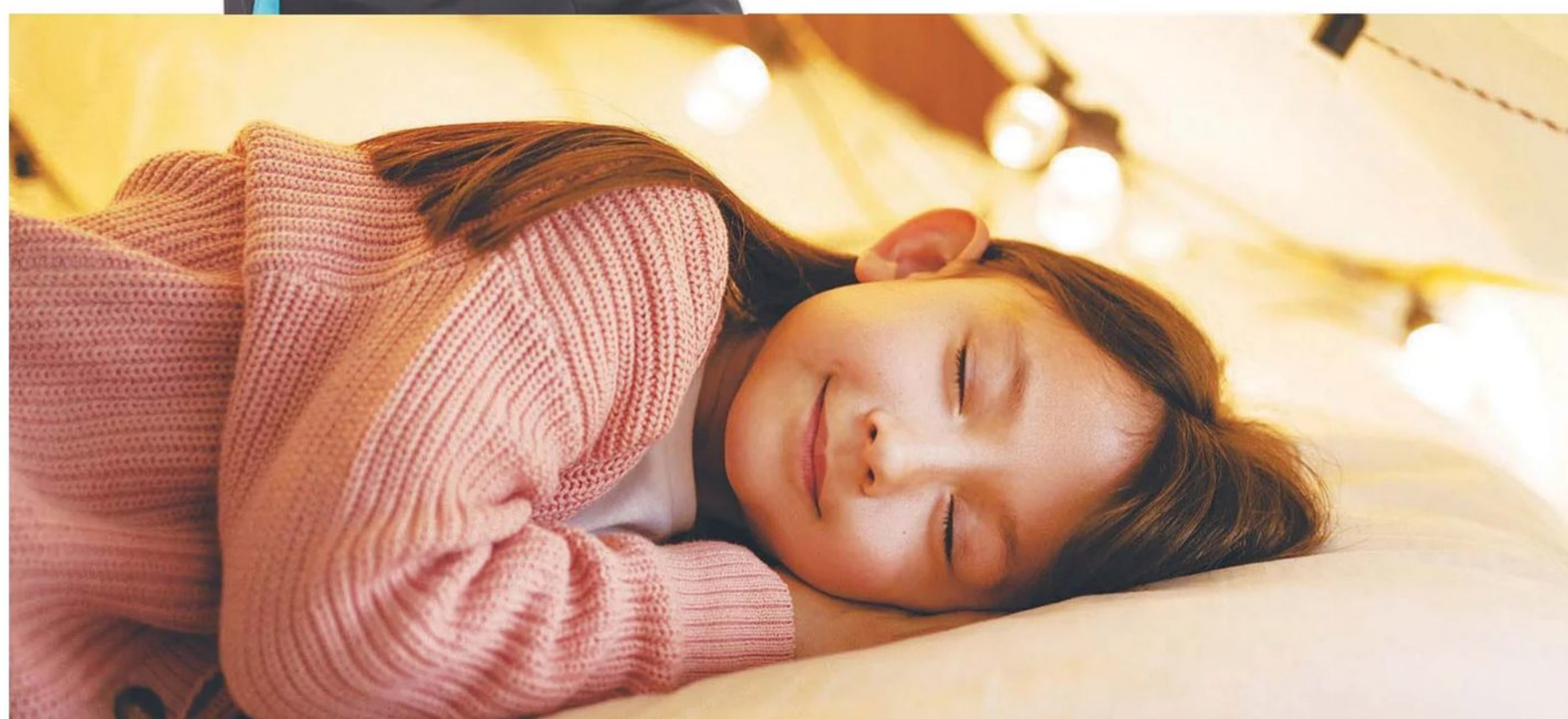
### Supporting children without shame

Beyond treatment, emotional support is essential. Children with incontinence may feel embarrassed or anxious, especially in social settings.

The first step is to remove blame. This is not something the child is doing intentionally. Parents can focus on effort, keep routines calm and avoid punishment that can increase stress. Teachers and caregivers can also help by allowing easy toilet access and maintaining a supportive, private environment.

Urinary incontinence is a medical and developmental issue, not a discipline problem. With time, understanding and the right support, most children improve significantly. Children need understanding, patience and the right care instead of judgement.

**This** article is contributed by Sunway Medical Centre, Sunway City consultant paediatric urologist, paediatric and robotic surgeon Dr Srihari Singaravel.



Some children have the issue of their bladder failing to reach the brain in time, leading to incontinence. – ALL HANDOUT PICS



# Further into parenthood

► New *Insidious* reflects parenting anxiety, says director

**W**HEN he sat down to write *Insidious: Out of the Further*, the sixth instalment of the blockbuster horror franchise, director Jacob Chase channeled his fears over a major life event: Becoming a parent.

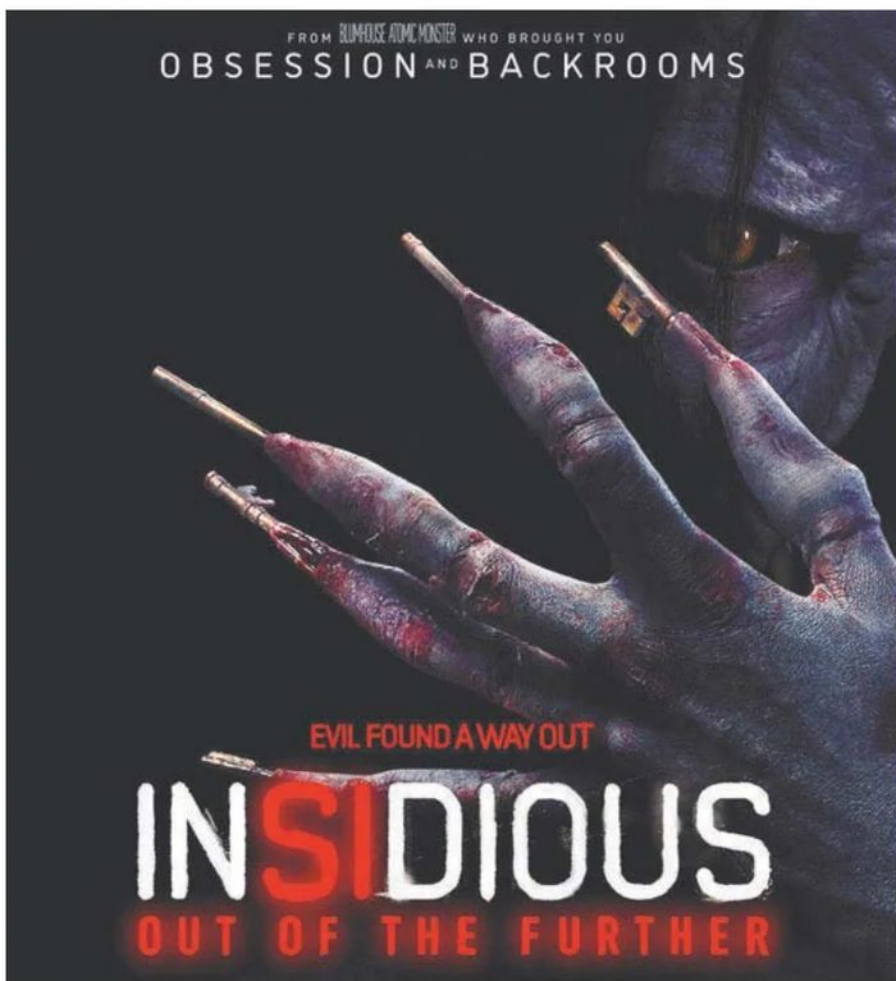
"I became a dad for the first time, and I was terrified of being a dad. I

was really nervous I would raise my child in the wrong way, and I was thinking about parenting almost in opposition of how I was raised," he told AFP.

The resulting movie, which is showing now, promises to take audiences into the Further – and bring back the demons who live there.

The main character is a woman who longs to be a good mother and protect her daughter from the terrible things that happened to her – but ends up becoming the worst version of herself in the process.

"I wanted to create a character who was haunted by her past... the



The film is the sixth in the horror series. – IMDBPIC



(From left) Shaye, Island Austin, Eve and Perea attend the Los Angeles special screening of *Insidious: Out Of The Further*.

– AFPPIC

experience with the *Insidious*... a character who already had this trauma from her past and was trying desperately to outrun her own sins of her mum."

The result is an atmospheric film that gradually draws the viewer to the other side, revealing the terror that seeks to infiltrate the characters' world.

Starring Amelia Eve, Lin Shaye, Brandon Perea and Sam Spruell, *Insidious: Out of the Further* introduces new directions and characters to a franchise that has grossed over US\$740 million (RM3 billion) at the global box office.

#### 'Completely evolving'

This chapter follows Gemma, played by Eve, a young single mother raising her daughter in the same home where she grew up – a house that holds traumatic memories.

It is there that Gemma discovers she can not only enter the afterlife but also bring its shadowy inhabitants into the world of the living, a power that makes her a target for terrifying entities and puts her daughter in danger.

For the 34-year-old British actress, it was an exciting opportunity.

"It's one thing to be welcomed into this franchise and it's a whole other blessing to then get to introduce a new aspect to this incredible world," Eve said.

