



Residents demand state protection for 'Sore Thumb' beach

Tanjung Bungah group sets Sept 20 deadline for written park commitment.

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No shield for errant M'sian firms

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says Malaysia will not defend any local company found responsible for forest fires in Indonesia as Jakarta penalises concession owners.

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FIERY FLIGHT ... Emergency personnel work to douse the burning wreckage of the Flying Doctor Service helicopter that crashed near the Long Lellang airstrip in Ulu Baram, Sarawak, killing all five on board. — **SOCIAL MEDIAPIC**

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'NEP goals of restructuring society, erasing poverty still relevant'

Prime minister says policy about national upliftment, not creating privileges for select few.

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Tun Razak's '3C' warnings ring true today, says Anwar

PM says lessons on communism, communalism, and corruption must guide younger generation.

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New Economic Policy about poverty, not just race: PM

► 'Fundamental concepts of policy, particularly restructuring society and eradicating poverty, remain relevant'

■ BY QIRANA NABILLA MOHD RASHIDI AND KIRTINEE RAMESH
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KUALA LUMPUR: The New Economic Policy (NEP) should not be viewed solely as a race-based policy, but also understood through its original objectives of restructuring society and eradicating poverty, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking yesterday at the Remembering Statesman Tun Abdul Razak: Architect of Nation-Building

programme, he said the policy, introduced under the leadership of the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, is often misunderstood as well as misinterpreted.

"The NEP was not simply about giving opportunities to a particular group or creating privileges for a select few.

"Its objective was to restructure society and raise the socioeconomic standing of the Malays, including by creating opportunities for capable Malays to become entrepreneurs and compete economically with other

communities," he said.

Also present at the event were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, Communications Minister Datuk Seri Fahmi Fadzil, National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang, former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam, and members of the family of the late Razak, among others.

Anwar described the policy as a relatively radical initiative at the time, saying its approach was aimed at addressing the structural inequalities faced by society.

He also said Razak had remained committed to eradicating poverty and had never deviated from the objective when introducing the NEP.

"Many young people today may have forgotten that when he introduced the NEP, he never moved away from the objective of

eliminating poverty.

"He understood that poverty was not confined to one community. Although the majority of those affected were Malays at the time, the responsibility was to address poverty as a national issue.

"I still remember his (Tun Abdul Razak) speeches and the discussions surrounding them. He stated that 'poverty does not know skin colour', although it just so happened that the majority of those affected were Malays."

Anwar said there is a need to continue refining and strengthening the understanding of the NEP to ensure its principles remain relevant to present-day challenges.

He said its fundamental concepts, particularly restructuring society and eradicating poverty, remain relevant.

"For me, we need to continue refining and strengthening our understanding of the NEP so that it remains relevant to the demands of the present.

"Unfortunately, in today's narrative, the policy is sometimes interpreted primarily through the lens of race."

He called on the younger generation to understand the ideas and contributions of past statesmen, rather than viewing history merely as a record of past events.

He emphasised that remembering figures such as Razak should serve as an opportunity to revisit their struggles and rekindle the spirit that contributed to the country's development.

"Statesmen such as Tun Abdul Razak were not ordinary figures who simply came and went as part of an episode in history.

"It is our responsibility to keep the flame of their struggles alive and ensure their contributions continue to be understood by future generations," he noted.

Anwar said Razak's legacy should be viewed within the broader context of nation-building, noting that the leaders of the time worked with the people to build an independent nation despite significant challenges following independence.

He also said Razak's ability to engage with young people and understand their aspirations had left a lasting impression on those who had the opportunity to work closely with him.

Reading vital to building M'sian identity, says minister

KUALA LUMPUR: Building a stronger Malaysian identity requires a whole-of-society effort, with reading, civic education and appreciation of the Rukun Negara playing key roles in shaping a knowledgeable and united nation, said National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang.

He said the government's ambition to make Malaysia a Reading Nation by 2030 could not be achieved by the government alone, but also requires the involvement of educational institutions, families, communities, the private sector, media and young people.

"We want to create a society that does not just read more, but also reads to understand, think, evaluate and create.

"A nation that reads is a knowledgeable nation, and a knowledgeable nation is a competitive nation, and a competitive nation will determine the future of the country," he said in a Facebook post in conjunction with International Literacy Day yesterday.

Aaron said the government is developing the Blueprint Pembinaan Negara Bangsa under the 13th Malaysia Plan, focusing on strengthening national identity, understanding of the Rukun Negara, civic education, community unity and youth participation.

He said the initiative continues the foundations laid by former prime minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein, whose efforts included boosting national unity and establishing institutions such as the National Unity Department following the May 13, 1969 incident.

He added that the legacy continued through grassroots platforms, including more than 8,659 Rukun Tetangga areas, 5,507 Voluntary Patrol Schemes and over 1,700 Tabika Perpaduan.

He said the Rukun Negara, proclaimed on Aug 31, 1970, remains relevant in shaping national identity, while its values are being promoted through a "cradle to grave" approach, from Tabika Perpaduan to schools and higher education institutions.

Aaron said the National Library is expanding access to knowledge through reading promotion, media and information literacy programmes and 506 rural libraries.

— By **Qirana Nabilla Mohd Rashidi and Kirtinee Ramesh**



Anwar visiting the exhibition held in conjunction with the programme commemorating statesman Tun Abdul Razak at the Tun Abdul Razak Memorial in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. — **AMIRUL SYAFIQ/THESUN**

Tun Razak's warning on 3Cs holds true today, says Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: The warnings of the late Tun Abdul Razak Hussein on the 3Cs (communism, communalism and corruption) remain relevant today, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said although the nature of some of these threats have changed, Razak's warnings continue to offer important lessons for the younger generation in safeguarding the country's stability and future.

He emphasised that the communist threat during Razak's time was an armed threat that could not be taken lightly, with members of

the armed forces and police losing their lives in the fight against communist insurgents.

"As a young country, Malaysia had to spend a significant amount on defence and security, even as Tun Razak was deeply focused on national development," he noted.

On communalism, Anwar said Razak understood the danger of racial sentiments being exploited in a multiracial country.

Although Razak was a prominent Malay leader, he consistently reminded young Malays and student leaders against narrow communalism

and stressed the importance of embracing a broader sense of nationhood, he said.

He added that corruption was the third threat identified by Razak and remains a challenge that the country continues to face.

"His message was clear: corruption is a threat that can weaken the country from within."

Anwar said while the armed communist threat no longer exists in the same form, Malaysians must remain vigilant against foreign ideologies and influences that could undermine society.

He said Razak's emphasis on eradicating corruption and promoting national unity remains relevant to the country's current circumstances.

"I do not believe that remembering Tun Razak should be limited to recounting stories about his life, although those stories are certainly important. More importantly, we must understand his ideas and vision.

"The younger generation in particular must look at how we could elevate the dignity of our people and our nation by understanding and internalising the lessons and messages left by these leaders."

Anwar added that Razak had the ability to look beyond his time and identify challenges that could either strengthen or undermine the country.

"Today, our responsibility is to keep the flame of his struggle alive and ensure the values and ideas that shaped nation-building continue to guide us."

He said Razak's contributions should continue to be studied and appreciated, particularly his role in shaping Malaysia's development and nation-building agenda.

— By **Qirana Nabilla Mohd Rashidi and Kirtinee Ramesh**

'No protection for firms tied to Indonesia blaze'

➤ Allegations linking Malaysian companies to forest fires not yet verified: PM

■ BY FAIZ RUZMAN
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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia will not protect any Malaysian company found to be involved in the fires burning in Indonesia, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said yesterday, as he pushed for the transboundary haze crisis to be tabled at the Asean level.

Anwar said the relevant minister would raise the matter for discussion among Asean member states, although he cautioned that claims linking Malaysian companies to the fires have not yet been substantiated.

"That is the allegation, but actually, many of the fires we detected came from forest areas. Even if there are Malaysians

companies involved, we will give Indonesia the space to take action. If it happens there, they will take action there and we will not defend them," he told reporters after meeting staff from the Plantation and Commodities Ministry yesterday.

The Indonesian government announced on Aug 31 that it was investigating 19 companies after fires spanning a combined 11,047 ha were detected within their concession areas across seven provinces in Sumatra and Kalimantan, although the companies involved were not named at the time.

The republic's Forestry Ministry has since slapped administrative sanctions on five companies in West Kalimantan over fires found within their concessions, including

suspending their business licences and ordering environmental rehabilitation work.

Malaysian civil society groups have since pressed Indonesian authorities to reveal whether any Malaysian-linked firms are among those under investigation.

When asked whether Asean's existing frameworks are adequate to tackle the recurring haze problem, Anwar acknowledged there was room for improvement.

"I think the minister concerned must look at this seriously because this affects lives, especially children and babies. If we look at Serian, it has been extremely disruptive."

The haze had earlier triggered an emergency declaration in Serian, Sarawak on Sept 4 after the Air Pollutant Index recorded hazardous reading of 500. That emergency was lifted on Monday as air quality improved, although authorities cautioned that haze conditions in the region have not yet fully cleared.

Anwar denies claims of rift within Cabinet

PUTRAJAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim brushed aside any talk of a rift within the Cabinet, insisting that cooperation among ministers remains strong regardless of how things might sometimes look on social media.

He said clear policies, political stability and Cabinet cohesion have allowed the government to chart the country's direction and keep Malaysia's economy on track.

"It is true that we cannot deny that our performance has been encouraging because of clear policies, political stability and the cooperation within the Cabinet, although sometimes it looks a little different on social media. But in terms of cooperation, generally we work well together. This gives an indication of stability and allows us to plan for the country," he said in a speech at the Plantation and Commodities Ministry's assembly yesterday.

His remarks come after Bloomberg reported, citing unnamed sources, that ties between Anwar and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi had grown increasingly strained, with recent Cabinet meetings said to

be running shorter than usual.

On Sept 6, Zahid rejected any suggestion of a rift, saying he had no issues with Anwar on either a personal or official level, including during Cabinet meetings. He also reaffirmed that Barisan Nasional remains committed to preserving political stability through to the end of the government's term.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Malaysia has continued to outperform expectations despite ongoing geopolitical tensions and regional uncertainty.

He credited the civil service for turning government policy into tangible outcomes, adding that good policy alone was not enough without solid execution on the ground.

"If the policies are good but the civil service takes a complacent attitude and does not implement them well, certainly we would not be able to achieve this kind of performance."

He also urged civil servants not to grow complacent despite the progress made, calling for implementation to be faster and more effective going forward. — By **Faiz Ruzman**

'Umno, PAS share common ground'

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno and PAS have enough common ground to pursue cooperation despite differences in their political approaches, said Umno Ulama Council deputy chairman Datuk Dr Mohd Khairuddin Aman Razali.

He said the two parties share similar foundations and aspirations in their respective struggles, particularly when it comes to matters concerning Islam.

He added that differences in opinion, political interpretation and approach should not stop them from finding areas to work together for the benefit of the Muslim community and the nation.

Khairuddin said Islam sits at the core of PAS' party constitution, while Umno's own objectives include upholding, defending and advancing Islam as the religion of the Federation.

"Both parties therefore have common ground in terms of their principles and objectives. Why can't they unite? There are areas in which we could come together despite differences in interpretation, perspectives and approaches. We still have common ground," he said at the

Multaqa Ilmuan 2.0 Islam Malaysia programme at the World Trade Centre yesterday.

Khairuddin, who also serves as religious adviser to the deputy prime minister, said political cooperation does not require parties to see eye to eye on every issue.

He pointed to Umno's own partnership with Pakatan Harapan at the federal level as an example, adding that political arrangements at the state level could take a different shape entirely.

"These are all part of political dynamics. The question is how we manage our differences."

He also said leaders today should draw on the Prophet Muhammad's approach to peaceful politics, social harmony and nation-building when navigating their own political differences.

"If we examine the Prophet's approach to politics, peace, wellbeing and governing a nation, that is the spirit we want to draw from the state he built. That is the lesson from the Prophet's history that we should apply today." — By **Faiz Ruzman**

Zahid stokes 'blue wave' as Malacca braces for elections

KUALA LUMPUR: "When the dark clouds have passed, what we will see is a blue sky. We have turned Johor blue. *InshaAllah*, we will also turn Malacca blue. After that, we will turn the whole country blue."

That was Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi's rallying cry at the closing of the Malay Education Convention 2026, held at the World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

He called on those in attendance to mobilise at the grassroots level to build fresh momentum for the party.

"Let us go to the grassroots in large numbers to build this new

strength; strength through education, commitment and determination to bring about change."

Malacca is bracing for a state election, with Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh signalling on Sept 7 that the state assembly could be dissolved before the month is out.

Zahid himself had urged Ab Rauf on Sept 6 to move up the dissolution, adding that voters particularly younger ones deserve the chance to decide the state's direction sooner rather than later.

In his closing remarks, Zahid also linked progress in Malay education to

the country's broader productivity and capability.

"When Malay productivity increases, Malaysia's productivity also increases. When the community's mastery of knowledge expands, the country's capacity expands."

The convention brought together academics and student representatives to tackle education-related challenges facing B40 and M40 households, alongside discussions on UiTM's role and the future of the Universities and University Colleges Act (Auku). Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri

Dr Zambry Abd Kadir and Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Seri Ahmad Maslan were also present.

Earlier in the day, Zahid called for tighter cooperation between Umno and PAS religious scholars while closing the Multaqa Ilmuan 2.0 programme at the same venue.

He emphasised that unity between the two parties' *ulama* needs to move beyond mere political understanding and translate into concrete, joint action on issues affecting the Muslim community.

"Not merely sitting together, but working together. Not merely

agreeing on political understandings, but agreeing on the matters we must resolve. Let there be no betrayal among us. Let there be no lies between us."

Zahid said he hopes Umno's Ulama Council would draw up a practical, results-driven cooperation blueprint within 100 days one covering Muslim unity, the handling of political differences, and priority community concerns before presenting it to the Majlis Perundangan Umat for endorsement and joint implementation. — By **Faiz Ruzman**



Khairuddin said political cooperation does not require parties to see eye to eye on every issue.
— **BERNAMAPIC**



Helicopter crashes in Sarawak, no survivors

BY THESUN TEAM
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PETALING JAYA: A BO-105 helicopter carrying five people, including the pilot, crashed near the Long Lellang Short Take-Off and Landing airport in northern Sarawak, roughly 929km from Kuching, yesterday afternoon.

The Civil Aviation Authority of Malaysia (CAAM) said it was notified of the incident by the Flight Information Service at 3.58pm.

Yesterday, it confirmed that the aircraft registration number 9M-LLF was operating a Flying Doctor Service (FDS) flight at the time, but did not disclose the condition of those on board.

It added that the Air Accident Investigation Bureau, under the Transport Ministry, will investigate in accordance with Part XXVI of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2016.

Deputy Minister in the Premier's Department (Labour, Immigration and Project Monitoring) Datuk Gerawat Gala, who is also Mulu

➤ Air Accident Investigation Bureau to investigate in accordance with Part XXVI of the Civil Aviation Regulations 2016

assemblyman, confirmed the crash after being alerted by residents of Long Lellang.

He said he has informed Layang Layang Aerospace Sdn Bhd, the operator of the helicopter, and expected the company to alert search-and-rescue authorities.

Gerawat reportedly said he could not confirm the number of casualties, the exact number of people on board beyond the reported five, or the aircraft's point of departure, saying those details would need to come from Layang Layang.

He said the helicopter was en route to Long Lellang when it went down, and noted that photos and videos of the incident believed to have been filmed by local residents

were already circulating on social media before he could verify them.

As of press time, official reports from the Fire and Rescue Department and the Health Ministry confirmed there were no survivors in the crash.

Sarawak police commissioner Datuk Mohamad Zainal Abdullah said the crash is under investigation.

He said a search and rescue team would need roughly 10 hours by road to reach the site from the Marudi district police headquarters.

He added that police expressed hope to deploy air support from the Kuching Air Base, pending CAAM approval given current haze conditions.

According to preliminary information reported by the

Sarawak Tribune, the aircraft came down near the end of runway 04 at 3.32pm while operating the Miri-Ba Lai-Long Siut-Long Lellang FDS route.

Long Lellang airport personnel alerted the Miri airport operations team at 3.36pm, with an Emergency Operations Centre activated in Miri four minutes later.

Aviation Security and the Airport Fire and Rescue Service were also mobilised, along with villagers, People's Volunteer Corps members, and Health Ministry personnel who assisted at the scene.

The five people believed to have been on board were named locally as Captain Zainol, Dr Ainul, medical assistant Alexson Adit and nurses Debra Moset and Jessie Paya.

However, their identities have yet to be officially confirmed by authorities.

The FDS was launched as a pilot project in Sarawak in September 1973 to extend healthcare access to communities in remote areas of the state.

Perak exceeds 100% SSR in 18 food products

IPOH: Perak has achieved a self-sufficiency ratio (SSR) of more than 100% for 18 of 30 major food commodities in 2025, the State Legislative Assembly was told yesterday.

State Rural Development, Plantation, Agriculture and Food Industry Committee chairman Datuk Mohd Zolkafly Harun said the commodities included rice, coconut, sweet corn and durian.

"Perak also continues to play an important role as a major food producer in the country, contributing 98.3% of national production of jicama, 44.6% of sweet potato and 29.8% of sweet corn."

He was replying to a question from Wong Chai Yi (PH-Simpang Pulai) on the strategy and latest progress of the Perak Food Security Plan to establish the state as a major food production hub, particularly through the adoption of modern agricultural technology or smart farming.

Mohd Zolkafly said Perak has remained the country's second-highest rice producer since 2023, while ranking third for banana and durian production, showing that the state has a strong foundation to further develop its position as a major food production hub.

He said to achieve that goal, the state government is implementing the strategy in phases, focusing on targeted new projects and expanding existing ones through allocations from the state and federal governments.

"In the long term, the approach involves specialising crops by district based on land suitability, agroclimatic conditions, infrastructure and market potential.

"For example, coconut cultivation is prioritised in Bagan Datuk; durian in Larut Matang and Selama and Hulu Perak; sweet corn in Perak Tengah and Kinta; while major vegetable production is being strengthened in Kinta and Kampar."

Mohd Zolkafly added that the state government, through the Perak Agricultural Development Corporation, is also focusing on Smart Indoor Farming, particularly in urban areas such as the Kinta Valley, as a key approach to increasing productivity amid increasingly limited land resources.

This includes the adoption of technologies such as the Internet of Things, artificial intelligence, electrical conductivity and pH sensors, as well as automated nutrient control systems in hydroponic and fertigation activities. – Bernama

Penang locals demand decision on natural park

BY T.C. KHOR
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GEORGE TOWN: Residents of Tanjung Bungah here are pressing the Penang government for a written response on their proposal to turn the Sore Thumb area and its adjoining public beach into a natural park.

Resident Oo Huei Ying said residents want a clear commitment from Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow and Tanjong Bunga assemblyman Zairil Khir Johari on when they can expect a formal reply.

She said numerous follow-up emails and WhatsApp messages have gone unanswered.

The residents are asking the state to officially adopt their detailed park proposal, protect the gazetted Sore Thumb area along with the public beach and coastline, involve residents meaningfully in the park's final design, halt any irreversible construction work until the plan is finalised, and commit to a firm implementation timeline for the proposed Coastal Nature's Park.



Residents emphasised that any clearing of trees or destruction of existing habitats would be irreversible in the short term, with consequences that could last for decades. – PIC COURTESY OF TANJONG BUNGAH RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

They have set a deadline of Sept 20 for the state to deliver its written decision.

Tanjong Bungah Residents Association chairman Zulfikar Abdul

Aziz framed the standoff as a broader test of the state government's priorities.

"This is a test for the Penang government on whether people or

developers take priority," he said, criticising what he described as the administration's dismissive attitude towards residents' concerns.

He added that it is disappointing that residents had to spend their own time and money simply to push for proper governance.

The demand comes after more than four years of back-and-forth between residents and the state over the fate of Lot 4658 and the broader Sore Thumb site.

Residents have questioned why, if the area is genuinely intended to become a public park, their detailed proposal has still not received a decision.

They emphasised that any clearing of trees or destruction of existing habitats would be irreversible in the short term, with consequences that could last for decades.

To highlight their concerns, residents held a gathering on Sunday evening at the pocket park next to Hillside Foodcourt.

theSun has contacted Zairil Khir for a response as of press time.

Selangor monitoring resources amid data centre expansion

SEPANG: The Selangor government is closely monitoring water and power supply capacity amid the rapid expansion of data centres in the state, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the state would not approve data centre projects without ensuring adequate water and electricity supply, as public concerns over the industry's resource requirements increase.

"We are very aware of the concerns

of the public related to power and water supply, and we are monitoring closely.

"Without enough water, data centres cannot be approved in Selangor," he told reporters after witnessing the handover of vacant possession for NCT Smart Industrial Park (NSIP) Phase 1 here yesterday.

Amirudin was commenting on NCT Alliance Bhd's recent announcement that it had signed a term sheet for the proposed sale of a 40ha land parcel

within NSIP for data centre development that could support up to 800 megawatts of capacity.

He said every data centre application must obtain approval from the Federal Data Centre Task Force, with power supply requirements to be cleared by Tenaga Nasional Bhd and water supply by Pengurusan Air Selangor Sdn Bhd.

He also said the state government is confident that its water supply capacity would be sufficient,

particularly with the Rasau Water Supply Scheme expected to provide an additional 350 million litres per day (MLD), while the capacity could reach 700 MLD upon full completion of its first phase.

He stressed that the state government is encouraging data centre operators to adopt water-recycling systems and technologies that could reduce water consumption for cooling purposes.

"We are encouraging the recycling

of water so that the processed water is not discharged but instead recycled within each data centre."

Amirudin said the rapid expansion of data centres could generate wider economic benefits by supporting the development of the electrical and electronics, chip and semiconductor sectors.

He added that Selangor has introduced a 30% policy to ensure SMEs benefit from data centre operations in the state. – Bernama

■ BY THE SUN TEAM
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PUTRAJAYA: Interpol in Manchester is assisting Malaysian authorities in efforts to locate former political research assistant Muhammed Yusoff Rawther, who is currently in the United Kingdom after seeking asylum there.

Deputy public prosecutor (DPP) Mohd Asnawi Abu Hanipah told the Court of Appeal yesterday that the prosecution had written to the National Central Bureau Interpol in Manchester on July 22 to obtain information on the whereabouts of Yusoff, 33, and facilitate the personal service of the notice of appeal on him.

"Until today, there is no confirmation on the respondent's whereabouts or attempts to serve the notice of appeal," he reportedly said during a case mention before a three-member panel led by Justice Azman Abdullah.

The prosecution is appealing the Kuala Lumpur High Court's June 12, 2025 decision to acquit and discharge Yusoff, without calling him to enter his defence, on charges of trafficking 305g of cannabis and possessing two

UK Interpol assistance sought to locate ex-political aide

► So far, no confirmation on whereabouts of asylum seeker or attempts to serve notice of appeal, says DPP

imitation firearms.

Mohd Asnawi said the prosecution would continue efforts to personally serve Yusoff with the notice of appeal.

He also argued that Section 314 of the Criminal Procedure Code, which deals with the non-appearance of a respondent in a criminal appeal, had yet to be invoked in the case.

This was because Yusoff, through his lawyer Muhammad Rafique Rashid Ali, had previously

indicated that he was prepared to attend the appeal proceedings remotely via Zoom.

"To me, Section 314 is yet to be invoked because the respondent wants to participate but through a non-physical medium," he said.

However, Justice Azman said Yusoff's physical presence was required as the matter involved a criminal appeal, warning that allowing proceedings to continue without the respondent could set a precedent for

future cases.

"This involves a criminal appeal. The court does not want a situation where once a decision has been reached and it involves arrest, the arrest could not be executed.

"We require the respondent's presence," he said.

Justice Hayatul Akmal Abdul Aziz and Justice K. Muniandy were also on the panel.

Rafique, meanwhile, maintained that his client wanted the appeal to proceed despite being overseas, in line with his earlier letter dated June 2 to the Court of Appeal.

He said Yusoff was in the UK and had applied for asylum on human rights grounds.

The court then fixed Nov 4 for further mention to allow the prosecution more time to pursue

efforts to serve the notice.

Yusoff was charged on Sept 12, 2024 with trafficking 305g of cannabis, allegedly found in his vehicle near a *surau* at the Kuala Lumpur police headquarters on Sept 6 that year.

He was also charged with possessing two imitation firearms near a condominium in Jalan Bukit Kiara on the same day.

The cannabis charge was framed under Section 39B(1)(a) of the Dangerous Drugs Act 1952, while the firearms charge was under Section 36(1) of the Arms Act 1960.

The High Court acquitted him after ruling that the prosecution had failed to establish a *prima facie* case at the end of its case. Yusoff subsequently left Malaysia and sought asylum in the UK.

Chairman held in RM1.6m bribery case

KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) has detained a chairman of a housing committee of a statutory body in Johor for allegedly soliciting and accepting bribes as well as abusing his position in matters involving applications for housing lots.

According to sources, the man, in his 40s, was detained when he turned up to give his statement at the Johor MACC office at 7.30pm on Monday, Bernama reported.

"Preliminary investigations found that the suspect allegedly committed the offences between 2016 and 2025," added the sources.

The sources said the suspect was believed to have solicited about RM4,000 from each of 400 applicants for housing lots, involving a total of about RM1.6 million. The money was then allegedly misappropriated for personal use through withdrawals from the committee's bank account using fake invoices.

Meanwhile, Johor MACC director Datuk Hairuzam Mohamad Amin@Hamim, when contacted, confirmed the arrest and said the case was being investigated.

Six rescued Gunung Gerah hikers leave Pos Kemar for Gerik

IPOH: The rescued six hikers, who took part in the Trans Gerah Expedition in Gunung Gerah, Kelantan, have safely left Pos Kemar yesterday morning.

The six hikers were reported missing while climbing the mountain on Aug 29.

Perak Fire and Rescue Department director Datuk Sayani Saidon said the six – Wan Ahmad Aslam Wan Zairudin, 39; his wife Siti Zulaiha Norizan, 39; their children Diya Raisha, 13; and Ahmad Raef, nine; as well as two mountain guides Shafiee Sidek, 49; and Hazman Mamat, 43, left Pos Kemar at 8.30am yesterday morning and arrived at Trojan Jetty, Tasik Blanding at 10.20am.

"All the hikers and the SAR (search and rescue) team arrived safely at Pos Kemar at 9.15pm on Monday night."

The hikers had to undergo check-up at the Pos Kemar Health Clinic before resting at the facility.

Meanwhile, Perak police chief Datuk Mohd Alwi Zainal Abidin said the hikers would be taken to the Gerik district police headquarters for documentation after leaving Pos Kemar.

"They will all be allowed to return home after the documentation process is completed," he said at a press conference at the Kerian police headquarters here yesterday. – Bernama



The hikers arrive at Trojan jetty, Tasik Blanding in Gerik. – BERNAMAPIC

Appeal to postpone RM250,000 payment to Perlis mufti rejected

KUALA LUMPUR: The High Court yesterday dismissed an application by a Facebook account owner to defer payment of RM250,000 in damages awarded to Perlis mufti Datuk Dr Mohd Asri Zainul Abidin in a defamation suit over posts linking him to GISB Holdings Sdn Bhd (GISBH).

Judicial Commissioner Rihaida Rafie also dismissed an application by defendant Mohd Nawawi Abdul Razak, 39, to defer the order requiring him to remove the defamatory post, refrain from publishing similar statements on social media and pay

RM50,000 in costs.

However, the court allowed Mohd Nawawi's application to postpone the order requiring him to apologise to the plaintiff through his Facebook account pending the outcome of his appeal.

Earlier, lawyer Mahmud Abdul Jumaat, representing Mohd Nawawi, submitted that denying the postponement would prejudice his client, who had filed an appeal against the decision at the Court of Appeal on Aug 12.

"If the appeal is allowed later, the apology made will affect the

defendant's reputation. As for the damages, my client is unable to pay due to financial difficulties and he has deleted the post," he said.

Mohd Asri's lawyer Fatima Zulaikha Ahmad Bashri objected to the application, arguing that financial problems did not amount to "special circumstances" warranting a stay of execution.

On July 31, Rihaida allowed part of the suit filed by Mohd Asri, 55, after finding that the first of the four statements published by the defendant was defamatory, while the plaintiff had failed to prove that the

remaining three statements fulfilled the legal elements of defamation.

The court ordered Mohd Nawawi to pay RM250,000 in global damages, with interest at 5% per annum from the date of judgment until full settlement, as well as RM50,000 in costs to Mohd Asri.

It also granted the plaintiff's application requiring the defendant to publish an apology on his Facebook account within seven days from yesterday, remove the defamatory posts from the same account, and refrain from publishing any further defamatory statements

through the account, whether personally or through his employees.

Mohd Asri, who is also a lecturer, filed the suit on Oct 10, 2024, alleging that the defendant had published four defamatory statements on the Facebook account "Mohd Nawawi Abd Razak" on Sept 20, 2024, which were accessible to the public.

He claimed the posts implied, among other things, that he was a leader or supporter of the GISBH movement, had close ties with the group, and condoned superstitious practices in return for benefits from GISBH. – Bernama



BAGAN SERAI: At Bukit Merah Orang Utan Island, a one-year-old orangutan named Orked is too young to understand the role she may eventually play. She is the youngest of 15 orangutans at the sanctuary, and foundation leaders hope that she and future arrivals could help build a population large enough to safeguard the species against a worst-case scenario in the wild.

Bukit Merah Orang Utan Island Foundation adviser Azmil Khuzaid Zakaria said the long-term goal is to grow the island's orangutan population to about 50 animals, a project that could take 15 to 20 years.

He added that the idea is to create what he calls an "assurance population", one large enough to help repopulate the species in the wild if a catastrophic decline ever occurred there.

He explained that reaching that number would provide a sufficient base to begin rebuilding wild populations, although the process would still take decades.

He also said the foundation's latest count for 2026 lists eight males and seven females, ranging from Orked and two-year-old Aggy to older residents such as 40-year-old B.J., 39-year-old Baboon and 32-year-old Ah Ling.

Azmil Khuzaid said conservation work in recent years has helped slow, although not reverse, the decline of orangutans in the wild.

He added that because of that continued fragility, the foundation is not yet ready to release island-born animals back into their natural habitat.

He said the original plan had been to gradually reintroduce orangutans to the wild as the island's population expanded, rather than continuing to grow the facility itself.

He also said that plan has been shelved, partly because long-term captive animals need specialised training before release, and partly due to ongoing uncertainty about wild population health.

Azmil Khuzaid said this led the foundation towards a different approach: rather than treating the island purely as a temporary shelter, it would expand the site enough to sustain a larger, self-sufficient population that could serve as a genetic backup for the species.

He said currently, less than five of

Bukit Merah orangutans vital to safeguarding species

» Sanctuary aims to build contingency plan for future of primates

the island's six hectares are in use, and that section is nearly full with room for perhaps two or three more animals, five at most.

He also said an additional two hectares of planned expansion, focused mainly on animal habitats rather than facilities, could theoretically support about 60 orangutans, although the foundation intends to cap the population at approximately 50.

Azmil Khuzaid said housing eight adult males creates its own challenges, since male orangutans compete for dominance as they mature, sometimes requiring separation.

He recounted an incident involving Mike, once the island's dominant male, who was seriously injured after losing a fight with B.J. and did not survive much longer afterward.

He said the foundation must also separate different Bornean orangutan subspecies and carefully manage genetic diversity within what remains a relatively closed group.

He also said to widen the gene pool, it collaborates with zoos and other organisations on animal exchanges.

He said one of the island's orangutans is currently at the Malacca Zoo following an unsuccessful breeding attempt, adding that the plan is to bring the animal home and send a different pair in its place, while talks continue with other institutions.

Azmil Khuzaid said population



Orked, a young orangutan that is part of the current population of the sanctuary.

— PIC COURTESY OF MK LAND HOLDINGS BHD

growth through natural breeding alone is slow, as orangutan infants typically stay with their mothers for five to seven years, during which the mother usually would not have another offspring.