To build that protective bond with her on-screen daughter, the actress drew inspiration from her relationship with her own sisters: "The people you'd do anything for," Eve described.

Eve shares the screen with Shaye, who returns once again to play Elise Rainier, a character who fans consider the heart of the franchise.

In this new instalment, Rainier represents a beacon of light for Gemma, a role that taught her a lot, Shaye said.

"It's still completely evolving, which is very exciting to me. You'd think it's the same old, same old every time (but) I feel that Elise is learning something new about herself," said the 82-year-old actress.

The women and their allies in the world of the living will face Cyrus, a new diabolical entity played by Sam Spruell (Fargo), who commands the forces of evil.

Director Chase, who was looking to create a charismatic demon, said: "I wanted a villain that was different."

"I wanted someone that was a bit more human and someone that had a real goal in the film. To me, a charming villain is so much scarier because I could see myself wanting to follow them."

## Mara sisters channel childhood energy for twins performance at Venice

**REAL-LIFE** actress sisters Rooney and Kate Mara recently said they drew on their instinctive closeness for new film *Bucking Fastard* that sees them talk and move in unison for almost their entire time on screen.

Their movie was called "unique in cinema history" by its director and writer, veteran German filmmaker Werner Herzog, ahead of its recent premiere at the Venice Film Festival.

*Bucking Fastard* is loosely inspired by the real-life story of Freda and Greta Chaplin, twins from northern England who earned notoriety in Britain in the early 1980s for their synchronised movement and speech.

"It reignited a lot of childhood energy in us, which was really special," said Rooney Mara (*The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, *Carol*) and other journalists in Venice about her experience filming with Herzog.

"It felt really... I don't want to say effortless but it really made sense. We kind of found our own language or our own rhythm with it," older sister

Kate (*The House of Cards*) added.

*Bucking Fastard*, which is in the running for Venice's top prize, is a whimsical drama that sees the sisters fall in love with the same man, played by Orlando Bloom, setting off a spiral of unsettling encounters with other people.

"It's unique in film history in a way... It's unique that two sisters are playing as one," Herzog told reporters, adding that he had written the screenplay in five days with the Mara sisters in mind.

Critics called the eccentric production a "strange tale of sisterly devotion" (*Screen Daily*), "cluttered, ripely bonkers fantasia" (*Variety*), a "silly, pointless drama" (*The Guardian*) and "destined to polarise... either you're on the train or you want to get off it fast" (*IndieWire*).

Herzog was awarded a lifetime achievement prize last year at Venice, where he premiered his documentary *Ghost Elephants* about the search for an elusive elephant herd in Africa. – AFP



(From left) Rooney, Herzog and Kate attend the photocall of *Bucking Fastard* at the Venice Film Festival. – AFPPIC



**M**ANAGEMENT and Science University (MSU) in collaboration with Times Higher Education (THE) last week organised the SDG-ESG Synergy Symposium: "Leading Change for People, Planet and Prosperity" at the Performing Arts Theatre, MSU main campus.

The two-day symposium brought together leaders and experts from higher education institution local as well as international, government, industry and stakeholders to discuss how the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles can collectively drive meaningful and sustainable change.

The symposium also addressed the growing demand for ESG-related competencies and the role of universities and industries in preparing graduates for an increasingly sustainability-focused workplace.

At MSU, this commitment is reflected in 950 documented SDG-related initiatives carried out between 2022 and 2025, including 81 international projects and 92,000 community engagements. Through its Community Outreach Programme, the university supported 2,408 families from 2023 to 2025 and continues to provide RM50 million in scholarships annually through Yayasan MSU to widen access to quality education. MSU's community efforts also include its Covid-19 vaccination programme, which reached more than 30,000 people in 2021.

The symposium was officiated by MSU president and founder Prof Tan Sri Wira Dr Mohd Shukri Ab Yajid. Also in attendance was MSU pro-chancellor Prof Emeritus Datuk Seri Dr Zaini Ujang, who will contribute to a session focusing on governance for impact.

Other speakers include THE president for the Asia-Pacific region Lim Mei Mei, Investment, Trade and Industry Ministry director of industry environmental, social and governance division Shireen Jasmin Ali, Affin Group managing director of strategy and

# Commitment to sustainability

➤ MSU organises SDG-ESG synergy symposium on leading change for people, planet, prosperity



Shukri delivers the presidential address at the SDG-ESG Synergy Symposium. – HANDOUT PIC

operations Jozaimah Johan Ali, University of Manchester executive director for social responsibility and civic engagement Dr Julian Skyrme and Western Sydney University pro vice-chancellor Prof Dr Amir Mahmood.

MSU vice president for research Prof Dr Norfilza Mohd Mokhtar and senior vice president for industry linkages and

entrepreneurship Prof Dr Abdul Jalil Ghazali also contributed to the symposium. They were joined by sustainability and governance experts from Universiti Sains Malaysia, the health sector and local government.

Centred on the sub-themes of ESG practices, environmental impact, social impact and governance impact, the programme comprises

governance-for-impact sessions, sustainability plenaries, social and environmental impact segments, as well as roundtable discussions.

MSU's contribution to this agenda is reflected in its best-ever performance in the THE Sustainability Impact Rankings 2026, where it rose to 88th place worldwide. The university ranked third globally for SDG 5: Gender Equality, 29th for SDG 4: Quality Education, 39th for SDG 1: No Poverty and 66th for SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals. These achievements demonstrate the reach of MSU's teaching, research, institutional practices and community engagement in advancing sustainable development.

The symposium reflected MSU's strengths in holistic education, applied research, industry engagement, entrepreneurship and international collaboration. Its multidisciplinary learning ecosystem connects academic knowledge with real-world practice, enabling students, researchers and industry partners to explore practical responses to environmental and social challenges while strengthening ethical and responsible decision-making.

MSU's emphasis on developing balanced, competent and globally minded graduates also supported the symposium's focus on responsible leadership. By bringing together perspectives from academia, government and industry, the university continues to encourage innovation, inclusive progress and partnerships capable of translating sustainability commitments into meaningful impact.

Through the SDG-ESG Synergy Symposium, MSU reinforces its commitment to sustainability, impactful partnerships and responsible governance, while supporting the global agenda for people, planet and prosperity.



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# Beyond service

## Hospitality journey at TAR UMT

**H**OSPITALITY is more than service. It is the art of making people feel welcomed, cared for and remembered. At Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT), this art is cultivated step by step, beginning at The Roots, the training restaurant operated by Diploma in Hotel Management students and progressing to The Place, where Bachelor in Hospitality Management students lead and manage full restaurant operations.

These two learning environments represent more than just physical spaces. They are learning milestones that guide students from foundational practical skills to advanced managerial competencies.

### 'Getting to the root'

For Yip Hui Ciing, a Diploma in Hotel Management student, the journey began with a love for hands-on learning.

"I chose TAR UMT because the learning facilities are comprehensive. There is a well-equipped training kitchen, the Fern House that is a hotel setup for housekeeping training and The Roots restaurant. As I prefer learning by doing, having access to all these practical environments works well for me."

At The Roots, Yip learnt the essentials of hospitality operations. Handling customers, maintaining cleanliness, working the cashier

counter and coordinating service flow all formed part of her daily routine.

"Working at The Roots taught me how important teamwork is, especially during peak periods. One memorable example of teamwork happened during a particularly busy lunch service at The Roots. A sudden rush of customers caused orders to pile up, the cashier queue to grow and delayed drink preparation. Realising we couldn't manage everything at once, our team quickly communicated and divided tasks based on each person's strengths. By staying calm, supporting one another and keeping communication clear, we managed the big group of customers smoothly and served everyone well," she shared.

The experience also gave her a better understanding on how the real deal of working in the hospitality industry would be.

"I realised serving people is not just about completing tasks. It's about creating a good experience for them. We have to think ahead and understand what they need. At the same time, we also need to cultivate a positive and resilient mindset as the challenges may vary and will demand a lot of patience," she highlighted.

### 'At the right place'

For Chan Ruey Nie, a Bachelor in Hospitality Management (Hons) student, The Place represents the next stage, a transition from "doing" to "leading". Students no longer simply execute



Yip plating a vegetable roulade during her culinary practical session at The Roots.

tasks – they design, plan and manage them.

"The Place provides a more advanced and managerial perspective. Here, we don't just serve, we lead. We organise schedules, manage communication between service and kitchen, as well as ensure the whole operation runs smoothly."

One of her most memorable experiences was managing a themed restaurant event.

"I was the event manager and during service, we faced issues with the main course. But our team worked together and reassured guests in order to make them feel comfortable and at ease. When the guests praised us afterward, I felt that everything we learnt had a purpose."

This level of training develops leadership, decision-making and emotional intelligence.

"Good leadership is not giving orders. It's guiding and supporting your team so everyone performs at their best. I also learnt to stay calm when unexpected situations happen and solve them diplomatically."

### Intentional progress

According to TAR UMT programme leader of hospitality management Dr Muhammad Aizuddin Ibrahim, the progression from The Roots to The Place is intentional and transformative.

"At the Diploma level, students build a strong foundation in operational skills through

hands-on practice. They learn discipline, service flow and customer interaction. When they advance to their degree, the emphasis shifts towards leadership, strategic thinking and management."

He believes TAR UMT's experiential learning gives graduates a competitive advantage.