He added that as a result, the foundation is also looking at bringing in orangutans from elsewhere to speed up growth.

Beyond conservation, Azmil Khuzaid expressed belief that a larger island population could give

researchers a rare opportunity to study orangutan behaviour and social dynamics up close, something notoriously difficult in the wild, where the animals could go unseen for days at a time, even by dedicated researchers.

He said sustaining the vision is not cheap, and costs would approximately triple if the population triples.

He also said the sanctuary was historically funded largely through

EMKAY Group founder, the late Tan Sri Mustapha Kamal Abu Bakar, who helped establish the island, although ticket sales now cover much of its running costs.

Azmil Khuzaid said since taking on his role in 2020, it has become clear that orangutan conservation should not depend on a single benefactor.

He added that the foundation now partners with groups including the Malaysian Palm Oil Green Conservation Foundation and, most recently, Marriott Bonvoy, while continuing to seek additional collaborators whether through funding, time or expertise.

He said energy costs alone eat up nearly a third of the operating budget.

He also said the island currently relies on a diesel generator, with electricity available only about 12 hours a day, adding that a planned partial shift to solar power is expected to cover about 30% of energy needs.

Azmil Khuzaid said round-the-clock power would allow better food storage and stronger emergency preparedness.

He added that behind the scenes, a team of 17 including rangers, nurses and a veterinarian keeps the sanctuary running.

He also said the foundation is also considering reviving its "voluntourism" programme, which brought international and local volunteers to help with island upkeep before the Covid-19 pandemic.

He said reaching a 50-strong population remains a multi-decade goal requiring new enclosures, sustained funding, careful genetic planning and broader partnerships.

However, for the island's 15 residents, that milestone carries real stakes: ensuring that a population exists to help rebuild if wild orangutans ever face collapse.

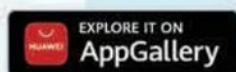
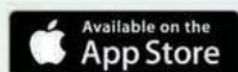


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64% pay hike for S'pore PM

➤ Lawmakers to debate changes tomorrow

SINGAPORE: Ministerial salaries in Singapore, already among the world's highest, will go up from Oct 15, boosting the prime minister's annual pay by 64% to S\$3.6 million (RM11.5 million) from S\$2.2 million, Prime Minister Lawrence Wong said.

Singapore pays its political leaders high salaries to attract talent and deter graft, but the issue is thorny in the city-state, where the median wage worker made S\$5,775 a month last year.

Wong yesterday acknowledged the sensitivity in a speech in parliament, saying political salaries were a difficult and emotive topic.

"The sums involved are more than what most citizens earn, so I understand why Singaporeans scrutinise them closely and why many feel strongly about the matter," Wong said, adding that he would donate his increment to charity for the next five years.

But it was not just a matter of pay, he said.

"It is ultimately about whether

Singapore will continue to have the quality of political leadership we need to take our country forward and to serve Singaporeans well in the years ahead," Wong said.

In comparison, the British prime minister makes US\$230,000 (RM933,462) while President Donald Trump earns US\$400,000, according to data from non-profit PoliticalSalaries.com, which ranks the Singapore prime minister as the highest-paid world leader.

The data set shows the Hong Kong chief executive is the second-highest earner with US\$719,000 annually, followed by the Swiss president at US\$606,000.

A Singapore junior minister, whose salary is now S\$1.1 million a year, will have a new salary that can go up to S\$1.8 million a year, depending on performance and responsibilities.

The increment for political office holders will start with a one-off increase of up to 9%, with subsequent adjustments based on performance, rather than an immediate jump to S\$1.8 million.

By the end of this term of government, most junior ministers will earn about S\$1.35 million and those who do well can "move higher," said Wong.

Singapore last adjusted

ministerial salaries in 2012, when ministers took a pay cut of 36% to allay public discontent about how much they earned.

Lawmakers will debate the issue in parliament tomorrow.

The numbers have provoked comment on social media, with some users on Reddit calling the pay adjustment "tone deaf" while others said the hikes would be justified if ministers did a better job of navigating challenging times.

Opposition parties have not issued statements on the topic.

Wong said it was "easier politically" for him to leave things as they were but that "would not be the right thing to do" as salaries in the private sector, civil service, judicial service and public sector had moved higher since 2012.

After the 2012 pay cut, salaries were reviewed again in 2017 but the government chose not to adopt a recommendation to hike. A second review due in 2023 was deferred because of economic uncertainty.

The city state uses the salary of the top 1,000 Singaporean earners as a benchmark for ministerial pay, as their qualities and abilities "reflect the desired calibre of the people whom Singapore needs for good government," the Public Service Division says on its website.

Referring to the top earners' benchmark, Chong Ja Ian, a political scientist at the National University of Singapore, said: "Given rising income disparity, this could mean that ministers associate more with the very rich rather than the experiences of ordinary Singaporeans." – Reuters

BRIEFS

INDONESIA FLIGHTS RESUME GRADUALLY

JAKARTA: Indonesia had planes flying again yesterday after a volcanic eruption forced the country's major airports to close for days. The disruption, caused by the eruption of Anak Krakatau, halted nearly 3,000 flights and stranded more than 340,000 passengers. The country's main airport serving the capital Jakarta and four other airports reopened early yesterday after authorities cleared volcanic ash from critical infrastructure. Transport Minister Dudy Purwagandhi said it would take time for flight schedules to return to normal. He said three flights departed after the airport reopened, including two commercial flights to eastern Indonesia. Anak Krakatau erupted at least three times yesterday. – AFP

2,000 FREE MEALS KITCHENS SHUT

JAKARTA: The agency for free meals has temporarily shut nearly 2,000 kitchens for failing to register for hygiene checks. The National Nutrition Agency suspended 1,999 kitchens because they did not register with the Health Ministry to undergo certifications, agency chief Sudaryono said. There are 27,022 kitchens distributing free meals across Indonesia. "The hygiene and sanitation certification is a mandatory requirement for kitchens that provide free meals," said Sudaryono. He said compliance with hygiene and sanitation standards was non-negotiable to ensure food quality and the safety of recipients. – Reuters

Nepal rescue focused on three tunnels

KATHMANDU: Rescuers in Nepal are focusing on three hydropower project tunnels where they believe dozens of workers could be trapped, authorities said yesterday, two weeks after a devastating flood killed hundreds and left thousands missing in the Himalayan country and Tibet.

At least 11 hydropower projects were engulfed when a mountain side collapsed into a river on the Nepal-China border on Aug 26, burying the entrances to the tunnels of these projects under debris and mud and cutting off those trapped inside.

"Our search operation is focussed on finding survivors, including in tunnels. Our bigger focus is on the Chilime hydroelectric project, where we believe people are trapped, because there was a canteen, residency and arrangements for food," said Dharma Raj Upreti, chief of the country's disaster authority.

Teams were also focused on tunnels of the Upper Trishuli 3A and 3B projects, which are linked by an interconnected tunnel, said Upreti.

"Oxygen has been supplied to these tunnels through pipes and we have sent new equipment needed for the operation (to open a passage into them)," he said.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah vowed there would be no let-up in the rescue operations.

"We know our responsibility and its sensitivity. We are translating the humanitarian spirit of the Nepali people into practice through the search and rescue operation," he said in a social media post.

About 121 of a total 900 people missing from the hydroelectric projects could have been trapped in



Nepali citizens lighting oil lamps and candles as they observe a national day of mourning for victims of flash floods in Kathmandu on Monday. – AFP/IC

these tunnels, army rescuers said, while others may have been working elsewhere at the power plants but not inside the vast network of tunnels.

In recent days, search teams have rescued four people, including a Chinese national who was pulled

from a tunnel on Saturday. The others were two hydropower workers rescued from another tunnel on Friday and a Nepali woman pulled out from her buried house on Saturday.

At least 1,399 people have been killed by the mudslide and more than

5,400 are missing in Nepal and Tibet. The toll includes 43 people who died on the Chinese side and 519 missing there, as of Saturday.

None of the bodies retrieved in Tibet were those of foreign nationals, Xinhua news agency reported yesterday. – Reuters

Filipino boxing great takes up fight against poverty

MANILA: Boxing great Manny Pacquiao joined President Ferdinand Marcos Jr's Cabinet yesterday as head of the government's anti-poverty agency, vowing to help Filipinos facing hardships all too familiar to him.

The 47-year-old former senator was appointed lead convener of the National Anti-Poverty Commission (NAPC), his first Cabinet post after a long political career that included service in Congress and the Senate, an unsuccessful 2022 presidential run and a failed bid to return to the Senate last

year as part of Marcos' administration-backed ticket.

As NAPC chief, Pacquiao will coordinate government efforts to reduce poverty, which he said he understands firsthand.

"I came from poverty. I experienced sleeping on cardboard on the streets, drinking only water, having nothing to eat, and saving loose coins just to help my family," Pacquiao said in a statement.

Pacquiao, who came from impoverished beginnings, worked as a

ship stowaway and fought on the streets as a boy, earning US\$2 per fight. His net worth was US\$220 million (RM892 million) last year, according to a *Sports Illustrated* article.

He takes over the anti-poverty agency as the Marcos administration seeks to cut poverty incidence to 8-9% by 2028. Government data showed the rate fell to 9.7% last year, equivalent to about 11.08 million Filipinos living below the poverty line.

The only boxer to win world titles in eight weight divisions, Pacquiao

remains among the Philippines' most revered sporting figures, with his biggest fights drawing everyone from presidents and Hollywood stars to ordinary Filipinos, often bringing the nation of 119 million people to a standstill.

The southpaw retired in 2021 but returned to the ring in July last year to face Mario Barrios for the WBC welterweight championship on July 19 in Las Vegas. He was inducted into the International Boxing Hall of Fame last year. – Reuters



Pacquiao ... joins Marcos' Cabinet. – REUTERS/IC



Hefty fines proposed if big tech fails 'duty of care'

Canberra unveils draft laws

SYDNEY: Social media giants face US\$78 million (RM316 million) fines if they fail to protect young users from harmful content, Australia's prime minister said yesterday as he unveiled draft laws reining in big tech.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese released draft laws that would place a "duty of care" on the firms behind popular platforms such as Facebook, TikTok and Instagram.

Social media companies would be held responsible for protecting under-18s from pornography, online bullying, content that glorified crime and content that encouraged eating disorders.

"We took action because the community said

'enough is enough,' Albanese told reporters.

"We would no longer let Australian kids be treated as commodities instead of children."

Social media firms face mounting scrutiny over their use of allegedly addictive algorithms and stand accused of directing users to extreme content to keep them scrolling.

The draft laws build on Australia's world-first social media ban for under-16s, which came into effect late last year.

Companies found to be flouting their "duty of care" could be fined up to A\$109 million (RM316 million), Albanese said.

The legislation includes a requirement that platforms allow users to "opt out" of powerful algorithms that determine what comes up on social media feeds.

"This will give Australians greater choice over their platforms and what they see," he said.

It would require firms like Meta, which owns Facebook and Instagram, to give users the option of turning off algorithms that tailor recommendations to their personal taste.

Communications Minister Anika Wells said big tech was facing a "reckoning".

"Their platforms and tools have infiltrated our daily lives in ways that we could never have imagined," she told reporters yesterday.

"Some good, but some with terrible consequences."

Data last month found that under-16s in Australia were increasing their use of social media apps such as Instagram and TikTok despite the ban.

The draft laws would be introduced to parliament later this year after consultation with social media companies, industry bodies and civil society groups. – AFP

Australia braces for its fire season

CLARENCE TOWN: Australian firefighters say they are on alert as temperatures in the southern hemisphere begin to pick up, following a devastating fire season in Europe.

Australia is already experiencing hotter, drier weather and an increased risk of wildfires.

"We're concerned this year that we'll see increased fire risk (versus) earlier years," said Trent Curtin, head of the New South Wales Rural Fire Service, the world's largest volunteer firefighting force.

Large parts of Europe endured sweltering summers, leaving vegetation tinder-dry and fuelling severe wildfires.

Britain had its hottest summer since records began, with Italy's the warmest for 75 years.

"We're seeing some extraordinary conditions in the northern hemisphere," Curtin said.

"They're experiencing fires that they haven't seen for a couple of decades or maybe never seen before."

Australia has a long history of fighting wildfires, including the 2019 to 2020 Black Summer blazes that destroyed an area the size of Türkiye and killed 33 people.

Authorities frequently conduct hazard reduction burns, where sections of forest are burnt in a controlled manner to reduce the spread of wildfires should they happen.

"For this year we're alert but not alarmed. We're conscious of the fact that the seasonal outlook is expecting a busier than usual fire season – conditions will be quite dry, hot," said Alex Capararo, a sector commander for the Forestry Corporation of New South Wales, which manages state-owned land, as he led a hazard reduction burn around three hours north of Sydney.

Peak fire danger season usually starts in mid-October in northern New South Wales and in December in southern parts of the state. – Reuters



Jacob Berry, a seasonal firefighter with Forestry Corporation New South Wales, carries a drip torch during a hazard reduction burn in Uffington State Forest near Clarence Town. – REUTERS/PIIC

Peanut butter artwork proves a sticky attraction

THE HAGUE: An artwork consisting of 390kg of peanut butter spread on the floor of a Dutch museum attracted 48,000 visitors, 48 accidental footprints, five phones and one "licking incident" during its run, the institution said yesterday.

The unusual work, a tribute to artist Wim T Schippers who died this year, was on display for two months at the Boijmans van Beuningen museum in Rotterdam.

Peanut butter was spread on a hexagonal floor measuring 25 sq m "as smoothly as possible,

without any lumps", according to the artist's instructions.

"Forty-eight visitors made a fatal misstep into the floor," said the museum in a statement summing up the exhibition. "Five phones were fished out."

"There was one licking incident," the statement added, with a spokesperson telling AFP that a young child was thought to be the culprit.

The museum also received 80 complaints in

writing or by telephone.

The big question now the exhibition is over what to do with the hundreds of kilogrammes of used peanut butter?

"We looked into whether the peanut butter could be reused, for example by zoos, animal shelters or sustainable initiatives," said museum spokesman Rene Timmermans.

"However, after being part of the tribute ... for eight weeks, we could no longer guarantee its quality, hygiene or food safety." – AFP

Macron warns of AI risks to creativity

SAINT-PAUL-DE-VENCE: French President Emmanuel Macron called for cinema to be protected in the age of artificial intelligence and streaming platforms, as he hosted a summit with global entertainment chiefs including major US studio bosses.

Macron and co-chair South Korean President Lee Jae Myung warned about the advance of AI.

"We would be making a tremendous mistake if this technology became a tool that replaces, or claims to replace, creators," Macron said.

Lee said that artificial intelligence should develop in "a more responsible and human-centred way".

"The film and audiovisual industry must be rooted in human creativity and must resonate with human emotions," he told the Lumiere summit.

The leaders also said their countries would invest €1 billion (RM4.7 billion) to support independent filmmaking.

"The elephant in the room is really YouTube," TF1 chief executive Rodolphe Belmer said.

Leading generative AI companies were absent.

They have been accused by rights holders of using film and audiovisual works to train their models without permission.

Gaetan Bruel, head of France's National Cinema Centre, which helped organise the gathering, said it was time for "concrete measures", even if it was impossible "to solve every problem in a single day".

Cannes Film Festival director Thierry Fremaux said: "The value of this summit lies in creating that meeting place, where the format itself helps drive the discussion." – AFP

Thieves steal Renoir art worth €9m

MARSEILLE: Two thieves broke into a museum dedicated to French impressionist painter Pierre-Auguste Renoir in southern France yesterday, stealing "four works of art", one of which they dropped as they fled.

"This morning, two individuals broke into the Renoir Museum and stole four works of art," said Bryan Masson, the mayor of the town of Cagnes-sur-Mer.

"Spotted thanks to the town's video surveillance cameras, the two individuals fled, abandoning one of the stolen paintings as they ran," he said, adding his office estimated the value of the stolen works at €9 million (RM42.5 million).

The Renoir Museum was opened in 1960 in the painter's last home before his death in 1919.

Its collection includes objects and furniture that belonged to Renoir, including his easel and wheelchair, as well as portraits, landscapes and nudes painted by the artist.

The mayor said it took just five minutes for the authorities to respond.

"The museum alarm went off at 5.48am. At 5.53am, just five minutes later, our police were on the scene," he said.

The theft comes less than a year after eight items valued at around US\$100 million (RM406 million) were stolen during a daylight robbery from the Louvre in Paris.

The four suspected Louvre robbers have been arrested, but the stolen items have still not been found despite extensive searches by French investigators in the Paris region and exchanges with police in Belgium, Italy and beyond. – AFP

Nicaragua presses genocide case

THE HAGUE: Nicaragua accused Germany of “violations of international law” at the UN top court yesterday, as it pressed its case that Berlin is complicit in what it described as genocide in Gaza.

It has dragged Germany to the International Court of Justice, accusing Berlin of breaching the 1948 UN Genocide Convention with its support notably arms shipments, for Israel.

“Nicaragua invokes Germany’s responsibility in connection to violations of international law, particularly in respect of genocide and international humanitarian law,” ambassador Carlos Jose Arguello Gomez told the court.

Gomez said Nicaragua’s claims “involve the most serious breaches of obligations under international law”.

The court has already thrown out a request by Nicaragua to impose emergency measures on Germany, notably to stop arms exports to Israel.

The case continues however and Germany is seeking to have it thrown out completely, arguing that judges do not have jurisdiction and that Nicaragua’s case does not hold water.

On Monday, the first of four days of hearings, Germany’s representative Julia 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.

“All German exports of military technology and equipment to Israel are subject to strict licensing requirements” she said.

Nicaragua’s statements “create an inaccurate and distorted picture”, said Monar.

Nicaragua reiterated its charge that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, an accusation firmly denied by the Israelis.

“The scourge of genocide is not new, but what is new in the case before us is the way it is being carried out publicly and live-streamed,” said Gomez.

The consequence of this, alleged Gomez, is that “there cannot be any doubt that the German government is fully aware of the crimes”. – AFP

Zelensky confirms ‘decent ideas’

KYIV: US peace negotiators Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner presented several “decent ideas” during talks on how to end the war with Russia, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky said yesterday.

Witkoff and Kushner visited Russia and Ukraine over the weekend and held several hours of talks with Zelensky and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

But the meetings failed to deliver a breakthrough.

Zelensky said he planned to meet President Donald Trump later this month and aimed to discuss a winter air defence support package.

“As for the peace package that Kushner spoke of and the new ideas – I can tell you that there were really some very decent, worthwhile ideas,” he said.

He said Kyiv agreed with the US envoys to work on them first.

Ukraine and Russia remain far apart in their visions on how to end the war. A key issue is the fate of the remaining Ukrainian-held territory in the eastern Donbas region, which Moscow has claimed as its own but has failed to capture despite years of fierce fighting.

Diplomatic efforts to end the war have been stalled for months and Zelensky said he was grateful to the United States for reviving diplomacy. – Reuters



Saudi strikes damage the central prison in al-Hazm, Jawf province in Yemen. – AFPPIC/ANSARULLAH MEDIA CENTRE HANDOUT

CAIRO: Yemen’s Tehran-backed Houthis attacked four cities in the south of US ally Saudi Arabia yesterday, wounding more than 70 people and setting oil installations ablaze in what appeared to be a major expansion of the six-month-old Middle East war.

The Houthis, who control most of Yemen’s populated areas including the capital, said they had launched a broad operation deep into Saudi territory. They used drones and missiles to strike a Saudi airbase in the southern city of Khamis Mushair, and targets belonging to Saudi Arabia’s state oil company in nearby Abha, Najran on the Yemeni border and Jazan, a major Red Sea port.

Saudi authorities described blazes at the sites and said women and children were among the 73 people hurt. The reports of such large numbers of wounded suggested the attacks were among the biggest carried out against Saudi

Houthis attack four Saudi cities

➤ Airbase, oil installations hit

Arabia since the United States and Israel launched their war against Iran in February.

Confirmed images of the aftermath of the attacks in the Saudi cities were not immediately available. The Houthis released pictures of an explosion of what they said were trucks from Saudi Arabia they had struck at the border in another area.

After a month of calm in August, fighting in the Gulf has resumed, with Iran and the US exchanging fire.

Houthi attacks on southwestern Saudi Arabia have the potential to worsen the war’s global economic impact by disrupting Middle East energy supplies beyond the blockaded Strait of Hormuz.

Saudi Arabia has led an Arab coalition battling against the Houthis in Yemen for more than a decade. That war had calmed in recent years but a ceasefire there

has broken down, with the Houthis threatening shipping at the mouth of the Red Sea.

“The coalition will take all necessary operational measures to deter this terrorist militia and resolutely confronts its hostile approach,” said Colonel Turki al-Malki, spokesperson for the Saudi-led coalition.

Houthi spokesperson Yahya Saree accused Riyadh of having escalated the war by launching airstrikes on Yemen and said the Houthis would respond. – Reuters

Americans fear domestic extremists more: Poll

WASHINGTON: Twenty-five years after the Sept 11 attacks focused US fears on threats from abroad, Americans are now considerably more worried about attacks by domestic extremists than by foreign groups, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

When asked to name the biggest threat to the safety of average Americans, 33% of respondents picked “domestic terrorism”, while 20% picked foreign terror and 42% pointed to random acts of violence such as mass shootings, the Aug 28-31 poll found.

The picture was much different a decade ago. Reuters/Ipsos polling from mid-2013 showed 21% of Americans viewed domestic terror

as the top threat, less than the 28% who pointed to foreign terror and 51% who picked random acts of violence.

Airplanes crashed into New York City’s World Trade Centre and the Pentagon outside Washington on Sept 11, 2001, killing thousands and sparking decades of war, including the US-led invasion of Afghanistan.

Asked which ideology-driven attacks pose the bigger threat, 61% of respondents in the latest poll picked domestic extremists and 34% picked those from abroad.

Americans do not believe that wars that followed 9/11 were worth the cost. Some 48% said the war in Afghanistan was not worth its toll,

compared with 21% who said it was, while the rest were unsure or didn’t answer the question. The war in Iraq was similarly unpopular, with 51% disapproving and 21% approving.

The poll found only 25% of Americans think the conflict has been worth it, compared with 54% who think it hasn’t been.

Six in 10 Americans, including eight in 10 Republicans, think the US government response to the Sept 11 attacks has been at least somewhat effective in preventing attacks against Americans on US soil.

A bipartisan majority – including 71% of Democrats and 75% of Republicans – think the beefed-up airport security that followed the

Sept 11 attacks has been worth the disruptions to people’s trips.

Americans are also more inclined to support government-run airport security, with only 23% supporting a proposal to replace federal security with private contractors. The poll found 48% opposed the proposal.

The expansion of domestic surveillance after 2001 has been less popular, with 65% opposed to allowing US intelligence agencies to monitor electronic communications of US citizens without a warrant.

The Reuters/Ipsos poll, which was conducted online, surveyed 1,167 US adults nationwide, with margins of error between 3 and 6 percentage points. – Reuters

COMMENT by Dr Faizanah Abdul Alim Sidique

Set the course for neurodivergent students

HIGHER Education Minister Datuk Seri Diraja Dr Zambry Abd Kadir recently made an important point about disability inclusion in universities: policy should not remain merely a document. It must be translated into meaningful practice.

His message is especially relevant as Malaysia moves forward with the Rancangan Pendidikan Tinggi Malaysia 2026-2035, which places inclusive access and a more humanity-centred higher education system among the priorities for the coming decade.

But what does accessibility truly mean? When we think about disability access, many of us picture what is visible: ramps, lifts, accessible toilets, tactile paving or facilities for students with visual and hearing impairments. These are essential.

Yet, disability is diverse. While some disabilities are visible, others are invisible or not immediately apparent. Malaysia's Social Welfare Department distinguishes between "OKU jelas" and "OKU tidak jelas" in its registration procedures.

This matters because our understanding of inclusion can easily be shaped by what we can see. It is within this discussion of less visible needs that neurodivergence becomes important.

Neurodivergence is a broad umbrella term commonly used to describe neurological differences in how people process information, regulate attention, learn, communicate or experience their environment. It commonly includes autism, attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia, among other neurodevelopmental differences.

Neurodivergence is not a separate official disability category in Malaysia, and not all invisible disabilities are neurodivergent conditions. Not every neurodivergent person is identified as disabled. However, autism, ADHD and specific learning disabilities such as dyslexia are recognised within the learning-disability category used by the Social Welfare Department.

For some neurodivergent students, their needs may not be immediately visible. A student may speak confidently, obtain good grades and appear independent, yet still struggle with sensory overload, attention regulation, planning, processing dense written information or coping with sudden changes.

This becomes especially important when we consider the number of neurodivergent learners already within

Malaysia's education system.

In July 2026, Deputy Education Minister Wong Kah Woh reported that more than 161,000 students with special educational needs were registered in educational institutions under the Education Ministry. Among them were over 53,000 autistic students, 24,000 with specific learning disabilities and 13,000 with ADHD.

These are school-system figures, not university enrolment data. Still, they show that many neurodivergent learners are already progressing through Malaysia's education system. As some move into higher education, universities need to be prepared for those with less visible needs.

My experience as a special-needs teacher continues to shape how I view this issue. Working with neurodivergent learners has taught me that the behaviour we see is not always the whole story. A learner who appears inattentive may be struggling to regulate attention.

Someone distressed by an unexpected change may be experiencing sensory overload or difficulty adjusting to uncertainty. What appears to be unwillingness to participate may instead reflect difficulty accessing the way participation has been designed.

That experience taught me to look beyond behaviour and consider what in the environment may be making participation difficult. The same perspective matters in higher education.

For a neurodivergent university student, the challenge may not be physical access to a building. It may be unclear assignment expectations, a noisy learning environment, several major deadlines occurring together, sudden changes in instructions or a teaching approach that assumes

"Inclusion cannot be measured only by whether a student can access a building. We must also consider whether that student can participate, learn and demonstrate what they know once inside it."



Many neurodivergent learners are already progressing through Malaysia's education system. As some move into higher education, universities need to be prepared for those with less visible needs. — BERNAMAPIC

everyone processes information in the same way.

Responding to these needs does not mean lowering academic standards. Clear written instructions do not make an assignment intellectually easier. Explicit assessment expectations do not provide the answer. Advance notice of changes or an appropriate learning environment does not give students knowledge they have not acquired. Students must still demonstrate the required learning outcomes and competencies.

This is why the minister's call for meaningful implementation matters. Inclusion cannot be measured only by whether a student can access a building. We must also consider whether that student can participate, learn and demonstrate what they know once inside it.

Universities do not need every lecturer to become a clinician or special

educator. But academic staff need sufficient awareness to recognise that students differ in how they process information, communicate, organise themselves and regulate attention. Greater clarity, predictability or flexibility can sometimes remove an unnecessary obstacle without changing the academic standard.

As Malaysia implements its higher education plans for the next decade, accessibility must extend beyond physical access. The real question is whether our universities are prepared not only for the disabilities we can see but also for the needs and challenges that may remain invisible.

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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.

COMMENT by Kua Kia Soong

American bull in a China shop

THERE is something almost comical about watching the United States lecture the world about the virtues of a rules-based international economic order while repeatedly behaving like a bull in a China shop.

Washington's latest economic rampage is directed not only at Iran but, increasingly, at anyone foolish enough to continue trading with Iran.

Canada is being battered with punitive tariffs, China is being threatened with secondary sanctions and countries around the world are being told, in effect: Trade with whom you like – provided Washington approves.

This is not free trade; it is economic coercion masquerading as foreign policy. The latest US campaign against Iran is particularly revealing.

After months of war failed to produce the decisive victory Washington promised, the US has turned increasingly to economic strangulation.

On Aug 25, Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent announced a new round of measures against more than 60 Iranian-linked individuals and entities and warned other countries that doing business with Iran could put their access to the dollar-based financial system at risk.

And Canada has discovered that even being America's neighbour, ally and major trading partner provides no immunity.

On Aug 25, Ottawa announced retaliatory tariffs on about US\$20 billion (RM80.89 billion) of American imports, covering roughly 700 products, after Washington imposed new 50% tariffs on Canadian goods. This is what passes for American economic statecraft in 2026: Threaten your allies, punish your enemies, intimidate everybody else and call the resulting chaos "America First".

The bull has forgotten the China shop is the world

The irony is that the country Washington increasingly treats as its principal economic adversary has repeatedly demonstrated a very different approach to systemic economic crises.

China did not create the 2008 global financial crisis. Wall Street did. Yet, when the financial system imploded in 2008, China did not respond by trying to pull the rest of the world into an economic war. It responded by trying to keep demand, investment and trade alive. That distinction matters.

The collapse of the American financial system produced a devastating contraction in global trade. The World Trade Organisation estimates that world merchandise trade fell by about 9% in terms of volume in 2009 – the largest annual decline in decades.

China responded with its famous US\$586 billion stimulus programme, announced in November 2008, directed heavily towards infrastructure, housing, transport, energy and other investment. It was not an act of charity. Beijing was protecting its own economy.

But that is precisely the point. In an interconnected world, protecting

one's own economy by sustaining demand can simultaneously help everybody else. China's stimulus helped prevent its economy from falling into the deep recession experienced by many Western economies. China's growth recovered strongly, reaching around 10% in 2010.

More importantly for the rest of the world, Chinese demand helped provide a market for commodities, machinery, components and manufactured goods when demand in the US and Europe was collapsing.

China, therefore, became part of the mechanism through which Asia – and eventually the wider global economy – could begin to recover.

There was another important lesson. China did not respond to the crisis by saying: "My country first, therefore everybody else's economy must suffer."

It expanded domestic demand, maintained investment, supported employment and continued importing, remaining deeply engaged in international trade.

The result was not merely China's recovery. It helped sustain the trading system upon which countries from Australia and Brazil to Malaysia and South Korea depended. That is what responsible economic leadership looks like.

Washington's asinine war on Iran and the world economy

The US war against Iran has created an enormous threat to global energy and shipping. The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's critical arteries for oil and LNG.

The war and disruption to shipping have threatened not merely Iran or the Gulf but the economic welfare of countries thousands of kilometres away. And which country has had to absorb the shock? China.

China is Iran's largest oil customer. Reuters reported that China imported about 1.38 million barrels a day of Iranian oil in 2025. Yet, Beijing has not simply responded by joining Washington's campaign of economic destruction. It has tried to keep trade and energy flows functioning while simultaneously pushing for diplomacy.

China supported Pakistani mediation in the US-Iran conflict and urged a cessation of hostilities and a return to negotiations. Its diplomats have also engaged Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states, stressing the importance of de-escalation and the restoration of safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz.

In April, China played a significant role in encouraging Iran to accept a Pakistan-brokered ceasefire with the US. Beijing was even asked to act as a guarantor, although it declined to take on that role.

China has a very large economic stake in Middle Eastern stability. It imports energy from the Gulf, trades extensively with Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and depends upon the uninterrupted movement of goods through the region.

Its interest is remarkably straightforward: Keep the oil flowing. Keep the ships moving. Keep the trading system functioning. Stop the war.



Washington's approach seems to be almost the reverse: Stop the trade. Stop the oil. Stop the ships. Threaten anyone who refuses.

China absorbed the oil shock instead of exporting it

There is another fascinating aspect of China's response to the Iran crisis. Rather than simply passing the energy shock through to the rest of the world, China has used its reserves and industrial capacity to absorb part of it.

China sharply reduced crude-oil imports during the first months of the war, drew on commercial oil inventories, restricted refined-fuel exports and increased the use of coal and renewable alternatives.

Reuters reporting cited by the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission indicated that Chinese crude imports had fallen substantially from previous years while domestic reserves helped cushion the disruption.

Other reporting estimates that China's oil consumption and imports fell dramatically during the first months of the war, helping to moderate pressure on global oil prices.

China has also been able to draw upon enormous accumulated reserves – estimated at roughly one to 1.4 billion barrels across commercial and strategic holdings. This matters because China is not merely another oil consumer. It is the world's largest oil importer.