"Our students don't just learn in classrooms, they run real restaurants, manage guests and are the decision makers during operations. This prepares them professionally from day one. This is important as we want our students to rise, from mastering service skills to managing people and operations. The Roots and The Place are not just training facilities – they are environments where character, leadership and passion for hospitality are shaped," he said.

To find out more about TAR UMT's Hospitality and other Social Science programmes, join its Open Day from Oct 17-18, 10am to 5pm at TAR UMT campuses nationwide.

Qualified students will receive their on-the-spot offers during TAR UMT Open Day at Kuala Lumpur campus (T&C apply). You can also contact 011-1078 5990, 011-1059 7135 or email fssh@tarc.edu.my, and to apply online, visit www.tarc.edu.my. Various financial aid and merit scholarships are also available for qualified students.



Chan (second row, fourth from left) and her peers gearing up for service at The Place.

– HANDOUT PICS



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**MERCEDES TEAM** boss Toto Wolff felt even on Saturday that Formula One leader Kimi Antonelli might perform a Sunday miracle at Monza.

The 20-year-old's victory in his home Italian Grand Prix from an initial start on the back of the grid – 19th with two cars lining up in the pitlane – was certainly remarkable. Teammate and closest title rival George Russell, who finished second, started on the front row.

"I thought one of the two (Mercedes drivers) was going to win," Wolff said when asked what outcome he had expected before the start.

"George, because he was on pole (at the restart after the race was red-flagged) or Kimi because he's going to walk over water. And I felt that yesterday also. I chatted with his father yesterday. The father saw that coming."

Wolff said what really made the difference on Sunday was how Antonelli, the first Italian to lead the championship to Monza since 1953 and now the

## Wolff hails Monza miracle

first Italian F1 driver to win at the "Temple of Speed" since 1966, got through traffic after starting at the back due to engine penalties.

"I've seen it with other great ones in the past," said the Austrian, whose team took Lewis Hamilton to six of his seven titles.

"When a driver and a car are one, then there's just nothing that can stop them."

Antonelli had a tough time at Monza in 2024 before his rookie season last year, the then-teenager debuting in Friday practice to plenty of local expectation but binning the car in the wall.

"It was probably the toughest moment in his career by himself and his family, a moment where everyone doubted including himself," recalled Wolff.

"And then two

years later it's the biggest glory, the biggest moment of his career. It's probably going to be one of his biggest moments for all of the future. Even if he wins another 200, that one will remain special."

Last season Wolff said Antonelli had been like a deer in the headlights at times, suffering ups and downs and needing to prove himself. He has done that far faster and more comprehensively this year than anyone had expected.

Russell started the season as favourite, and won the Australian opener, but then Antonelli took five wins in a row and everything changed.

"It's still surprising and amazing to see how quickly he develops. For me, it's like an AI agent that continuously improves and learns," said Wolff. – Reuters

Mercedes' Kimi Antonelli kisses the trophy after winning the Italian Grand Prix at the Autodromo Nazionale in Monza on Sunday night. – **REUTERSPIC**

## Kimi serves notice



### Antonelli takes sensational home Italian GP win from back of grid

**F**ORMULA ONE leader Kimi Antonelli won his home Italian Grand Prix after a sensational race from 19th to first on Sunday in a massive blow for Mercedes teammate and closest championship rival George Russell.

The 20-year-old was the first Italian winner at Monza since Ludovico Scarfiotti for Ferrari in 1966, while the victory was the 50th by an Italian driver since the championship started in 1950.

Russell, who had taken the lead on lap two moments before Ferrari's Charles Leclerc crashed heavily and halted the race for half an hour, finished runner-up – 3.857 seconds behind – after being hunted down by his teammate on fresher tyres late in the race with Max Verstappen a distant third for Red Bull.

The Briton had hoped to slash Antonelli's 59-point lead after the Italian took engine penalties and lined up on the back row of the grid, with two other drivers starting in the pitlane, but instead ended up 66 adrift after 13 rounds and with Antonelli ever closer to becoming Formula One's youngest champion and Italy's first since Alberto Ascari in 1953.

"Oh my god, oh my god," screamed Antonelli over the team radio as he took the chequered flag as a winner for the seventh time this season and gave the crowd something to celebrate after Ferrari failed to make the podium.

"I could have never imagined to be here today. But we managed to pull it off

and I'm really, really happy," he said later, after stepping out onto the podium to huge cheers.

"I could never have imagined to be here today, but we managed to pull it off. It's a dream coming true. What an incredible day.

"I couldn't do it without my team, family and everyone who supports me. Still a few races to go, so we're going to keep our head down, but now we're going to enjoy today."

The Italian, who had carved his way through the field and swapped the lead repeatedly with Russell before pitting during a virtual safety car period while his teammate stayed out, cut an 8.9-second gap to less than a second in 10 laps but then appeared to have wasted his efforts.

Trying to pass, Antonelli went into the gravel with four laps to go but still came back and took back the lead on lap 51 of 53 before pulling away.

Russell said he had lacked fresh enough tyres to fight back on a scorching afternoon that was declared a heat hazard.

"It was looking like a pretty strong race from us, and then I was just struggling with the tyres towards the end. Obviously, we did the whole race on that one hard tyre," he said.

"I thought we were both going to stay out. I was surprised to see him pitting. In the end it was a roll of the dice both ways."

McLaren's reigning champion Lando Norris took fourth from team-

#### RESULTS (TOP 10)

1. Kimi Antonelli (Mercedes)
2. George Russell (Mercedes)
3. Max Verstappen (Red Bull)
4. Lando Norris (McLaren)
5. Oscar Piastri (McLaren)
6. Lewis Hamilton (Ferrari)
7. Pierre Gasly (Alpine)
8. Arvid Lindblad (Racing Bulls)
9. Franco Colapinto (Alpine)
10. Yuki Tsunoda (Racing Bulls)

#### STANDINGS (TOP 5)

**DRIVERS:** 1. Kimi Antonelli (Italy) 267pts, 2. George Russell (Britain) 201, 3. Lewis Hamilton (Britain) 191, 4. Lando Norris (Britain) 171, 5. Charles Leclerc (Monegasque) 155.  
**CONSTRUCTORS:** 1. Mercedes 468pts, 2. Ferrari 346, 3. McLaren 287, 4. Red Bull Racing 204, 5. Racing Bulls 75.

mate Oscar Piastri on the last lap but is now 96 points off the lead.

Ferrari's Lewis Hamilton was sixth, after starting fourth and then dropping to 10th after being forced into the gravel by Leclerc when he tried to pass on the opening lap.

Pierre Gasly, the initial pole sitter for Renault-owned Alpine, was seventh with Racing Bulls' rookie Arvid Lindblad eighth and Alpine's Franco Colapinto ninth. Racing Bulls' stand-in Yuki Tsunoda completed the scoring positions in 10th. – Reuters



# Electric Alcaraz

*Spaniard senses title chance after cruising into quarters*

**C**ARLOS ALCARAZ believes he can capture a second consecutive US Open title after shaking off any lingering injury concerns, cruising into the quarterfinals with a high-voltage performance yesterday.

The 23-year-old kept rolling at Flushing Meadows, reasserting his status as tournament favourite with a commanding 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 win over American Tommy Paul, extending his Grand Slam winning streak to 18.

Alcaraz had downplayed expectations in the early rounds, with the tournament in New York marking his first competitive test since a wrist injury sidelined him for nearly five months.

Now, though, the Spaniard believes he has the game to go all the way, even as enjoying every moment on court remains his guiding priority.

"At the beginning of the tournament I didn't have any expectations. I just came here to see how my body would react, especially my wrist, and above all to enjoy being back competing," Alcaraz told reporters.

"After four really good matches, now I feel

capable of winning the tournament. I still have the same expectations. I still have the same mentality of knowing that every time I step on court is a gift and it is a moment to enjoy."

The seven-times Grand Slam champion has looked increasingly comfortable with each round and has now reached the US Open quarterfinals for the fifth time in six appearances.

He also continued a curious pattern at the majors, with all three of his previous Grand Slam wins over Paul coming en route to the title, at Wimbledon in 2024, Roland Garros in 2025 and this year's Australian Open.

"It makes you happy when you know those things, but it doesn't mean anything," Alcaraz said. "I always say there is a first time for everything, so let's try to make sure it doesn't happen."

"For me it is still a gift to be able to compete once again and play another quarterfinal here at the US Open, so I'm going to try to enjoy it and give my best."

"I tried to play to my style. Tommy's such a talented player and his shots are pretty dangerous and it's difficult to control the ball when it

comes to you. I was ready for a battle."

"I was trying to be aggressive all the time... I did well to put pressure on his return, which helped me stay calm and to think clearly. I was really happy with the performance."

Alcaraz hit a rocket of a forehand to bring up matchpoint, another sign that he was reaching the peak of his powers at a venue where he has thrived ever since his maiden Grand Slam triumph four years ago.

"I think so," Alcaraz said when asked about being back to his best in New York, where he has reached the quarterfinals in five of his six appearances now.

"It shows how special this place is to me, I'm just enjoying myself on court here."

"It doesn't matter that I was out for over four months."