Its decisions, therefore, have global consequences, helping to prevent a temporary supply shock from becoming an uncontrollable price spiral. When it maintains industrial production and supply chains, it helps prevent shortages of manufactured goods. And when it keeps trading with countries under unilateral American sanctions, it provides an alternative economic channel through which trade can continue.

One may almost think the bull has

wandered into the China shop and is now blaming the crockery. During the 2008 financial crisis, China's response helped sustain global demand.

During the present Iran crisis, China's enormous economic weight, energy reserves, continued trade and diplomatic engagement have helped cushion some of the consequences of the conflict while Beijing pushes for de-escalation.

China understands that its own prosperity depends upon global stability. Washington, by contrast, behaves as though American prosperity requires everyone else to submit. That is the difference between economic leadership and economic bullying. A global trading system in which no great power – American, Chinese or otherwise – is allowed to behave like a bull in a China shop.

Kua Kia Soong is a former MP and director of Suaram. Comments: letters@thesundaily.com

LETTERS letters@thesundaily.com

Geographical 'lottery' we take for granted

ARE we taking Malaysia's geographical "lottery" for granted?

A recent video circulating online raises a thought-provoking question: Have we failed to capitalise on the extraordinary geographical advantages our country enjoys?

Malaysia, particularly Peninsular Malaysia, has been blessed by nature. We are largely spared the devastating typhoons, major earthquakes and volcanic eruptions that wreak havoc elsewhere.

Although we continue to grapple with annual floods, especially along the east coast – causing significant damage to infrastructure, property and livelihoods – we have, so far, been relatively sheltered from some of the more severe impacts of climate change that are ravaging landscapes around the world.

Yet, despite these geographical advantages, Malaysia still trails Singapore and Indonesia in terms of

nominal gross domestic product. This raises a bigger question: Are we making the most of the hand we have been dealt?

Our oil and gas wealth has not eliminated the need for government cash aid and subsidies while our fertile land and abundant natural resources have not always translated into broadly shared prosperity.

More troubling is the degradation of our natural environment. Our rainforests remain under pressure from development and resource extraction while indigenous communities struggle to protect ancestral lands and wildlife suffers from habitat loss. Even our once-pristine highlands are showing signs of environmental neglect.

Our political and social landscape is equally concerning. Racial divisions appear to be deepening while religion is increasingly used as a political instrument, threatening

Malaysia's delicate multi-cultural and multi-religious fabric. Meanwhile, corruption and abuses of power risk becoming normalised.

How long can we continue taking these blessings for granted?

As Malaysia marks its 69th year of independence, perhaps our priority should not simply be how much more we can develop but how we can repair, protect and restore what we have already damaged.

Our national success should be measured not only by economic growth, skyscrapers or investment figures but by whether we leave future generations a country that is more united and sustainable.

We may have won the geographical "lottery". The real test is whether we have the wisdom to reverse the damage we have inflicted on our beloved country.

J.D. Lovrenciar

HeveaBoard bags six honours at ESG Positive Impact Awards

SEREMBAN: HeveaBoard Bhd and its wholly owned subsidiary, HeveaPac Sdn Bhd, secured six honours at the ESG Positive Impact Awards (ESG PIA) 2025, including the prestigious Most Outstanding ESG Initiative 2025 Award for the SME and Mid-Tier segment.

HeveaPac received the highest overall distinction for its work in sustainable manufacturing, clean-energy practices and inclusive workforce initiatives. It also received Gold for Innovative Partnership and Silver for Human Rights and Labour Standards.

HeveaBoard received a further three category awards, Gold for Responsible Manufacturing for their SCARA Robot and Silver for Responsible Manufacturing for their Formaldehyde Emission as well as another Silver for Energy Efficiency.

The ESG PIA 2025 recognised 44 companies with 65 awards across 16 categories. Held under the theme "Celebrating ESG in Action: From Vision to Value", the awards recognise organisations that have translated their environmental, social and governance commitments into tangible initiatives and outcomes.

Managing director Yoong Hau Chun said: "These six awards are meaningful because they recognise initiatives implemented across different parts of the group, from manufacturing automation, emissions management and energy efficiency to employee welfare and inclusive workforce practices.

"For HeveaBoard, ESG is not treated as a separate corporate exercise.

"It influences how we invest, operate our facilities, manage resources, care for our people and strengthen the long-term resilience of the group.

"This recognition affirms that responsible business practices and operational performance can, and should, progress together.

"Sustainability reporting must be supported by credible and verifiable information.

"We voluntarily subjected selected disclosures to assurance because stakeholders should be able to rely on the data we publish and understand that the figures reported are supported by proper records, methodologies and evidence."

OCBC Bank launches flagship CSR initiative

➤ Programme will support marine conservation efforts in Johor, Sabah and Terengganu

TERENGGANU: OCBC Bank (Malaysia) Bhd recently launched #OCBCCares Oceans Alive, a flagship corporate social responsibility (CSR) programme dedicated to protecting and restoring Malaysia's marine ecosystems.

In its first year, the programme will support marine conservation efforts across Johor, Sabah and Terengganu, focusing on coral reef restoration and seagrass conservation through employee volunteerism and community partnerships.

These efforts will create long-term environmental and social value by strengthening climate resilience, conserving biodiversity, supporting coastal livelihoods and food security, and equipping local and indigenous communities with

ocean conservation knowledge.

Speaking at the launch held at Pulau Perhentian Besar, Terengganu, OCBC Al-Amin Bank Bhd CEO Syed Abdull Aziz Syed Kechik said: "The health of our oceans is closely linked to the wellbeing and resilience of our communities.

"As marine ecosystems face growing pressures, protecting and restoring them requires collective action from businesses, communities and conservation partners alike.

"Through our #OCBCCares Oceans Alive programme, we are working alongside our employees, conservation partners and local communities to help restore Malaysia's marine habitats and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable future for generations to come."

Healthy coral reefs are among the world's most valuable ecosystems. They provide habitats and breeding grounds for marine life, support fisheries and marine tourism, and help protect coastlines from wave action and erosion.

Yet many reefs are increasingly threatened by climate change, pollution and unsustainable human activities.

To support the restoration of these vital ecosystems, OCBC Malaysia undertook coral conservation initiatives in Terengganu and Sabah.

At Pulau Perhentian Besar, Terengganu, eight OCBC Malaysia employees who are certified scuba divers and volunteers from the Bank's Kota Bharu Branch collaborated with Planet Blue Carbon to support the recovery of coral ecosystems.

The volunteers first underwent training on coral identification and rehabilitation techniques before participating in hands-on coral propagation activities.

These included rescuing about 100 coral fragments, attaching them to restoration substrates, and planting them in an underwater nursery for rehabilitation.

Once mature, the coral colonies will be transplanted to nearby Tanjung Genting to help restore reef ecosystems damaged by a boat incident in 2006.

Meanwhile, at Usukan Island, Sabah, OCBC Malaysia continued its coral restoration efforts for the second consecutive year in partnership with One Ocean Empire PLT and Youth Coral Rangers.

Twenty volunteers from the OCBC Kota Kinabalu Branch, alongside colleagues from OCBC Group subsidiaries, Pac Lease Bhd and Great Eastern Life Assurance (Malaysia) Bhd, successfully propagated 158 coral fragments, adopted a second coral nursery, and revisited the coral nursery first adopted in 2025 to monitor the growth of previously planted corals.

These restoration efforts are expected to create positive ripple effects for coastal communities, with the Sabah project alone indirectly benefiting around 50 local families through livelihood opportunities, enhanced food security and ocean conservation education.

Seagrass meadows serve as important nursery habitats for fish, prawns and crabs, helping to replenish marine populations while supporting the livelihoods of coastal communities.

They also play a critical role in stabilising sediment, reducing coastal erosion and improving water quality.

In Johor, colleagues from OCBC Malaysia's Southern Region branches, led by the Kulai Branch, participated in a seagrass restoration initiative at the MyKP Pendekar Laut jetty in Iskandar Puteri, Johor.

The initiative brought together 50 participants, comprising 30 OCBC Malaysia employees and their family members, as well as 20 students from SMK Tanjung Adang.

The initiative provided participants with an opportunity to deepen their understanding of environmental conservation while fostering a sense of stewardship for marine ecosystems.

By restoring these habitats, the initiative is expected to support local fisheries and benefit around 230 fishermen who depend on healthy marine ecosystems for their livelihoods.

#OCBCCares Oceans Alive forms part of the Bank's broader #OCBCCares platform, which drives meaningful social and environmental impact across education, environmental sustainability, support for vulnerable communities, community building and humanitarian efforts.



Volunteers undergo training on coral identification and rehabilitation techniques.

Tenaga Nasional deeply committed to energy sovereignty

KUALA LUMPUR: Tenaga Nasional Bhd is deeply committed to energy sovereignty by strengthening resilience, safeguarding energy security and accelerating sustainable growth.

TNB Power Generation Sdn Bhd (TNB Genco) managing director Datuk Shahrir Abdul Latif said energy sovereignty was no longer defined by self-sufficiency, but by the ability to build resilient, adaptable and future-ready energy systems.

Energy sovereignty, which means having direct control over a country's

energy resources, is shaping the next chapter of the energy transition, he said during a presentation at the recent Asia ESG Summit 2026.

Anchored by the energy trilemma of security, affordability and sustainability, Shahrir said these interconnected responsibilities must guide every investment, policy and technology decision to ensure a resilient and reliable energy future.

He said in supporting this vision, TNB, which is driving Malaysia's sustainable energy journey, continues

to enable a responsible transition towards a lower-carbon future through clear strategic priorities.

These include progressing towards Net Zero 2050, ending investments in new greenfield coal-fired power plants and transforming brown assets into cleaner energy solutions.

They also include advancing low-carbon technologies such as biomass, ammonia, hydrogen co-firing and carbon capture.

Beyond technology, Shahrir reaffirmed that the energy transition

will ultimately be powered by strong operations, good governance, disciplined investment and capable people.

"Reliable electricity depends not only on infrastructure, but also on the expertise and dedication of the people who design, operate and maintain the nation's energy system every day," he said.

Recognising that energy sovereignty is strengthened through collaboration, he said TNB continues to support the Asean Power Grid as a

strategic pathway towards greater regional interconnectivity, enhanced energy security and accelerated clean energy integration across Asean.

As the energy landscape continues to evolve, TNB remains committed to advancing an energy transition that is practical, responsible and resilient.

Through trusted partnerships, responsible investment and stronger regional collaboration, TNB will continue to help build a more secure, interconnected and sustainable energy future, he said. – Bernama



■ BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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PETALING JAYA: Malaysia expects about 9 gigawatts (GW) of gas-fired power generation capacity to be deployed into the electricity system by 2032 as the country phases out coal and prepares for rising electricity demand.

Economy Minister Datuk Seri Akmal Nasrullah Mohd Nasir said the additional gas-fired capacity would be needed to support future electricity demand while Malaysia continues to reduce the carbon intensity of its power sector.

"We expect the need for about 9GW to be deployed or to be put into the system through our gas power plants," Akmal Nasrullah told reporters after officiating the Energy Regulatory Insights 2026 yesterday.

He said the planning would have to be managed by the Energy Transition and Water Transformation Ministry (Petra) together with the Energy Commission (ST), ensuring that Malaysia can meet rising electricity demand without compromising its sustainability commitments.

Akmal Nasrullah said Malaysia is no longer planning new coal-fired power plants, with the final coal plant expected to be retired by 2044.

The planned gas capacity comes as Malaysia faces growing electricity requirements from data centres, advanced manufacturing and other energy-intensive industries, while existing coal plants approach the end of their operating lives.

ST CEO Siti Safinah Salleh said the regulator's latest generation planning exercise is based on a three-year rolling requirement covering 2029, 2030 and 2031, with the cumulative requirement at "slightly around 8GW".

"The one that we have issued most recently is actually for the requirements for 2029, 2030 to 2031. And those requirements are cumulative, roughly about slightly around 8GW all together," she added.

ST's current three-year planning window is consistent with its NEWGEN26 procurement exercise, which seeks proposals for new gas-fired power plants scheduled to commence operations between 2029 and 2031 to maintain electricity supply stability and an optimal reserve margin.

Siti Safinah said the Joint Energy Planning Committee (JPEC) now revisits the system's generation requirements twice a year, reflecting the faster pace of change in the electricity sector.

Gas-fired power generation in M'sia set to hit 9GW by 2032

➤ Additional capacity needed to support future electricity demand while country continues to phase out coal to reduce carbon emissions in sector: Minister

Under the current approach, ST identifies the system requirement and subsequently issues tender requirements based on the latest planning assessment.

Siti Safinah said the more frequent reviews are necessary because electricity demand and the generation mix can change substantially within a short period. She confirmed that

JPEC reports, which had previously been publicly released, are no longer being published.

ST is considering whether the reports could be reinstated or whether another mechanism could provide sufficient visibility to industry, Siti Safinah said.

"One of the challenges ... is that because JPEC, as we said, is now a lot

more frequent. So we revisit that all the time, and we've seen the numbers change," she disclosed.

"If we publish, and then another six months we publish again, it does create a lot more uncertainty compared to the certainty objective that you want."

She said ST regards this as an area for improvement.

Despite the expected longer-term expansion in gas-fired generation, Siti Safinah said, no new gas-fired capacity is expected to come online in 2027.

Instead, the electricity system will optimise existing gas capacity next year, with utilisation depending on overall electricity demand and the operating requirements of the system.

Siti Safinah said gas currently accounts for about 39% of Malaysia's installed generation capacity, based on total installed capacity of 22GW.

However, she stressed that Malaysia's electricity supply is a mixture of coal, gas and renewable energy, with generation dispatched according to available capacity and system requirements.

Around half of the country's coal-fired generation capacity is expected to expire around 2035-2036, she added.

One of the older coal plants is expected to reach the end of its operating life before 2030.

ST is looking at whether that plant should be retained on standby after its scheduled expiry, a practice used in some countries to provide additional system security.

The newest coal plant is expected to remain until 2044.

"The last coal plant, which is the last one built, will actually expire in 2044," Siti Safinah said.

The retirement schedule means Malaysia will have to coordinate the timing of new gas capacity, renewable generation, storage and grid upgrades carefully to ensure sufficient capacity remains available.

ST's earlier generation planning documents have also identified the need for new combined-cycle gas turbine capacity as older plants retire and demand rises. It said in its June 2026 consultation on gas supply to the power sector that domestic gas production is declining while electricity demand continues to grow. It identified indicative additional gas requirements from new gas-fired plants expected to be commissioned from 2028 onwards.

The consultation identified eight indicative new gas plants with a combined installed capacity of roughly 8.35GW, including a 1,400MW plant expected in 2030 and a 2,100MW plant in 2031.

The ST said the figures remain indicative and are subject to final investment decisions.



Akmal Nasrullah posing for a group photo after officiating the launch of Energy Regulatory Insights 2026 yesterday. Second from right is Siti Safinah and second from left is Energy Commission chairman Datuk Seri Asri Hamidon, - BERNAMAPIC

Selangor on track to achieve over RM100b investments this year

SEPANG: Selangor is confident that the value of investments recorded by the state this year will exceed RM100 billion based on the current positive momentum, said Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Amirudin Shari.

He said the state had recorded about RM70 billion in investments up to mid-year, with the investment trend very encouraging.

"We set a target of RM80 billion, similar to the achievement in 2025, but by mid-2026, we had reached RM70 billion.

"Following this trend, we strongly believe we will be able to exceed the RM80 billion target. In fact, if the trend is very good, we are confident we can create a record of more than RM100 billion," he said in a press conference after the delivery of vacant possession ceremony for the NCT Smart Industrial Park (NSIP) here yesterday.

Amirudin said Selangor's strong investment performance was also driven by the state government's strategy of consistently carrying out investment missions abroad, inclu-

ding to France, Germany, Saudi Arabia and South Korea, showing that efforts to attract investment were being made extensively.

He said the development of new industrial areas, including NSIP in Sepang, as well as the development of a third port on Carey Island, is expected to continue to boost investment activities in Selangor.

"If the East Coast Rail Link operates as scheduled at the end of this year and so on, I think this will all be exciting in several northern areas (and

Selangor)," he said.

Regarding NSIP, Amirudin said more than 200 factories are expected to start operating after obtaining approvals, with most companies currently involved being local enterprises.

"This area is part of the Integrated Development Region in South Selangor (IDRISS), which was included in the First Selangor Plan (RS-1), as I mentioned.

"RS-1 is not just planning on paper, but the delivery (project) that we have made, and we feel very proud as it is

not just a government project, but an initiative from a private company that also received assistance and support from the state government," he said.

NSIP, which has received several recognitions, covers 368.26 hectares of prime land with a total gross development value of RM10.2 billion.

As the inaugural development under the IDRISS master plan, NSIP remains a major contributor to the development of South Selangor as a strategic industrial corridor for high-impact investments. - Bernama

See
also
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BY HAYATUN RAZAK
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PETALING JAYA: Data centres accounted for 9.28% of Malaysia's electricity consumption as of the second week of August, up from about 7% around the middle of the year, as the sector's rapid expansion and prolonged hot weather push power demand higher.

Energy Commission (ST) CEO Siti Safinah Salleh said the latest figure reflected not only the growing number of data centres coming online, but also higher electricity consumption for cooling amid hotter weather.

"So 9.28% is the number that I have right now on data centres most recently," she said during a question-and-answer session with the media at the Energy Regulatory Insights 2026 (ERI 2026) yesterday.

Siti Safinah said data centre usage could increase even without additional facilities coming online, as higher temperatures require more energy for cooling.

"Sometimes consumption or behaviours, use, utilisation remains the same, right? Usage remains the same. But with the hotter weather, the cooling system requires a lot more energy to cool it," she said. "So that's where the consumption therefore increases."

The latest figure represents an increase from the 7% of total electricity consumption recorded around the middle of the year, highlighting the speed at which data centres are becoming a major component of Malaysia's electricity demand.

Siti Safinah said Malaysia's current peak electricity demand is slightly above 21GW, with demand expected to rise further towards the end of the year as several data centres are anticipated to become operational around November.

"We don't expect that will increase too much in terms of peak capacity, but there will be a lot more consumption with the data centres coming in," she added.

Data centres hungry for more power as mercury rises

► Sector accounted for 9.28% of electricity consumption in Malaysia as of second week of August, up from 7% in the middle of the year: Energy Commission

Siti Safinah estimated total electricity consumption could increase by 5% this year from 2025, although she stressed that this was only a rough estimate pending a check against ST's latest figures. "The 5% is from last year's consumption to this year's consumption, in total."

Siti Safinah said ST had expected the hotter weather to ease after July and August, based on the usual seasonal pattern.

Despite the rapid growth in data-centre electricity demand, ST does not impose a specific cap on the sector's share of the country's electricity supply.

Siti Safinah said large electricity users are being encouraged to participate in the Corporate Renewable Energy Supply Scheme (CRESS), which allows them to directly invest in renewable energy development.

ST currently has approximately 3GW of projects in the CRESS pipeline, she added.

The strong CRESS pipeline could allow data

centres and other major electricity consumers to secure renewable energy while supporting the wider expansion of Malaysia's renewable-energy capacity.

Siti Safinah said the surge in electricity demand has not resulted in any delay to Malaysia's renewable energy development plans.

The latest Large-Scale Solar 6 (LSS6) programme involves 2.5GW of hybrid renewable energy comprising solar and batteries, with the capacity expected to start coming into the system from 2029.

Siti Safinah said, "LSS6 is already open. It's already open. 2.5GW."

ST has remained consistent in implementing both its JPEC generation requirements and renewable-energy development plans, she said. "We've actually been quite consistent in ensuring that whatever we have planned in JPEC, and also for our renewable energy development, will continue."

ST is also looking at increasing the contribution from other renewable sources, including biomass.

A study under the Sustainable Energy Development Authority is looking at ways to address some of the challenges surrounding biomass development.

ST is also looking at smaller renewable-energy projects, including run-of-river and mini-hydro, Siti Safinah said, adding that the current rule-of-thumb reserve margin for Malaysia's electricity system is 25%.

The focus next year will be on optimising existing gas capacity, with utilisation dependent on overall electricity demand.

Siti Safinah disclosed that the implementation of the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Act is beginning to take effect, with ST issuing reminders to the first group of large energy consumers that need to conduct energy audits and develop energy-efficiency plans.

"We've started issuing all the reminders to the first set of the large energy guzzlers that actually need to start doing their energy audits," she said.

Siti Safinah said she hoped the government would introduce incentives and other measures to encourage energy efficiency and renewable-energy development in Budget 2027, which is due to be tabled next month.

Govt strengthens regulations governing rubber glove industry, enhances product traceability

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is strengthening regulations governing rubber glove manufacturing and exports to address industry overcapacity while enhancing the traceability of Malaysian-made gloves.

Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad said the measures, implemented through the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB), will help promote sustainable and disciplined growth.

Malaysian Rubber Council chairman Datuk Seri Mohamad Suparadi Md Noor read out the speech on the minister's behalf at the opening ceremony of the International Rubber Glove Conference & Exhibition 2026 (IRGCE 2026) here yesterday.

Under the MRB (Licensing and Permit) Regulations 2014, Noraini said, only manufacturers with an appropriate and valid rubber product manufacturing licence are allowed to manufacture rubber gloves in Malaysia.

"The licensing requirement is important from a regulatory perspective; it strengthens accountability, supports product quality and compliance. It also provides a mechanism for better management of manufacturing capacity as the industry addresses the issue of overcapacity and moves towards more sustainable and disciplined growth," Noraini said.

The MRB also strengthened requirements for rubber glove exports, with the export licence number displayed on packaging materials to enhance traceability and accountability throughout the supply chain, she said.

The measure will prevent transshipment activities and ensure Malaysia is not used as a route for products manufactured elsewhere to enter international markets under Malaysian-made gloves.

"We want the international marketplace to have confidence that when a product is represented as a Malaysian-made glove, it is



From left: Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association (Margma) vice-president Teh Weng Joo, president Oon Kim Hung, Mohamad Suparadi, Malaysian Rubber Board director-general Datuk Dr Zairossani Mohd Nor and Malaysian Rubber Council CEO Datuk Seri Muhammad Eizaaz Muhammad Redzuan during the launch of the 12th International Rubber Glove Conference and Exhibition at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre yesterday. — BERNAMAPIC

backed by proper manufacturing, regulatory compliance, traceability and recognised industry standards," Noraini said.

The industry must move beyond competing primarily on volume and price as global competition intensifies and buyers become more demanding, she added.

Greater investment in research and development, automation, digitalisation, artificial intelligence (AI) and advanced manufacturing were needed to improve efficiency, enhance product performance and strengthen Malaysia's technological capabilities, Noraini said.

"Technologies such as AI-driven quality inspection, smart production systems,

advanced materials and next-generation glove formulations have the potential to improve efficiency, enhance product performance and strengthen Malaysia's technological capabilities."

Organised by the Malaysian Rubber Glove Manufacturers Association, the three-day 12th edition of IRGCE, themed "Synergising Innovation: Redefining the Future of the Rubber Glove Ecosystem", features 605 booths and 215 exhibitors from various countries. It brings together industry leaders, technical experts, researchers and policymakers to exchange knowledge, explore new technologies and solutions, and establish business relationships. — Bernama

Matrade, DNeX to advance digital trade facilitation for local businesses

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) and Dagang NeXchange Bhd (DNeX) have signed a memorandum of cooperation (MoC) to strengthen trade facilitation and accelerate the adoption of digital trade solutions among Malaysian businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises.

In a joint statement yesterday, Matrade said the collaboration aims to empower the Madani Digital Trade Platform (MDTP) as a key national digital export hub, providing digital trade solutions and trade facilitation services to the exporter community.

"The collaboration will make digital trade facilitation more accessible to SMEs by bringing key export and customs processes together within a single digital platform."

"By integrating customs declaration services into MDTP, the collaboration will provide SMEs and exporters with more accessible and seamless digital trade facilitation through a single platform," it said.

DNeX, as the trade facilitation partner, will provide access to its digital trade platform, DNeX TradeHub, together with the technical support and expertise required to integrate the platform with MDTP.

"DNeX will also enable SMEs and exporters to onboard and utilise the platform, and will work closely with Matrade to support the implementation and adoption of digital trade solutions among participating businesses," the statement added.

Matrade CEO Datuk Abu Bakar Yusof and DNeX IT CEO Shiraz Ramli formalised the MoC, witnessed by Matrade chairman Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican and DNeX chairman Tan Sri Syed Zainal Abidin Syed Mohamed Tahir. — Bernama

Industries urged to up their game

GEORGE TOWN: Industries must improve productivity, optimise energy consumption, enhance operational reliability and accelerate their sustainability journey to remain competitive amid rising costs and rapid technological changes.

ABB Malaysia vice-president for electrification service Andrew Chelliah said businesses today were facing unprecedented challenges, including rising energy costs, increasing sustainability expectations, supply chain complexities, rapid digitalisation, and the adoption of artificial intelligence (AI).

"Industries today are at a crossroads. To stay competitive, organisations must find a way to improve their productivity, optimise energy consumption, enhance reliability and accelerate their sustainability journey," he said at the

➤ Rising costs, digitalisation and AI reshaping the way companies operate: ABB Malaysia

ABB Innovation Forum Penang 2026 yesterday, which was officiated by Institution of Engineers Malaysia Penang branch chairman Dr Lee Choo Yong.

The one-day forum gathered more than 100 participants from key sectors including semiconductors, utilities, power generation, electrical and electronics, oil and gas, water and wastewater, data centres and manufacturing.

Andrew said Malaysia continued to strengthen its position as a regional manufacturing giant, particularly in the semiconductor and advanced electronics sectors,

with manufacturing contributing about 23% to the country's gross domestic product.

He said Penang, often referred to as the "Silicon Valley of the East", played a pivotal role in attracting investments and driving innovation across the semiconductor value chain.

"Energy efficiency has become a clear business imperative, not just a sustainability goal any longer," he said, noting that energy accounts for around 25% of operating costs.

Citing ABB's Energy Efficiency Report 2026, Andrew said 63% of industrial companies in Malaysia

had already invested in energy efficiency initiatives, reflecting the growing importance of managing energy consumption and improving overall operational efficiency. Another 33% of companies surveyed indicated that they planned to make similar investments within the next year.

He said technologies that improve efficiency, reliability and performance were increasingly becoming strategic investments rather than mere operational upgrades.

Andrew added that the forum was designed to provide practical insights and real-world solutions for semiconductor production, adaptive automation, variable-speed drives, smart motors, power reliability, emissions monitoring, digitalisation, AI, and asset performance optimisation. - Bernama

Firms told to speed up automation

KUALA LUMPUR: Local companies of all sizes need to accelerate automation in operations and production as the future supply of foreign workers is unlikely to match current levels, said Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani.

"We want many companies, regardless of size, whether micro, small or medium, to understand how important it is to bring automation into operations and production as soon as possible," he told reporters after officiating the Women, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Digital Economy Forum yesterday.

He said foreign workers were brought in to do dirty, dangerous and difficult (3D) jobs, not to replace local workers.

"We have to be fair to local workers because their lives are not the same as foreign workers. Our people have many family members who need to be supported here," he said.

Johari said employers who claim that locals do not want to work should reconsider their offers.

"If they are offered the minimum wage, maybe they do not want it as they don't see the economic value. Our people are willing to go to Singapore to work because there is economic value," he said.

The forum brought together government, academic, industry and business leaders to discuss women's role in the AI era and how AI is shaping the future economy. - Bernama

SCA Solutions gets Bursa approval for ACE Market listing

KUALA LUMPUR: Mechanical and electrical engineering solutions provider SCA Solutions Bhd has received Bursa Malaysia Securities Bhd's approval to list on the ACE Market, expected by the fourth quarter of 2026.

Managing director Tan Cheng Eng said in a statement yesterday that the initial public offering will solidify SCA Solutions' foundation to scale up operations and drive innovation.

"Our integrated solutions and services have earned the trust of

customers across mission-critical facilities including data centres, higher learning institutions, industrial facilities, and hospitals. Clients rely on our expertise to ensure safety, optimise building performance and maintenance, and enhance operational resilience.

"As buildings and industrial facilities grow in complexity, we continue to enhance our knowledge and capabilities to execute massive and sophisticated projects nationwide," he said.

SCA Solutions has extensive experience across diverse building projects, spanning shopping malls, hotels, office buildings, hospitals and educational institutions.

It provides a comprehensive portfolio of instrumentation components and accessories, including temperature and pressure sensors, motorised control valves, and metering devices used in heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems, and fire safety instrumentation and

related components.

"The group distributes 13 global brands such as Belimo, Honeywell and ABB. Its track record encompasses industrial facilities such as data centres and semiconductor plants, in addition to infrastructure including tunnels, airports, and rail transit stations," it added.

Malacca Securities Sdn Bhd is the principal adviser, sponsor, underwriter, and placement agent for the proposed listing exercise. - Bernama

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TM One unveils TM CYDEC to strengthen cyber resilience in Malaysia

KUALA LUMPUR: Telekom Malaysia Bhd (TM), via its enterprise and government sector arm TM One, has unveiled the TM Cyber Defence Centre (TM CYDEC).

This centre utilises a cyber fusion operating model that integrates connectivity, cloud services, and cyber-security. It aims to assist organisations in detecting cyber threats, minimising vulnerabilities and enhancing response times.

Located at TM's Cyberjaya Campus, TM CYDEC supports local governance, escalation and control for sensitive environments.

Its multi-security domain and Malaysian expertise provide greater assurance over regulatory compliance, supporting requirements under the Cyber Security Act 2024, the Personal Data Protection Act 2010, and Malaysia's digital governance framework.

TM One executive vice-president Shanti Jusnita Johari said the future of cybersecurity would not be determined by who sees the most alerts, but by who has the clearest understanding of their digital ecosystem.

TM CYDEC has received internationally recognised certifications, including ISO/IEC 27001 for information security management, ISO 22301 for business continuity management, ISO 9001 for quality management and ISO 37001 for anti-bribery management. – Bernama

Maybank to acquire rest of Maybank Ageas for RM4.83b

KUALA LUMPUR: Malayan Banking Bhd (Maybank) has entered into an unconditional share purchase agreement (SPA) with Belgium-based Ageas Insurance International NV to acquire the remaining 30.95% equity interest in Maybank Ageas Holdings Bhd (MAHB) for RM4.83 billion.

In a filing with Bursa Malaysia yesterday, Maybank said the agreement involves acquiring 78 million MAHB shares from Ageas.

The banking group said it signed the SPA yesterday after receiving approval from Bank Negara Malaysia on Sept 1 and that the purchase consideration will be funded entirely through internally generated funds.

Maybank said the proposed acquisition is intended to enable it to wholly own MAHB and provide the group with greater strategic flexibility.

"The acquisition is also aimed at strengthening MAHB's position as a national insurance and takaful player, supporting expansion across Southeast Asia, enhancing sustainable and resilient long-term value for the Maybank group, and improving capital management efficiency across its insurance and takaful franchises.

"Full ownership of MAHB is expected to provide both Maybank and MAHB with greater strategic agility to accelerate product innovation, deepen bancassurance penetration, expand takaful propositions, and enhance capital and operational efficiency across the insurance and takaful franchises," it said.

Barring unforeseen circumstances, the proposed acquisition is expected to be completed on Friday. – Bernama

East Coast can become food security, green economy hub

KUANTAN: Malaysia's East Coast region has strong potential to become a key hub for national food security and a leading centre for the green economy through greater investment in renewable energy.

Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida) CEO Datuk Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid said smart farming, food processing, cold-chain infrastructure, and logistics could boost productivity and strengthen the country's food supply chain.

He said the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) would further improve connectivity and market access for agrofood products by facilitating the movement of raw materials and finished products to wider markets.

➤ ECRL will improve connectivity and market access for agrofood products, says Mida CEO

"Connectivity through the ECRL will also expand market access for agrofood products, while facilitating the movement of raw materials and products to wider markets," he said in his speech at the 2026 East Coast Region Investment Seminar here yesterday.

Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim indicated that Pahang, Terengganu, and Kelantan have significant potential in renewable energy, especially in solar, biomass, and hydropower, including floating solar-hydro hybrid projects.