"Every time I come here I play well." – Reuters/AFP

## Sabalenka surges past Townsend

**ARYNA SABALENKA** kept her US Open three-peat bid alive yesterday, charging into the US Open quarterfinals with a confidence boosting victory over tricky American Taylor Townsend.

Sabalenka took everything the multi-faceted Townsend threw at her to emerge with a 6-4, 6-3 victory, winning the last five games to push her Flushing Meadows win streak to 17 matches.

"I love matches like that, because it was really challenging, and going through tough challenges and overcoming those challenges, it definitely gives you strength and really strong belief that you can do it," Sabalenka said.

"So these kind of matches is really, really, really like a boost of confidence."

Sabalenka is vying to become just the third woman, after Chris Evert and Serena Williams, to win three straight US Open titles.

She'll have to lift the trophy just to have a chance of retaining her world No. 1 ranking, and even if she does her time at the top could end in New York, where second-ranked Elena Rybakina needs only to reach the semis to be assured of ascending.

"I completely separate myself from that, because it's just guessing," Sabalenka said of the multiple No. 1 scenarios – which could also see third-ranked Jessica Pegula or even No. 4 Coco Gauff end the tourna-

ment at the top.

"I'm just trying to bring my best tennis every time I'm competing out there and basically fight for it," she added.

The match opened with five breaks of serve before Sabalenka managed a comfortable hold for a 4-2 first-set lead and pocket the first set, saving a break point before putting it away with a trademark forehand winner.

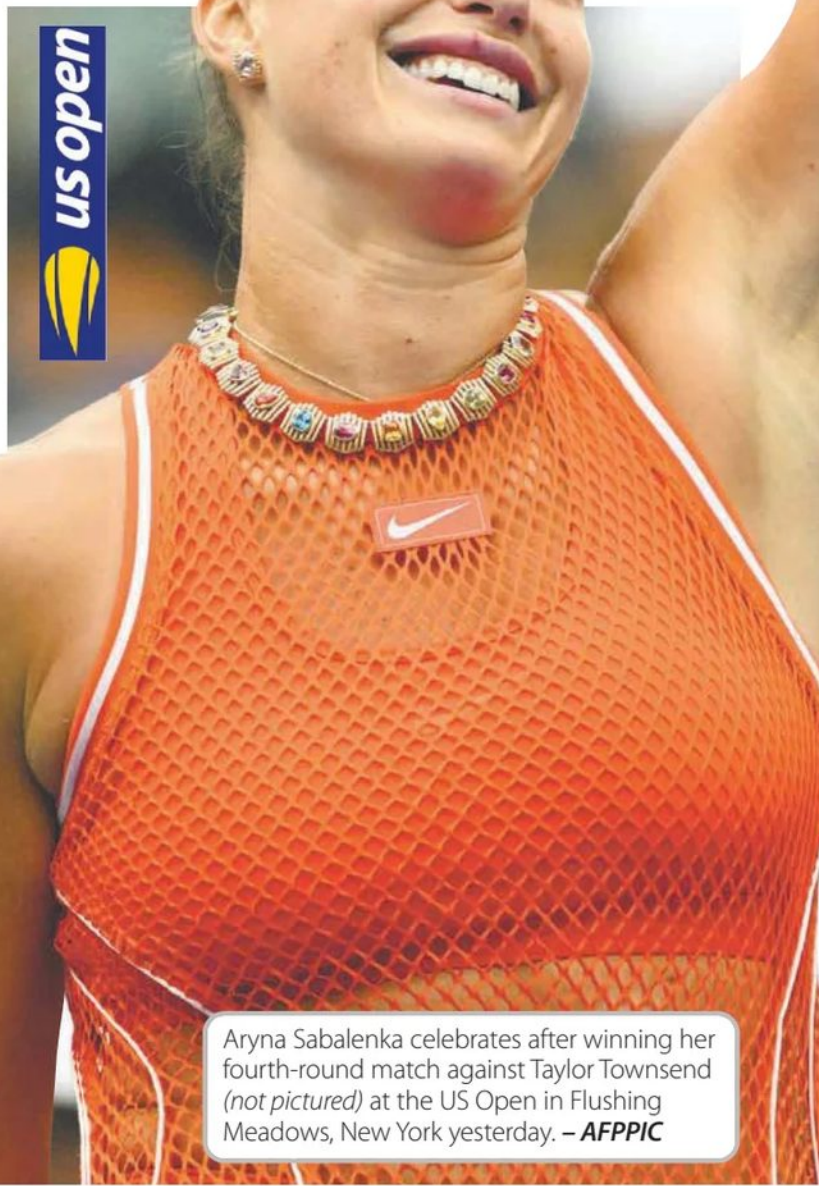
"She was returning really well," Sabalenka said.

"She saw where I'm going. She was blocking really well. I guess playing doubles and mixed doubles really helped her to react on, like, heavy serve."

"That was really challenging beginning, but then I had to adjust my serve, the speed, the spin, bring the variety into my service games just so I keep her guessing."

The second set unfolded in more traditional style, neither player facing a break point through the first three games.

Sabalenka blinked first, smacking a forehand into the net to give Townsend a 3-1 lead. Sabalenka immediately broke back, however, launching a run of five straight games to take the match. – AFP



Aryna Sabalenka celebrates after winning her fourth-round match against Taylor Townsend (not pictured) at the US Open in Flushing Meadows, New York yesterday. – AFPPIC

## Tiafoe tops Medvedev in straight sets

**AMERICAN** Frances Tiafoe swept past former champion Daniil Medvedev in straight sets yesterday to advance to the quarterfinals of the US Open.

A two-time semifinalist at New York's Flushing Meadows, the 11th-seeded Tiafoe defeated seventh-seeded Medvedev of Russia 7-6 (7-1), 6-4, 7-6 (8-6) to reach the quarterfinals for the fourth time in five years.

Medvedev held leads in two of the three sets, but was outplayed by the American at key junctures.

"I played well when it counted," Tiafoe said. "Yeah, I came up with some crazy stuff, but it had to be that good against such a quality player in Daniil."

Tiafoe enjoyed loud support from the crowd in Louis Armstrong Stadium, where he has

never lost.

After the match, Tiafoe stood before the crowd and pointed to his ear, asking for noise. He also took a virtual basketball shot, acknowledging hoop stars Lisa Leslie, AJ Dybantsa and Victor Oladipo who were in his cheering section.

"The energy has been amazing," Tiafoe told a court-side interviewer. "It's like the people's court. I'm loving the energy for sure."

Medvedev had won six of seven prior matches against the American, including a straight-set drubbing in the same round of the 2020 US Open.

But Medvedev, who won the US Open in 2021 for his only Grand Slam, has had an up-and-down 2026.

He has won two ATP titles and notched a

win over Carlos Alcaraz at the prestigious Indian Wells tournament.

But Medvedev, who has reached six career Grand Slam finals, failed this year to advance beyond the round of 16 at any Grand Slam.

Medvedev served for the first set, but was broken at 6-5 and then lost the tiebreaker decisively.

Too often, Medvedev was unable to consolidate lead. He hit a brilliant backhand overhead to take a 4-3 lead in the third-set tiebreaker, but followed it up with a feeble backhand error.

Still, the Russian held a set point in the third-set tiebreaker. But Tiafoe got the better of a net exchange between the men, then proceeded to take the next two points to seal the win.

"I should have played better in some moments of the match," Medvedev said. – AFP

### TRAMLINES

#### Shelton book last eight clash with Carlitos

**EIGHTH-SEEDED** Ben Shelton overpowered former world No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-2, 6-3, 6-4 yesterday to book a US Open quarterfinal date with defending champion Carlos Alcaraz. Shelton dominated on serve and blasted a dozen aces and never faced a break point in a match lasting just one hour and 52 minutes. Shelton put 71% of his first serves in play and won 84 percent of those points. "I was focused today," said Shelton, a 2023 US Open semifinalist. "I played a complete match from start to finish." Now he awaits Alcaraz, the seven-time Grand Slam champion who opted to make the US Open his first tournament back from a four-month injury layoff. The Spaniard delivered his most convincing display of the tournament in a 6-4, 6-3, 6-4 victory over American Tommy Paul, and Shelton said it would take "special tennis" to beat him. "I think the level that he's been playing at is really, really impressive," Shelton said. "I think it's going to be fireworks."

#### Pegula tops Cirstea

**FORMER** US Open finalist Jessica Pegula defeated Sorana Cirstea of Romania in straight sets yesterday to advance to the quarterfinals at Flushing Meadows. Third-seeded Pegula, one of the players who could supplant Aryna Sabalenka atop the world rankings in New York, needed 84 minutes to polish off the 6-3, 6-4. Both sets followed a similar pattern, an aggressive Pegula jumping out to big leads before the Romanian cleaned up her play enough to narrow the lead, but not enough to catch up to the American. Pegula wrapped up the first set in 38 minutes with a break of Cirstea's serve. In the second Cirstea twice recovered breaks, but Pegula broke her one more time to seal the win. The American clinched the victory when she got the upper hand in a rally and eventually forced an error out of Cirstea, who bowed out of her final Grand Slam having said she'll retire at the end of the season. Pegula said that if she was the one to close the curtain on Cirstea's efforts on the major stage, she wanted to make sure that the Romanian knew how much she admired not only the way she competed. "I just told her, I don't know if you're still going to play next year, but you're playing great," she said. "I think she's just had a really nice perspective as far as the interviews she's given, especially this year, and why she's playing so well and at a different point in her career."