He said such development was in line with the National Energy Transition Roadmap (NETR) and the Green Investment Strategy, creating opportunities for high-technology, sustainable and environmentally friendly investments.

The East Coast region recorded RM61.4 billion in approved investments between 2021 and June 2026, involving 1,746 projects expected to create more than 30,000 jobs, said Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim.

He urged Bumiputera companies, small and medium-sized

enterprises and mid-tier companies in the region to explore the capital market as an alternative source of financing, including through initial public offerings.

"This is important to enable local companies to move to the next level and become industry role models amid increasingly challenging global supply-chain competition," he said.

Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim said the implementation of the New Incentive Framework would place greater emphasis on high-impact, high-technology and sustainable investments in line with the needs of the future economy.

Mida, through its Incentives Coordination and Collaboration Office and i-Incentives Portal, also facilitates access by local companies, particularly SMEs and Bumiputera firms, to relevant government support and incentives.

Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim emphasised that companies should make full use of the 84 active incentive schemes offered by 10 ministries through the i-Incentives Portal to strengthen their business capabilities.

He added that Mida, together with federal and state agencies, was ready to expedite approvals and address project implementation issues through the Invest Malaysia Facilitation Centre.

Meanwhile, Pahang Business and Investment Officer Datuk Kamarul 'Arifin Ahmad @ Abd Rahman, representing the state government, expressed appreciation to Mida for organising the seminar in Kuantan.

He said the event would help unlock new investment opportunities and stimulate economic growth in the East Coast region.

More than 400 participants attended the seminar, which also featured an appreciation and pre-listing showcase recognising Pahang-based aquaculture firm FDI Group and Terengganu-based oil and gas engineering company Upstream Downstream Process & Services Sdn Bhd. – Bernama



Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim says the East Coast Rail Link will improve connectivity and market access for agrofood products. – MIDA PIC

AirAsia MOVE launches flight-plus-event ticket bundle

PETALING JAYA: AirAsia MOVE is making it easier for travellers to plan trips around live events with a new offering that brings flights and official event tickets together in a single booking.

The event-plus-flights bundle debuts with Djakarta Warehouse Project 2026 (DWP 2026), one of Southeast Asia's biggest electronic dance music festivals, giving fans a more seamless and better-value way to plan their journey to the event.

Powered by MOVETIX, AirAsia MOVE's dedicated event platform, the bundle also helps event organisers reach high-intent audiences beyond their home markets, connecting their events with travellers who are actively planning

trips around live event experiences.

Capital A CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes said that as live events increasingly inspire people to travel, they see a huge opportunity to connect more people with the music, culture and moments they love across Asean.

By bringing together AirAsia's connectivity and AirAsia MOVE's travel ecosystem under MOVETIX, he added, they want to make those experiences more accessible and help people discover more of their region along the way.

MOVETIX by AirAsia MOVE head Hassan Choudhury said, "We've seen travel bookings to destinations around major events and concerts increase by 10-15%, clear evidence

that live experiences are driving travel demand."

He added that the new event-and-flight bundle allows them to tap into that demand by bringing event tickets and flights together, while putting events in front of high-intent travellers who are already looking to travel.

"DWP is an exciting first launch with Ismaya Group, and we look forward to working with more organisers across Asean and beyond to help them reach new audiences and unlock more value from the travel demand their events create," said Hassan.

Ismaya Group co-founder Christian Rijanto said, "DWP has always been more than a festival. It's

arguably Asia's biggest homegrown destination festival, and a reason to come to Indonesia. We've seen fans fly in from across Asia, Australia and Europe every year, and that is part of what makes DWP special. What we've built over 18 years, from the lineup and production to the hospitality, is the ultimate festival experience.

He added that partnering with AirAsia MOVE through MOVETIX makes that journey significantly easier and more accessible.

The DWP MOVETIX event-plus-flight saves travellers up to 20% and is now available from as low as RM1,300 for general admission event ticket plus flights from Kuala Lumpur to Jakarta via AirAsia MOVE.

FRENCH AI FIRM MISTRAL VALUED AT OVER €21 BILLION

PARIS: Mistral said yesterday it had raised €3 billion (RM14.1 billion) in what it described as the largest-ever European tech equity fundraising, valuing the French AI firm at over €21 billion. The startup, which is considered Europe's leading AI model developer and was valued at nearly €12 billion following the previous funding round, said new the funding would help expand its leading-edge research. It emphasised that it is focusing on so-called open-weight AI models that companies can run themselves with their own data. The company's notional valuation has nearly doubled since a funding round exactly a year ago, putting it within range of France's biggest blue-chip companies. – AFP

CONSUMER CONFIDENCE IN THAILAND AT 6-MONTH HIGH

BANGKOK: Thailand's consumer confidence index rose for a third straight month in August to reach its highest level in six months, a survey showed yesterday. The consumer confidence index of the University of the Thai Chamber of Commerce rose to 53.2 in August from 51.8 in the previous month. The government's consumer subsidy scheme, steady official interest rates and higher prices for key agricultural products boosted purchasing power and supported confidence, the university said. Planned energy-sector reforms could help sustain growth after the consumer subsidy scheme ends in September, Thanavath Phonvichai, the university's president, told a briefing. – Reuters

China's trade booms, fuelled by global AI buildup

Cumulative surplus through end of August reaches US\$805.5 billion

BEIJING: China's imports and exports surged in August, helped by a global AI buildout that has fuelled demand for technology products and ahead of an expected meeting between President Xi Jinping and US counterpart Donald Trump.

After achieving a historic surplus in 2025, China's trade has continued to grow this year, thanks largely to heightened overseas demand for semiconductors, computing hardware and other products linked to the artificial intelligence boom.

Exports spiked 25% year-on-year, the General Administration of Customs (GAC) said, accelerating from July's 23.9% growth, though the increase was just short of the 25.9% forecast in a Bloomberg survey of economists.

Imports swelled 28.2%, which was faster than July's 27.5% but less than the 31% estimated in the Bloomberg survey.

"China's trade growth remained robust in August, with both exports and imports continuing to grow at a rapid pace," wrote Nguyen Hoang Nam, a China economist at Capital Economics.

Still, momentum in imports weakened in seasonally adjusted terms, wrote Nguyen, reflecting "still-subdued domestic demand".

Strong overseas shipments have offered a key lifeline for the Chinese economy in recent months, as domestic activity has been mired in the doldrums.

Data published last week showed that factory activity contracted in August for a second straight month, despite the rise in overseas demand.

New export growth this year has come from the global AI sector, adding to strengths in other areas including electric vehicles, consumer goods and industrial equipment.

From January through to August, the value of China's exports of computers and related parts surged 49.4%, the customs data showed.

The value of automobile exports rose 53.2% through the end of August, the data showed.

"China continues to rely on the exporters to support the economy," wrote Zhiwei Zhang, president and chief economist at Pinpoint Asset Management.

The country's cumulative trade surplus through the end of August had reached US\$805.5 billion (RM3.2 trillion), the GAC data showed – on pace to surpass last year's record.

But growing asymmetries with several key trading partners have also presented political issues, as officials overseas argue that waves of Chinese imports are crowding out local

competition.

"The US government made it clear at the G20 meeting that they are concerned about this (trade imbalance) issue," Zhang wrote.

Shipments to the United States climbed 34.4% year-on-year last month, compared with the 17% increase seen in July.

The latest figures come before Xi and Trump's expected high-stakes summit in Washington this month.

Last year's global tariff onslaught unleashed by the US president sparked renewed turmoil in the countries' trade relationship.

Sky-high levies imposed by Washington and matched by Beijing were tentatively relaxed late last year, after a move by China to severely restrict flows of rare earths to the United States.

Strong growth in exports to the European Union, Southeast Asia and Africa helped offset a steep drop in shipments to the United States, which were hit by the tariff war.

"The share of shipments going directly to the United States stabilised at around 10%, while the share going to Asean remained elevated," wrote Nguyen, referring to the bloc of Southeast Asian nations.

China's bilateral surpluses with the European Union and the United Kingdom also remained "exceptionally large" in August, Nguyen wrote, "adding to already elevated trade tensions and raising the prospect of further protectionist measures in the region". – AFP

Global diesel supply to stay tight through winter, say industry execs

SINGAPORE: Global diesel supply will remain tight due to a lack of spare refining capacity, Russia's ban on exports and the approach of peak winter demand, senior industry executives said yesterday.

The wars in Ukraine and Iran have impacted refineries in Russia and the Middle East, pushing diesel margins to record levels in Europe and the US, while reducing crude supplies to Asia.

"There's really a shortage of products because we're missing two million barrels a day from Russia, and we're missing nearly two million barrels a day from the Middle East," Vitol CEO Russell Hardy told the Apec conference yesterday.

Hardy said crude is in a better supply position than products as the Middle East is exporting about 9 million bpd of crude and 1 million bpd of products.

"We're still not running enough refining capacity to prevent those draws," he said.

"We keep eating into the surplus that exists around the world, and we're pretty much at the bottom of our stockpiles."

Mark Senn, senior vice-president of global trading at Phillips 66, said most US refineries were already running flat out.

"When you're looking forward to a winter season coming where diesel stocks are quite deficit, you're setting up for an environment where that strength could continue in those markets," he added.

US diesel prices jumped to record highs late last week, while the product's crack spread, a measure of refining profitability, surged to a

record intraday high of US\$108.02 a barrel on Wednesday.

Vitol's Hardy said high prices and the lack of available fuel supplies are expected to reduce global oil demand by about 1.5 million bpd in 2026 versus 2025.

He added that the gap between China's crude imports in 2025 and 2026 at five million to six million bpd is unsustainable and he expects the gap to narrow towards the end of the year so China will have sufficient fuel for winter.

Meanwhile, a Kuwait Petroleum Corp (KPC) executive said the company is looking to buy more ships and improve its supply chains.

"In KPC, we have our own fleet, which we are managing ... we are in the market to acquire more ships," the state-owned energy major's managing director for international marketing, Shaikh Khaled Al-Sabah, told the Apec conference.

KPC is also looking at options such as pipelines through neighbouring countries and building storage to supply its crude and products to customers amid the US-Iran war, he said.

Last year, KPC shipped around 713,000 barrels per day of fuel products and 1.4 million bpd of crude, Kpler shiptracking data showed.

Shipping nowadays has become "a very hot commodity and every shipping owner, I guess, is very happy," Al-Sabah said.

"Controlling your own fleet ... your own operation will give you a lead over the others." – Reuters



Shaikh Khaled Ahmad speaking at the Apec conference in Singapore yesterday. – REUTERS/PICT

Japan's Q2 economic growth better than estimated, revised statistics show

TOKYO: The Japanese economy grew faster than initially thought in the second quarter, revised data showed on yesterday, ahead of an expected interest rate hike next week.

The world's fourth-largest economy expanded 0.4% in the three months to June, the Cabinet Office said, compared with the 0.3% shown in preliminary data.

Analysts had suggested the initial reading could complicate the Bank of Japan's attempts to lift interest rates as it battles surging inflation and a weaker yen.

The revised data showed private consumption and corporate investment remained weak but better than preliminary data had suggested, although imports came

in below the previous estimate, contributing to the upward gross domestic product revision.

The Bank of Japan (BOJ) is expected to hike its key interest rate next week, while Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi reportedly plans to reshuffle her Cabinet, although no major changes are expected.

Meanwhile, the yen extended gains yesterday, putting it in range of a 2026 high against the dollar as investors ramp up bets on BOJ interest rate hikes, though equities dropped as oil prices continued to rise.

The Japanese currency briefly hit 152.89 and within distance of the 152.10 touched in February, its highest this year. – AFP



Canal authorities may cut daily transits to around 29 ships if drought conditions worsen in the coming months. — **PEXELS PIX**

Panama Canal may cut transits further due to El Nino

PANAMA CITY: The number of ships sailing through the Panama Canal could be cut further due to drought caused by the El Nino weather pattern, the new administrator of the waterway told AFP on Monday.

Panama has declared a nationwide emergency over El Nino, a phenomenon developing over the Pacific Ocean that is affecting worldwide weather patterns and pushing up global temperatures.

This year's El Nino is expected to be the strongest since record-keeping began four decades ago.

Panama's restrictions come even as use of the canal has risen: shippers are seeking an alternative to the Strait of Hormuz, which Iran has blocked in retaliation for the war launched by the US and Israel.

The interoceanic Panama Canal — which handles 5% of global maritime trade — has already reduced the maximum number of ships allowed through daily, from 36 last month to 32 by mid-September.

It operates using rainwater that collects in two reservoirs, whose levels have dropped due to the onset of El Nino.

Without water, the locks that lift and lower ships at the start and end of their crossing cannot function.

Ilya Espino de Marotta, who took over as head of the Panama Canal Authority on Monday, told AFP that further measures may be implemented if the drought does not subside.

"We do not rule out the possibility that in February or March we may have to lower the limit — probably not to 24 slots per day, but it could be reduced to 29 or something similar," she said.

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

In 2023, El Nino forced a reduction in daily transits from 38 to 22 due to the dramatic reduction in reservoir levels.

Espino de Marotta, the first woman ever to head the US-built canal authority, stated, however, that she does not expect restrictions to reach the levels seen that year.

Apart from reducing the number of vessels, canal authorities have also reduced their maximum draft, from 15.2m to 14.6m.

The draft is the vertical distance between the waterline and the lowest point of a ship's hull. It is a measure of how much water is needed for a ship to float safely without running aground.

Experts have warned that long-term restrictions on canal crossings could lead to higher shipping costs and longer waiting times for deliveries.

The US and China are the main users of the canal, which is the fastest maritime route between the east coast of the US and China.

The canal connecting the Atlantic and Pacific handles around 40% of US container traffic.

Canada counter-tariffs on US goods take effect

OTTAWA: Canada's retaliatory tariffs on US goods took effect just after midnight yesterday as Prime Minister Mark Carney increased economic pressure on his country's biggest trading partner after negotiations collapsed last month, intensifying an 18-month-old trade war.

The counter-tariffs cover US\$20 billion (RM81 billion) of US goods, with duties ranging from 15% to 50% across products from steel and furniture to clothing and electronics.

The dollar-for-dollar retaliation marks an escalation in the dispute between the neighbouring countries, and US and Canadian officials have traded blame for scuttling a deal that seemed close to fruition two weeks ago. The rising tensions create uncertainty about the broader US-Mexico-Canada free trade agreement, which is up for annual reviews after US President Donald Trump declined

Escalating tensions increase fresh uncertainty over future of broader trade pact

to extend it for another decade.

"What we are worried about is an escalatory spiral," said Michael Harvey, executive director of the Canadian Agri-Food Trade Alliance and a member of Carney's advisory committee on bilateral US economic relations.

"But at the same time, we totally understand that the prime minister needs to find areas of leverage," Harvey said.

Trump's tariffs implemented last month hit sectors including wine, furniture, dairy products, cement, clothing, fishing rods and hockey equipment, covering US\$20 billion, or 5%, of Canadian exports to the US.

According to Canadian and US government data, Canada has

shipped almost 68% of total exports to the US this year, out of which roughly 80% moved duty-free due to exemptions under the USMCA pact. Protections under the agreement have provided the domestic economy some resilience.

The new tariffs, imposed under a Depression-era US law, do not allow Ottawa to exercise USMCA exemptions.

Concerns about the USMCA's future have fuelled uncertainty about investment and growth, as Canada wages a trade war against an economy 13 times its size.

Polls show Carney has broad support from Canadians, but it could disappear within months as the consequences of the trade war sink

in, according to political analysts.

Just 20% of Americans approved of Trump's tariffs on Canadian goods, a Reuters/Ipsos poll found.

Carney said last week his government was ready to sign a trade deal that benefits both countries.

Trump threatened last month to raise US tariffs on all cars, trucks and automotive parts from Canada to 50% starting Jan 1, and signed an executive order renaming Lake Ontario as Lake America.

A government source said there are currently no talks between the two sides among ministers or government officials.

"The Canadian government needs to keep channels open to the US and not go overboard in terms of rhetoric and reacting to the rhetoric from the American side, while waiting for the American decision-making process to come back to economics," Harvey said. — Reuters

S'pore defends Air India bet as part of overseas growth

SINGAPORE: Singapore's government defended Singapore Airlines' stake in Air India yesterday, saying the flag carrier must expand overseas to grow and the investment's outcome was for the company and its shareholders to judge.