#### Noskova edges Kostyuk

**WIMBLEDON** champion Linda Noskova reached the quarterfinals of the US Open yesterday, edging Ukraine's Marta Kostyuk in three sets. The Czech Noskova, who has largely flown under the radar in New York despite winning Wimbledon, beat Kostyuk 7-5, 5-7, 6-4, finally sealing the win on her sixth match point when Kostyuk netted a backhand return. "I am more than relieved," Noskova said after booking a last-eight showdown with two-time defending champion Aryna Sabalenka. "This match was so tough, emotionally more so than physically." Kostyuk said after the match that she has been playing with a right wrist injury and planned to get an MRI now that the tournament is over. "I wasn't 100% for sure," said Kostyuk, who smiled in the later stages of the second as the crowd "started going crazy" as she saved match points. "I've never had the whole stadium cheer for me like this, and it was so loud, and yeah, I wanted to soak it in, and it kept going until the rest of the match," she said. "So it was incredible. So nothing else but smile about it."





**A**NOTHER Champions League season gets going this week with the beginning of the league phase as Paris Saint-Germain bid to join the tiny band of clubs to have won the competition three years running.

PSG successfully defended their title last season when they beat Arsenal on penalties in Budapest, retaining the trophy they won for the first time in their history 12 months earlier.

Luis Enrique's side have already secured their status as one of the competition's greatest teams by winning it back-to-back, something only Real Madrid had previously achieved since the inception of the modern Champions League in 1992.

Winning three in a row would be on another level entirely. Real did exactly that under Zinedine Zidane between 2016 and 2018. The only other teams to manage such a feat are Ajax (1971-73) and Bayern Munich (1974-76), while Madrid also won the first five editions of the European Cup from 1956 to 1960.

"Our objectives are clear. I want to win important trophies and there are none more important than the Champions League," said Luis Enrique, who also led Barcelona to glory in 2015.

The back-to-back titles for the French giants have coincided with the introduction of the new

# Treble quest

*PSG go for three in a row as Champions League returns*

Champions League format, with 36 teams in the league phase now playing eight games against eight different opponents.

The Parisians struggled in the league phase in each of the last two campaigns, finishing outside the top eight and having to come through the additional playoff round to make the last 16.

Tough draws were partly responsible for that, and PSG will face some familiar opponents this time in Manchester City, Barcelona and Aston Villa.

With each passing year, the prospect of a team other than one of Europe's super clubs winning the Champions League seems more remote.

The Premier League's financial strength means all of its representatives can be expected to feature prominently, with Arsenal chief

among them.

Over the last three years, the Gunners have lost in the quarterfinals, the semifinals, and then the final. There is therefore a logical next step for Mikel Arteta's side,

Arsenal topped the league phase last season with a perfect record. They have a tough start this time away to Napoli.

There are five English clubs involved, with Manchester City and Liverpool joined by the returning Manchester United and Villa.

Bayern Munich are formidable, while Jose Mourinho has returned to Real Madrid charged with the task of leading them back to continental glory. Barcelona are itching to get their hands on the trophy again.

It is hard to see beyond

one of those clubs, although Inter Milan could have a say and Atletico Madrid will be desperate to reach a final to be held in their stadium.

The only club outside Spain, England, Germany, Italy and France to have won the Champions League in the last 30 years remains Mourinho's Porto in 2004.

Plenty of new names will add freshness to the competition, including Como, who finished fourth in Serie A last season under Cesc Fabregas to qualify at the expense of AC Milan and Juventus.

Viking Stavanger are in the Champions League proper for the first time after winning a first Norwegian title in 34 years.

Sabah start with a trip to Old Trafford after winning a first Azerbaijani title and coming through four qualifying ties. Their manager, Valdas Dambrauskas, got into coaching with the money he made appearing on the Lithuanian version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*.

"Since I was 12, when I realised I will not be a professional player, I knew I wanted to be a football coach," he said in an interview with *Flashscore*.

"I cannot guess what would have happened without this game, but I believe I would have found a way to achieve my dream." – AFP

## Gatti salvages Juve draw with AC Milan

**FEDERICO GATTI** came off the bench and scored an injury-time equaliser as Juventus snatched a 1-1 draw with AC Milan in Serie A yesterday.

Both teams arrived at the Allianz Stadium after starting the season with back-to-back wins and remained unbeaten after a hard-fought affair.

The result leaves Roma and Inter Milan as the two teams with 100% records after three games, with Lazio attempting to join them when they face Udinese overnight.

"We didn't deserve to win, and Juve didn't deserve to lose," Milan coach Ruben Amorim told *DAZN*. "We lost possession too often and didn't play well, but we've only been working together for two months."

Juve coach Luciano Spalletti was critical of Randal Kolo Muani after he missed several chances in their first match of the season against Frosinone.

But he insisted he still has faith in the France striker, despite his wait to get off the mark in his second spell at the club.

"I chose him to lead our attack and I am sticking with that choice," said Spalletti. "I will stick with it until the end of the season, and we'll see then just how far he has taken us."

Juventus had the better of the first half but visiting goalkeeper Mike Maignan made an excellent save to keep out Francisco Conceicao's shot from their clearest chance.

The Portugal winger went even closer 10 minutes into the second period, but fired his effort off the base of the post after being found by Manuel Locatelli.

Milan grabbed the lead in the 68th minute with their first shot on target of the match.

Juve brought on Nick Woltemade with 15 minutes left for his debut after joining on loan from Newcastle on deadline day.

But it was another substitute who rescued the hosts a point, as centreback Gatti powered a header in off the bar from Teun Koopmeiners's freekick. – AFP

## Yamal hits double as Barca thrash Valencia

**LAMINE YAMAL** (pic) struck twice for Barcelona as they demolished Valencia 5-0 yesterday to maintain their 100% start in La Liga.

The reigning champions moved two points clear at the top of La Liga, after Jose Mourinho's Real Madrid lost 1-0 at Real Betis on Saturday. Unbeaten Alaves rose to second place with a thumping 5-2 victory over Osasuna.

As well as Yamal, Fermin Lopez, Raphinha and Pedri were also on target for Hansi Flick's swagging Barca on a hot afternoon on Spain's east coast.

Yamal did not take part in the team training session on Saturday after a knock but showed no signs of it during a dazzling display against Carlos Corberan's side.

Barcelona, the only team in the top flight to win their first four games, took control from the start to the upset of Valencia's fans at a persistently bad-tempered Mestalla stadium. Los Che are bottom and yet to win this season.

"We played a fantastic game, it was nearly perfect, we controlled, we were dominant and this is what I want from the team," said Flick.

"We stay calm and then if it's possible to score we try to do it – it was a fantastic game for us. Nothing is perfect, you always can improve. If it's perfect then you can stop working."

Yamal opened the scoring with a clever lofted finish in the sixth minute after Lopez dinked a superb ball over the top for the teenage star.

Lopez netted the second with a crisp finish in the 22nd minute after former Newcastle winger

Anthony Gordon teed him up.

Raphinha, starting again as the team's centre-forward, tapped home his sixth goal of the season from close range after Lopez fed him.

Valencia goalkeeper Stole Dimitrievski saved from Rodri before Pedri netted Barcelona's fourth after an exchange of passes with Dani Olmo.

Yamal stayed onside to collect another Olmo pass and put away Barca's fifth and conclude a profitable afternoon for both the World Cup winner and the Catalan giants.

"We have a very young team, with the right transfers we made, but it's the beginning of the season, it's not the end," added Flick, telling his team not to get too excited yet about their strong start.

"We have to go a long, long way."

Corberan said his team were up against it from the start after Yamal's rapid strike.

"Conceding a goal so early, on their first or second attack, made everything much more difficult," said the Valencia coach.

"It's a difficult situation that we will navigate together." – AFP



## Mourinho's Real revival starts with Inter reunion at the Bernabeu

**WHEN** Jose Mourinho left Inter Milan for Real Madrid in 2010, after leading the Italian outfit to Champions League glory, he was at the peak of his powers.

The Portuguese coach claimed a historic treble with Inter, clinching Serie A in the last week of the season and lifting the Coppa Italia.

Inter beat Bayern 2-0 in the Champions League final at Madrid's Santiago Bernabeu stadium, winning the trophy for the first time since 1965 and becoming the first Italian team to win the treble.

The day after the final Mourinho said it was likely his last match in charge and around a week later his appointment at Real Madrid was final-

ised.

Now 16 years on, and beginning his second stint at Madrid, Mourinho kicks off the record 15-time Champions League winners' European campaign against Inter tomorrow (3am Malaysian time) at the Bernabeu.

Neither the veteran coach nor Inter have been able to reproduce that level of European success since.

Inter have reached the final on two subsequent occasions, beaten in 2023 by Manchester City and then thrashed by Paris Saint-Germain in the 2025 showpiece.

Mourinho was unable to help Real Madrid past

the semifinals and after leaving the club in 2013 has mainly spent his time competing in lower levels of European competition.

The 63-year-old led Manchester United to the Europa League in 2017 and won the Conference League with Roma in 2022.

Fished out of the relative wilderness by Madrid president Florentino Perez this year after two seasons without a major trophy for *Los Blancos*, Mourinho's main task is to return the club to their European throne.

Perez credits Mourinho with building the foundations for those trophies.

Mourinho's challenge is to prove both he and

Real Madrid still can rule among Europe's elite, and stopping Luis Enrique's PSG retaining it for a third year running.

"Finishing without trophies at Real Madrid is not a successful season," said Mourinho in August.

The coach's second stint at Madrid started smoothly with three wins from three games, but on Friday they fell to their first defeat, 1-0 at Real Betis.

Inter's visit to the Spanish capital will be an early test of whether Mourinho can restore Madrid's European fortunes, against the club with which he last reached the pinnacle of the competition. – AFP





# Carrick 'bitterly disappointed'

United manager blames poor decision-making for late draw

**M**ANCHESTER UNITED manager Michael Carrick blamed questionable decision-making from his players after a dramatic late draw away at Everton.

The Red Devils appeared destined for consecutive victories at Hill Dickinson Stadium following an enthralling Premier League contest. Bryan Mbeumo had put United ahead, before Tyrique George equalised in the closing stages.

Benjamin Sesko's 88th-minute header looked to have secured all three points for the Red Devils. However, there was still sufficient time for Ainsley Maitland-Niles to unleash a spectacular strike to bring the Toffees level six minutes into added time.

The result leaves Carrick's men with one victory from their first three League fixtures of the

season, following a summer transfer window which saw approximately £150 million (RM810m) invested.

Reflecting on his team's performance, Carrick felt that certain poor choices from his players unnecessarily complicated their afternoon.

Speaking to *NBC*, the United manager explained: "There was a lot of good things in the game for us. We played some really good football, were dangerous at times.

"For the most part we defended well as a team. The longer the game went on there were a few more balls into the box and a few decisions we made it more difficult for us when we should've seen it out really. We're disappointed we didn't come away with a win."

When pressed to elaborate on those errors, Carrick remained somewhat reserved. He

responded: "I'll keep them to myself a little bit but we should've seen the game out really so we're disappointed with that."

Carrick added: "There were two great strikes to be fair. We didn't give them real clear chances. We defended well.

"They had a few bits that dropped around the edge of the box. We defended the box pretty well for the most part. We look to the reasons how they ended up getting those opportunities but those were really good strikes.

"There was a lot of good things. Especially early on in the game and probably towards the end not so much. We looked dangerous. I thought we called a lot of problems. They got really good goals for different reasons and our second one should've been a winner."

Carrick added in his press conference: "We're

disappointed, bitterly disappointed to be in the position we were in the game twice, so close to the end.

"All the work that went into putting us in that position at different stages to then come away like that leaves us... yeah, it's not a great feeling, so, it feels like a defeat.

"It's a bit of a cliché, it's the obvious thing to say at this stage, but we have taken a point. We can't ignore that, but it feels that we should have had a lot more."

United are back in action at Old Trafford on Friday, taking on Azerbaijani outfit Sabah in their Champions League curtain-raiser.

Attention then turns to a hotly anticipated Premier League derby clash with Manchester City at Old Trafford on Sunday afternoon. - Express Newspapers

## Mudryk happy to finally make Tottenham debut

**MYKHAILO MUDRYK** has expressed his delight after making his Tottenham debut against Nottingham Forest on Saturday.

The 25-year-old, who earned a deadline day loan move to Spurs from Chelsea, was brought on in the 74th minute during Spurs' goalless draw at The City Ground.

It marked Mudryk's first competitive outing since November 2024, having finished a suspension for alleged doping offences.

Although his time on the pitch was limited, Mudryk caught the eye when introduced and produced signs that he could rediscover his best form in a Tottenham shirt.

In the closing stages, he earned a free kick in a dangerous position after an impressive piece of skill, and looked threatening whenever he got the ball.

Mudryk delivered a message to the Tottenham faithful following his debut for Roberto De Zerbi's side. In an *Instagram* story yesterday, the Ukraine international said: "No feeling better to be back on the pitch. First minutes in new colours. Thanks for support."

Despite a positive first performance for Tottenham, De Zerbi

admitted post-match that Mudryk is "not ready" to be starting fixtures just yet and must work diligently to achieve the "best physical condition".

"He's not ready yet. He's working to reach the best physical condition. He needs time, he needs work," De Zerbi said.

"In that position, we have Mathys Tel, big potential. But also Mathys takes too many wrong decisions, and Mudryk. So, two big players, two big potential players.

"But if we want to score, I think Marmoush has 15 goals. Solanke, the header for him, I consider a chance to score. It's not a shot on goal. But how many shots did Nottingham have?"

With Mathys Tel deployed on the left flank, Savio began on the right wing against Forest and appeared lively but was substituted after 60 minutes alongside Destiny Udogie.

De Zerbi revealed he would have preferred to keep them on the pitch, but was bound to a pre-agreed schedule with the medical team, which he admitted is for his "advantage". - Express Newspapers



Tottenham's Mykhailo Mudryk in action against Nottm Forest during the Premier League match on Saturday. - REUTERS/PIC

## Three talking points from the EPL weekend

**ARSENAL** laid down an early marker in the Premier League title race by coming from behind to end Chelsea's promising start under Xabi Alonso and keep pace with Manchester City at the top of the table. The Gunners' normally impenetrable defence was breached inside two minutes by the Blues, but they roared back for a 2-1 win to maintain a 100% start. Here's a look at three talking points from the Premier League weekend:

### Alonso's Chelsea handed title lesson

Chelsea arrived at the Emirates Stadium feted as a serious threat to Arsenal's hopes of retaining the title. Over the following 90 minutes, Chelsea boss Xabi Alonso learnt the difference between pretenders and genuine contenders. The Blues had kicked off Alonso's reign in free-scoring fashion, beating Fulham and Brighton in the top flight while netting seven times and easing past Luton in the League Cup. When Morgan Rogers put Chelsea ahead with a stylish volley it appeared the Alonso revolution was in full swing. But Arsenal are a far tougher proposition than Chelsea's first three opponents, as they proved with a stirring fightback. Kai Havertz exposed the flaws in Alonso's three-man central defence as he drifted to the edge of the area for a low drive that eluded Emiliano Martinez's weak attempted save. It was the kind of dubious keeping that Martinez was signed to eradicate after the hapless form of his predecessor Robert Sanchez. Chelsea's vaunted attack of Rogers, Cole Palmer and Joao Pedro were largely held in check after their opening salvo by an Arsenal defence featuring a first start for Ezri Konsa. The maturity and cutting edge of Mikel Arteta's men came to the fore again in the 50th minute when Martin Odegaard capped a flowing move with a clinical winner. Alonso has plenty to work on, while Arsenal are in the rudest of health.

### Isak shows sign of Liverpool life

Alexander Isak's three Premier League goals this season already matches his tally from an injury-disrupted first campaign at Liverpool. The Swedish international's struggles after his English transfer record £125 million (RM675m) move from Newcastle played a major role in Liverpool's fall from champions to just scraping into the top five. But the 26-year-old showed flashes of his old self at the World Cup and a full pre-season has allowed him to hit the ground running under Andoni Iraola. An Isak double inside the first 10 minutes at Ipswich on Saturday secured a first win of the Iraola reign. "I don't think the quality is anything that we doubt," said Liverpool captain Virgil van Dijk. "We've seen how good he is playing against him and now he's going to show the world with a Liverpool shirt as well."

### No case for Man Utd defence

Everton fans arrived at the Hill Dickinson Stadium still in uproar at the lack of attacking options available to David Moyes after a chaotic final few hours of the transfer window saw a deal for Folarin Balogun fall through. Yet the Toffees, just like newly-promoted Hull and Ipswich, still found a way to breach the Manchester United defence twice. Ainsley Maitland-Niles's spectacular strike rescued a 2-2 draw for Moyes's men with virtually the last kick of the game, but it was little more than Everton deserved. Excellent finishes from Bryan Mbeumo and substitute Benjamin Sesko and another encouraging performance from Marcus Rashford displayed United's strength going forward. But the decision to not reinforce Michael Carrick's defence in the transfer window is already looking misguided before much tougher tests begin with the visit of Manchester City this weekend.

## Pundits rule out Chelsea's chances

BY CHRIS WILSON

**SKY SPORTS** pundits Daniel Sturridge and Jamie Carragher have ruled Chelsea out of the Premier League title race after emphasising the "massive gulf" between the teams following the Blues' 2-1 defeat to Arsenal.

While some had seen Chelsea as potential title contenders early on this term, it was a match that served to highlight the gap between the two teams, while also highlighting Arsenal's status as favourites for 2026/27.

Both Carragher and Sturridge agreed that the Blues are lagging behind their London rivals as their rebuild continues, with the latter highlighting that Chelsea are "a work in progress".

"I feel as if (Chelsea) started the game well, but ultimately, you can see that there are few things that need to change for them to be as fluid as they

can be," said Sturridge at full-time on *Sky Sports*.

"They threatened Arsenal at various moments, but I think they are very much leaning into the front three right now. The chemistry is there for the front three, but outside of it, you can see it's a work in progress.

"What Xabi (Alonso) needs to do, and what he's going to address, is how to get the team playing the style he wants.

"They won the first two games, they gave a good account of themselves today, but I'm talking about communication, knowing where you want to be, knowing your teammates roles.

"You can still see there's a little bit of confusion, it's not seamless yet, and going forward they're reliant on the front three to win them games right now, and relying on their quality. That's not sustainable all season."

Carragher agreed with Sturridge,

though he preferred to emphasise how Arsenal are the finished article, explaining that "it doesn't look like anyone can score against them".

"There is a massive gulf between both teams - their XIs and the squads. It will take Chelsea a while to get to that level, if they can get there," explained Carragher, who added that he "thought Arsenal were fantastic".

"There is a massive gulf between both teams - their XIs and the squads. It will take Chelsea a while to get to that level, if they can get there," explained Carragher, who added that he "thought Arsenal were fantastic".

"We don't normally see Arsenal in these games, end-to-end, because they very rarely go behind. They're so strong defensively they don't need to get involved in those games. They still didn't look like they were going to give too much away." - The Independent



## RESULTS &amp; STANDINGS

**ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE:** Arsenal 2 (Havertz 25, Odegaard 50) Chelsea 1 (Rogers 2), Everton 2 (George 83, Maitland-Niles 90+6) Manchester United 2 (Mbeumo 46, Sesko 88).

|                | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Man City       | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 2 | 9   |
| Arsenal        | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 1 | 9   |
| Hull           | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 7   |
| Chelsea        | 3 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 8 | 7 | 6   |
| Brentford      | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 5   |
| Liverpool      | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 5   |
| Newcastle      | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 4 | 5   |
| Everton        | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 3 | 5   |
| Leeds          | 3 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 3 | 2 | 5   |
| Brighton       | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 4   |
| Man Utd        | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 6 | 4   |
| Sunderland     | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 4   |
| Crystal Palace | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3   |
| Ipswich        | 3 | 1 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 3   |
| Bournemouth    | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 5 | 2   |
| Nottm Forest   | 3 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 2   |
| Aston Villa    | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 1   |
| Tottenham      | 3 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 5 | 1   |
| Fulham         | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 4 | 7 | 0   |
| Coventry       | 3 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 5 | 0   |

**CHAMPIONSHIP:** Birmingham 2 Wolves 2, Swansea 0 Wrexham 0.

| TOP 4   | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|---------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Swansea | 5 | 3 | 2 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 11  |
| Boro    | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 8 | 5 | 10  |
| QPR     | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 4 | 10  |
| Bristol | 5 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 9 | 7 | 10  |

**LA LIGA:** Valencia 0 Barcelona 5 (Yamal 6, 84, Lopez 22, Raphinha 50, Pedri 79), Alaves 5 (Boye 27, 51, 68, Mariano 36, Ibanez 90) Osasuna 2 (Budimir 46, 64-pen), Malaga 0 Levante 0, Espanyol 1 (Fernandez 90+8) Sevilla 1 (Stassin 85).

| TOP 4       | P | W | D | L | F  | A | Pts |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|-----|
| Barcelona   | 4 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 17 | 2 | 12  |
| Alaves      | 4 | 3 | 1 | 0 | 10 | 3 | 10  |
| Real Madrid | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 10 | 3 | 9   |
| Real Betis  | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 | 5  | 5 | 9   |

**SERIE A:** Parma 1 (Lontani 60) Monza 1 (Robinson 38), Frosinone 3 (Raimondo 21, 39, Kvernadze 83) Venezia 2 (Yeboah 66, Sagrado 74), Bologna 2 (Piccoli 50, Dovbyk 90+1) Sassuolo 2 (Doig 19, Adzic 56), Juventus 1 (Gatti 90+2) AC Milan 1 (Cisse 68).

| TOP 4       | P | W | D | L | F  | A | Pts |
|-------------|---|---|---|---|----|---|-----|
| Roma        | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 1 | 9   |
| Inter Milan | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 8  | 3 | 9   |
| Como        | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 7  | 3 | 7   |
| AC Milan    | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5  | 2 | 7   |

**BUNDESLIGA:** Eintracht Frankfurt 1 Augsburg 4, Hamburg 0 Mainz 5.

| TOP 4      | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Augsburg   | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 1 | 6   |
| Freiburg   | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 6   |
| Dortmund   | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 6   |
| Elversberg | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 5 | 6   |

**FRENCH LIGUE 1:** Troyes 2 Strasbourg 6, Angers 1 Rennes 2, Marseille 2 Paris FC 3.

| TOP 4    | P | W | D | L | F | A | Pts |
|----------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| Monaco   | 3 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 1 | 9   |
| Paris FC | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 7   |
| Lyon     | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 6 | 2 | 7   |
| Lille    | 3 | 2 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 2 | 7   |

# True grit needed

**B**ADMINTON great Datuk Seri Lee Chong Wei believes Malaysian shuttlers have the talent to succeed internationally but need greater hunger and determination.

The Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) Performance Committee chairman said Malaysia's players needed greater hunger, pointing to France's breakthrough at the World Championships.

"If you had asked me before, no one would have believed France could win two World Championships (titles). They proved themselves, and we must also prove how we can improve for the future.

"You can see the French players enter the court with such hunger to win. Our players have it, but maybe not enough," he said.

Alex Lanier became France's first men's singles world champion, while Thom Gicquel-Delphine Delrue won the mixed doubles title. France also reached the Thomas Cup final in Horsens, Denmark, in May.

Chong Wei said that mentality was needed

among Malaysia's players, including Leong Jun Hao.

"I hope he knows what he needs and what he wants. He is no longer 18 or 20 years old...He doesn't have much time left and needs to know what he needs.

"He might have one last Olympic run in 2028 depending on his condition. It's about desire," he said.

The Olympic silver medallist stressed that talent alone was insufficient, with discipline remaining the foundation for reaching world level.

Meanwhile, Chong Wei plans to take the Lee Chong Wei Cup international next year after the edition attracted more than 2,200 junior players nationwide.

He said he intended to organise local and international editions, with the latter requiring sanctioning from Badminton Asia to avoid clashes with other junior tournaments.

National coaches monitored the tournament for candidates for BAM trials later this year. Chong Wei stressed selection would not be limited to

*Badminton great Chong Wei says Malaysian players have talent but need stronger desire to succeed*

semifinalists or finalists.

"Even someone who reached the quarterfinals might show talent and get called up. Even if they lost early, if we see talent, we might call them for selection to see how they progress in training at BAM," he said.

The tournament, held from Aug 29 to Sept 6 at Stadium Juara, Bukit Kiara, featured U-13, U-15 and U-17 categories, with RM104,000 in prize money.

Bukit Jalil Sports School shuttler Shahadzryl Suhaimi emerged as its standout performer, becoming the only player to win two titles.

The 13-year-old from Kuantan beat Penang's Jorus Lee Yi H'ng 12-15, 15-12, 15-12 in the U-13 singles final before partnering Gan Giap Han to defeat Sarawak's Ahmad Aniq Rafiq Mohd Zariffi-Lucas Ho Ming Joon 15-12, 15-12 in the Under-13 doubles final.

"From the start of the tournament, I already aimed for two championships," Shahadzryl said.

Shahadzryl said his next goal was to earn a place in the BAM setup. - Bernama

## BRIEFS

Selangor's Jefferson Tabinas takes a shot during the 2026 Super League match against Melaka FC at the MBPJ Stadium on Sunday.  
- BERNAMAPIC



## Harimau Muda edge Laos

**THE** national U-19 football team booked their spot in the 2027 AFC U-20 Asian Cup finals in China after completing their Group H campaign with a 2-1 victory over Laos at the Lao National Stadium KM16 in Vientiane on Sunday. The win saw Malaysia accumulate five points from one victory and two draws to finish as group runners-up behind leaders Indonesia, who topped the standings with seven points. The result was enough to ensure head coach Shukor Adan's squad qualified as one of the seven best group runners-up following the conclusion of all Asian qualifiers. Malaysia opened their campaign with a goalless draw against Indonesia before holding Australia to a 2-2 draw in their second match. Needing a win to advance, Malaysia started aggressively and opened the scoring through Haziq Aziz Ahyok in the seventh minute. Laos fought back after the break, stepping up the pressure for an equaliser, which Odin Siphaniit delivered in the 61st minute.

However, the national squad restored their lead through Fadhlul Hadi Zulkarnain in the 77th minute to seal the 2-1 victory. Based on the updated list of best runners-up, Malaysia qualified alongside Iraq, Thailand, India, Australia, Jordan and Syria. The 2027 AFC U-20 Asian Cup finals in China next March will feature 16 teams.

## Tabinas secures Selangor's win over Melaka with injury-time goal

**SELANGOR** defender Jefferson Tabinas' goal in injury time secured his team's victory over Melaka FC in their 2026/2027 Super League match at Petaling Jaya City Council Stadium on Sunday night. The 3-2 win also ensures

that Selangor remains third in the Super League, behind second-placed Kuching City FC, both with nine points and only goal difference separating them. Selangor's aggressiveness at the start of the match was rewarded when Chrigor Moraes scored their first goal in the 11th minute, and even though the home team tried to double their lead, the first half ended 1-0. Melaka tried to mount an offensive in the start of the second half hoping to get an equaliser, but Moraes made them suffer when he scored his second goal in the 51st minute, extending the home team's lead instead. Somehow stung into action, Melaka then managed to score two goals, through Syahir Abdul Rashid in the 59th and Dong-Hyeon Do in the 75th to even up the match. Luck was on Selangor's side however, and Melaka went home without a single point when Tabinas scored Selangor's third goal in injury time, much to the delight of the home crowd.

## Third straight defeat for juniors

**MALAYSIA'S** national women's junior hockey squad suffered their third straight defeat at the 2026 Women's Junior Asia Cup after going down 0-1 to South Korea in their Elite Group match in Moqi, China yesterday. South Korea's Park Soyeon scored the only goal of the match with a field goal in the 45th minute which proved enough to secure victory. The defeat followed Malaysia's 6-1 loss to hosts China in their opening match last Friday and an 11-1 thrashing by defending champions India in their second group match yesterday. Mohd Nasihin Nubli Ibrahim's charges will face Japan tomorrow in their final Elite Group match before entering the quarterfinals. Under the tournament format, all five teams in the Elite Group - Malaysia, China, India, Japan and South Korea - have already secured their places in the last eight. They will be joined by the top three teams from the Challenge Group, comprising Bangladesh, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Kazakhstan and Pakistan.

# Bibiana turns hunger into gold

**TWO DAYS** of barely eating to make weight paid off for Sarawak para powerlifter Bibiana Ahmad as she struck gold and smashed her own national record at the Selangor 2026 Para Malaysia Games (Para Sukma) in Shah Alam yesterday.

Bibiana lifted 86kg in the women's lightweight U-61kg category at the Selangor International Trade and Convention Centre (SITCC), surpassing her previous national record of 85kg.

The 2025 Asean Para Games gold medallist in the 67kg category admitted she had endured a

drastic weight cut after previously competing mainly in heavier divisions.

"It was drastic. I didn't eat for two days. I only drank a little water and took medication at night. During the day, I didn't take anything. So, when I got this result, it was definitely worth it," she said.

Bibiana said the decision to move down to U-61kg was made after discussions with her coach, who felt the heavier categories offered tougher competition.

"This is really the first time I've had to struggle to

lose weight, so I didn't expect to break the record either," said the 38-year-old.

Perak's Aphiradi Singchang took silver with 59kg, while Sarawak's Nurul Rabiatal Adawiyah Bakri won bronze with 56kg.

Meanwhile, Kelantan's Ahmad Shahmim Mohd Kadri completed a hat-trick of Para Sukma gold medals after winning the men's U-72kg category.

The 24-year-old achieved the feat across three different weight categories, having won the U-49kg title at the 2022 edition in Kuala Lumpur and

U-54kg gold at the 2024 Games in Sarawak.

He also rewrote the Games record three times yesterday, starting with a 161kg lift on his first attempt to erase the previous 157kg mark held by his coach Ma Hussein Mat Noh.

Ahmad Shahmim then improved the record to 166kg with his second attempt before raising it again to 171kg on his third. Perlis' Muhamad Syalqi Mohd Shikri took silver with 131kg, while Johor's Mohamad Auf Kasdan won bronze with 115kg. - Bernama





## Glorious hattrick

Kelantan's Ahmad Shahmim Mohd Kadri poses with the gold medal he won in the men's 72kg powerlifting event at the 2026 Para Sukma at the Selangor International Trade Centre (SITC) yesterday. — **BERNAMAPIC**

Story on page 31

# Arsenal raise the bar

*Arteta believes champions can improve further after comeback win exposes Chelsea's defensive weaknesses*

**ARSENAL MANAGER** Mikel Arteta believes his side can reach an even higher level than the one that delivered their first Premier League title last season after they came from behind to beat Chelsea 2-1 in an absorbing London derby yesterday.

Morgan Rogers stunned the Emirates Stadium by putting Chelsea ahead after just 77 seconds, but Arsenal responded with a commanding display.

Kai Havertz equalised before captain Martin Odegaard scored the winner after the interval, giving Arsenal a third victory from three League games and keeping them alongside Manchester City as the only teams with perfect records.

"I think it was an exceptional performance. I enjoyed every minute of it from the beginning to the end, and the beginning was tough," Arteta told reporters.

"I enjoyed it because the team reacted in a spectacular way. The conviction, the determination, the quality of which I intend to have them constantly, it was beautiful.

"It's an indication for us of how capable we are to perform at an even higher level than last season, and it depends on how we maintain and sustain that desire."

Arsenal ended a 22-year wait for the League title last season and Arteta believes lifting that burden could allow his players to approach the new campaign with greater freedom.

"It wasn't the right start but we certainly reacted in an amazing way. I enjoyed the way we competed. We took risks, it was a joy to watch," he said.

"We are very happy and we need to continue to raise the bar and look to improve every single time. We need to enjoy the victory because it was a big one today."

Odegaard, in particular, appears to have rediscovered his best form after an injury-disrupted season. The Norway midfielder has three goals from four games, including the Community Shield.

Arsenal's attacking threat was strengthened by the return to form of several key players, while new signing Christos Tzolis again showed flashes of quality from the flank, giving Arteta more options in attack this season.

"Odegaard has a point to prove from last season after missing so much football," Arteta said.

"When that happens, Kai the same, Bukayo the same, we miss so many attacking players last season for long, long periods.

"I don't know how many times they've played together those two in the last year or so, but probably not much, and when you start to feel the chemistry they have between them and what they can produce, it's great."

"His personal life is settled, he is available, he is training, he has his routine and if he is intelligent, he can take a lot of benefits from the players around him. He was outstanding today," Arteta said.

For Chelsea manager Xabi Alonso, the defeat provided a sharp reminder of the work still required during his early rebuilding process.

But Arsenal offered a far more demanding test and Chelsea were unable to sustain the momentum created by Rogers' early goal.

The defeat was Alonso's first in four games in all competitions and left Chelsea with seven goals conceded in three Premier League games.

"I learnt about the game, about us, about what we are doing, what we are starting," Alonso said. "This is a process. It's still early days for us. We want to start having clean-sheets. They will come.

"The players are committed to working hard, to knowing that we're on the way to compete in each game. Not happy that we couldn't get anything but we need to keep calm and carry on."

Alonso was particularly frustrated by the period after Chelsea took the lead, when Arsenal seized control.

"It hurts because a defeat has to hurt. It was a very intense game. We had chances to equalise," he said.

"After we scored, there were 15 or 20 minutes where we had to defend too much and we were struggling a bit to get control. Overall, it was a very tight, very intense game."

He also felt Chelsea could have defended Arsenal's winning goal better.

"We could do better with the second goal. You need to control the overloads on the right side," Alonso said.

Despite the disappointment, the Spaniard believes the experience of facing one of the league's established powers will benefit his young team.

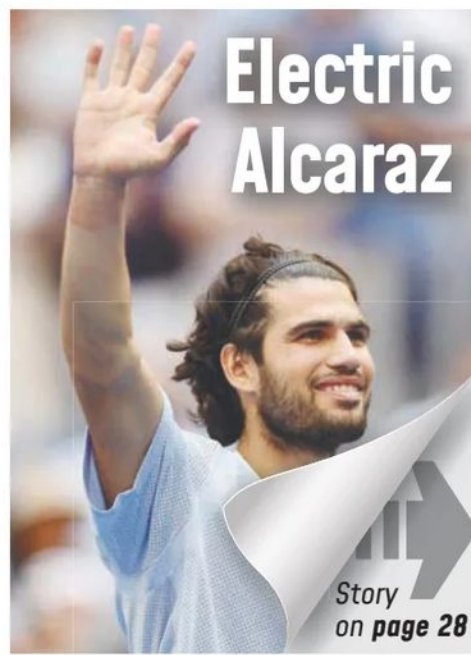
"The players have this attitude, this desire to compete better game by game to create something we believe in," he said.

"It's game three and this is going to be a long, long ride." — **AFP/Reuters**

## 2026 PARA SUKMA GAMES

### MEDAL TALLY

| STATE             | G  | S  | B  | Ttl |
|-------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. Sabah          | 20 | 15 | 14 | 49  |
| 2. Selangor       | 19 | 11 | 14 | 44  |
| 3. Sarawak        | 14 | 10 | 14 | 38  |
| 4. Johor          | 8  | 6  | 7  | 21  |
| 5. F. Territories | 5  | 5  | 4  | 14  |
| 6. Perlis         | 3  | 3  | 4  | 10  |
| 7. Kedah          | 3  | 1  | 4  | 8   |
| 8. Perak          | 2  | 9  | 5  | 16  |
| 9. Kelantan       | 2  | 6  | 3  | 8   |
| 10. Penang        | 2  | 6  | 1  | 9   |
| 11. Terengganu    | 2  | 4  | 3  | 9   |
| 12. Pahang        | 2  | 3  | 4  | 9   |
| 13. N. Sembilan   | 2  | 1  | 4  | 7   |
| 14. Melaka        | 1  | 5  | 1  | 7   |
| 15. Brunei        | 0  | 0  | 0  | 0   |



## Electric Alcaraz

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