The remarks, made in parliament, cap two weeks of public scrutiny over a request by Air India for about US\$1.5 billion (RM6.1 billion) of fresh equity from owners Tata Sons and Singapore Airlines that was first reported by Reuters.

An opposition lawmaker objected to using any funds from Temasek, the state investor that majority-owns Singapore Airlines, to back the Indian carrier. Temasek then publicly supported Singapore Airlines, which holds a 25.1% stake in Air India.

Singapore's Prime Minister Lawrence Wong on Sunday condemned anti-Indian abuse online that accompanied the debate, a day after Senior Minister K. Shanmugam asked police to examine racist comments about the Air India investment and Singaporeans missing in flash floods in Nepal.

Responding to a question in parliament, Transport Minister Jeffrey Siow said the flag carrier was a listed company that funds investments from its own balance sheet and it had not sought further capital from shareholders.

"Building globally competitive companies means entering potentially difficult markets against people who got there first and staying the course when there is turbulence," Siow said. "We cannot have it both ways. We cannot tell our companies to go out and compete, and then treat every tough year



Singapore Airlines holds a 25.1% stake in Air India as the Indian carrier undergoes a major turnaround. — **UNSPASH PIX**

abroad as proof that they should stay home."

Singapore Airlines' stake in Air India has weighed on its earnings, with the Indian airline group's losses widening to US\$2.33 billion in the year to March during a multibillion-dollar turnaround that could take up to a decade.

Siow said many overseas investments would not necessarily produce immediate returns and it was for Singapore Airlines and its shareholders to decide whether the investment in Air India would prove valuable.

"Air India's losses do not automatically become SIA's (Singapore Airlines') liabilities. Neither does the capital request from Air India oblige SIA to provide it," he added.

Singapore Airlines said in a statement yesterday that investments in India have been and will continue to be funded through the flag carrier's internal resources, subject to board approval and a disciplined capital allocation framework.

It said Air India's transformation was a complex, multi-year programme that was not expected to be linear and the flag carrier's investment in the airline was a long-term strategic commitment aligned with its multi-hub strategy.

News of the funding request had prompted Kenneth Tjong, a lawmaker from Singapore's opposition Workers' Party, last month to urge that Temasek's funds not be used to shore up the Indian carrier and submit the question

answered in parliament yesterday.

On Saturday, Shanmugam said that as a shareholder of Singapore Airlines, Temasek expects the company to make responsible investment decisions and that such decisions are for the company to make.

"That news (of the funding request) has given rise to a whole series of anti-Indian, racist ranting online," Shanmugam said, adding that Temasek's CEO and senior management had been attacked over their ethnicity.

Temasek did not respond to a request for comment on his remarks.

Tjong told parliament he categorically rejected racism and xenophobia, and noted his questions had been about a purely commercial matter. — Reuters



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MARKET ROUND-UP: SEPT 8

8-Sept-2026

Bursa Malaysia

Trade Statistics

Net (in RM million):

Participation

Retail

-25.77

31.84%

Local Institution

-63.26

41.84%

Foreign Institution

+89.03

26.32%

Source: Bursa Malaysia, Berjaya Research

Preliminary statistics (excluding trade amendments). For final data, please refer to www.bursamalaysia.com.

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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 and websites

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Bursa Indices		
INDEX	CHANGE	
FBMEMAS	12,671.03	+10.54
FBMKLCI	1,714.40	-0.39
CONSUMER PRODUCTS & SERVICES	481.55	-0.56
INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTS & SERVICES	187.42	+0.46
CONSTRUCTION	315.08	+5.96
FINANCIAL SERVICES	20,147.47	-41.27
ENERGY	818.77	+9.56
TELECOMMUNICATIONS & MEDIA	400.06	-0.81
HEALTH CARE	1,482.45	-15.30
TRANSPORTATION & LOGISTICS	1,020.07	-2.79
PROPERTY	1,076.61	-5.74
PLANTATION	9,476.63	+87.95
FBMSHA	12,450.83	+40.30
FBMACE	5,272.23	+13.92
TECHNOLOGY	74.07	+1.45
TURNOVER: 4.134 bil		VALUE: RM3.144 bil

Bursa ends almost flat, construction stocks in play

BURSA Malaysia closed almost flat yesterday as buying interest rotated away from index heavyweights towards smaller-cap construction stocks, with sentiment affected by geopolitical uncertainty, said an analyst.

At 5pm, the FBM KLCI eased 0.39 of a point to 1,714.40 from Monday's close of 1,714.79.

The broader market was almost evenly balanced, with decliners leading gainers 548 to 546, while 598 counters were unchanged, 1,107 were untraded and 25 were suspended.

Rakuten Trade Sdn Bhd equity research vice-president Thong Pak Leng said trading interest appeared to be shifting towards smaller-cap technology and construction stocks, suggesting that investors remain willing to take selective positions despite cautious broader market sentiment.

"Looking ahead, external developments are likely to dictate the near-term direction, with investors keeping a close watch on the Strait of Hormuz situation and Friday's US inflation data," he told Bernama.

Among the heavyweights, Maybank shed 4 sen to RM10.54, Public Bank was flat at RM5, CIMB eased 2 sen to RM7.98, Tenaga gained 6 sen to RM13.90, IHH Healthcare slid 6 sen to RM7.84, while Gamuda added 21 sen to RM4.80.

Among actives, Zetrix AI rose 3.5 sen to 30.5 sen, HHRG lost 2 sen to 18.5 sen, Cuscap put on 1 sen to 5.5 sen, and GIIB inched up 1.5 sen to 53.5 sen. ACE-Market debutant GTA Holdings slipped 1.5 sen to 33.5 sen with 83.91 million shares traded.

Among the top gainers, United Plantations advanced RM1.10 sen to RM33.30, Nestle improved 26 sen to RM94.16, Solarvest jumped 25 sen to RM3.55, Vitrox increased 24 sen to RM9.28, and Sam Engineering leapt 23 sen to RM4.57.

Top 20 Actives				
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
ZETRIX	0.305	+0.035	+12.96	12,575,032
GTA	0.335	-0.015	-4.29	839,164
HHRG	0.185	-0.020	-9.76	731,284
CUSCAPI	0.055	+0.010	+22.22	730,373
GIIB	0.535	+0.015	+2.89	369,717
INARI	2.700	+0.090	+3.45	343,209
GAMUDA	4.800	+0.210	+4.58	333,914
NEXG	0.270	+0.015	+5.88	314,183
CBHB	0.955	+0.005	+0.53	304,486
DNEX	0.485	+0.010	+2.11	300,260
NIHSIN	0.290	-0.005	-1.70	283,199
JAKS	0.120	-0.005	-4.00	274,097
PBBANK	5.000	-	-	269,425
MAG	0.145	-0.005	-3.33	260,588
TANCO	0.200	+0.015	+8.11	256,432
TWL	0.025	-	-	253,788
NATGATE	1.700	-0.040	-2.30	231,171
M&G	0.305	-	-	220,814
CAPITALA	0.285	-0.005	-1.72	213,074
HSI-PWTX	0.125	+0.005	+4.17	210,319



Top 20 Gainers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
UTDPLT	33.300	+1.100	8,350
NESTLE	94.160	+0.260	235
SLVEST	3.550	+0.250	91,459
VITROX	9.280	+0.240	31,745
SAM	4.570	+0.230	7,810
TAANN	6.340	+0.220	4,699
GAMUDA	4.800	+0.210	333,914
ITMAX	4.460	+0.210	41,300
SOP	6.130	+0.210	13,528
AJI	19.100	+0.200	673
HEIM	14.860	+0.180	6,997
HENGYUAN	3.000	+0.180	104,628
KLK	22.680	+0.180	10,730
PCHEM	4.470	+0.170	49,745
SCGBHD	2.730	+0.170	156,992
HLFG	18.980	+0.160	1,457
KGB	8.690	+0.140	21,730
FRONTKN	4.990	+0.130	48,761
MI	5.910	+0.130	15,870
HENGYUAN-WA	1.950	+0.120	23,998

Top 20 Gainers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
BCMALL	0.010	+100.00	710
PCHEM-C2H	0.010	+100.00	22,710
ZETRIX-CB2	0.010	+100.00	106,951
ZETRIX-CB5	0.010	+100.00	8,687
ZETRIX-CB6	0.010	+100.00	72,259
ZETRIX-CDF	0.010	+100.00	2,112
ZETRIX-CDG	0.010	+100.00	15,000
GAMUDA-C4K	0.065	+85.71	69,931
SCGBHD-CT	0.065	+85.71	66,950
SLVEST-C9	0.180	+80.00	3,000
ARMADA-C10	0.025	+66.67	500
SLVEST-CZ	0.065	+62.50	21,728
99SMART-C41	0.080	+60.00	1
GAMUDA-C4U	0.040	+60.00	7,991
GAMUDA-C4V	0.045	+50.00	19,550
PADINI-C17	0.015	+50.00	36,728
SCGBHD-CR	0.060	+50.00	35,980
ZETRIX-CB4	0.015	+50.00	2,473
SLVEST-C3	0.290	+45.00	230
YTL-C2W	0.035	+40.00	929

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	-80.9	-0.33
EURO STOXX 50 (EUR)	6,371.26	-32.73	-0.51
FTSE 100 (UK)	10,793.26	-28.87	-0.27
DAX (GER)	25,823.16	-183.37	-0.71
NIKKEI 225 (JPN)	65,269.33	-1130.51	-1.7
TOPIX INDEX (JPN)	4,050.33	-75.47	-1.83
HANG SENG INDEX (HK)	25,317.18	-95.94	-0.38
CSI 300 (CHN)	4,558.74	-16.29	-0.36
MSCI ASIA PACIFIC	284.43	5.17	1.85
SHANGHAI SE COM (CHN)	3,940.55	7.85	0.2
KOSPI INDEX (SK)	6,954.52	-40.87	-0.58
SENSEX INDEX (IND)	75,645.56	-487.25	-0.64
ASX 200 (AUS)	8,920.81	-90.08	-1
ALL ORDINARIES INDX (AUS)	9,114.28	-86.32	-0.94
FBM KLCI	1,714.40	-0.39	-0.02
STRAITS TIMES INDEX (S'PORE)	5,764.29	-27.99	-0.48
WTI (US\$/BBL.)	94.29	2.81	3.07
BRENT (US\$/BBL.)	98.85	1.85	1.91
GOLD (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	4,439.10	-37.5	-0.84
SILVER (COMEX) (US\$/T OZ)	66.52	-0.23	-0.34
PLATINUM (US\$/T OZ)	1,832.42	0.79	0.04
COPPER (COMEX) (US CENTS/LB.)	676.5	8.25	1.23
COPPER 3MO (LME) (US\$/MT)	14,509.50	94	0.65
CORN (US CENTS/BU.)	539.75	3	0.56
WHEAT (US CENTS/BU.)	752.5	18.5	2.52
SOYBEAN OIL (CBOT) (US CENTS/LB.)	69.58	0.31	0.45
COCOA (ICE) (US\$/MT)	6,162.00	-26	-0.42
RUBBER (S'PORE) (US CENTS/KG)	247.1	6.2	2.57

As at 6pm, Sept 8.

Top 20 Losers (By RM)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (RM)	VOLUME ('00)
MCCEMENT	5.520	-0.510	63,925
HLIND	17.060	-0.340	1,866
PETGAS	17.440	-0.260	4,312
LYSAGHT	2.380	-0.120	35
KPJ	2.610	-0.110	150,297
NIKKEI-C18	0.580	-0.105	30
MENTIGA	0.575	-0.100	3,470
UMSINT	8.140	-0.100	111
KPJ-C43	0.055	-0.095	600
AMBANK	6.850	-0.090	23,802
NEXG-C88	0.060	-0.090	1,000
HSI-CWUI	0.600	-0.085	60
ECOWLD	1.870	-0.080	47,694
EUROSP	2.980	-0.080	167
HLBANK	23.580	-0.080	5,049
KLUANG	6.570	-0.080	12
MERCURY	0.625	-0.080	17
PPB	9.810	-0.080	1,109
CHINAETF-MYR	4.400	-0.080	5
KIALIM	0.305	-0.070	225

Top 20 Losers (By %)			
STOCKS	CLOSING (RM)	+/- (%)	VOLUME ('00)
ZETRIX-CA4	0.005	-80.00	1,100
SUNWAY-C64	0.020	-63.64	500
KPJ-C43	0.055	-63.33	600
MCCEMENT-CO	0.020	-60.00	1,000
NEXG-C88	0.060	-60.00	1,000
ZETRIX-CA1	0.035	-58.82	200
CIMB-C2L	0.015	-57.14	4,000
DNONCE-WB	0.005	-50.00	1,000
KPJ-C42	0.005	-50.00	20,040
LYC	0.005	-50.00	100
MPAY-WB	0.005	-50.00	374
RHBBANKC74	0.005	-50.00	2,300
ZETRIX-CBX	0.005	-50.00	3,842
RHBBANKC78	0.025	-44.44	148
SUNWAY-C66	0.085	-43.33	1,170
HSI-CWQS	0.040	-42.86	250
MTTSL-CE	0.045	-40.00	1,470
TENCENT-C50	0.015	-40.00	1,000
TOPGLOV-C5V	0.015	-40.00	1
WCT-C52	0.015	-40.00	2,730

MARKETS/FROM THE BROKERS

SUNBIZ presents extracts of a selection of commentaries and research reports received from stockbrokers on counters that could be of interest to investors.

Compiled by **SunBiz Team**

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Capital market inflows hit 15-month high: Kenanga IB

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's capital market recorded a 15-month-high net inflow of RM13.9 billion in August 2026, reversing from a net outflow of RM5.3 billion in July, driven mainly by a sharp reversal in bond flows.

Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd (Kenanga IB) said foreign investors turned net buyers of Malaysian bonds in August with inflows of RM15.9 billion, the third-largest monthly inflow on record and the highest since September 2013 versus July's RM5.6 billion net outflow.

"Global duration repricing amid heightened US fiscal concerns drove the reversal; Malaysia's resilient domestic fundamentals supported the shift into local debt," it said in a note yesterday.

Kenanga IB said total foreign holdings rose to RM320.1 billion in August 2026, recording outflows of RM2 billion against RM300 million in July, with selling concentrated in the financial, industrial and technology sectors.

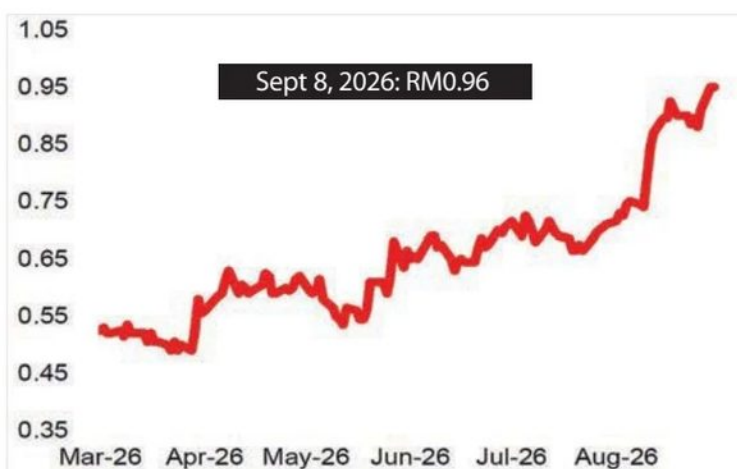
"The recovery in Malaysian Government Securities (MGS) holdings, however, remained partial at RM235.2 billion, still below June's RM237.6 billion," it said.

On equities, it said foreign investors turned net sellers in August 2026, recording outflows of RM2 billion against RM300 million in July, with selling concentrated in the financial, industrial and technology sectors.

"The divergence between bond and equity flows suggests that the August reallocation was driven more by duration and relative fixed-income attractiveness than by a broad-based rise in risk appetite," it said.

Moving forward, Kenanga IB expects the US Federal Reserve to keep rates unchanged for the rest of 2026, with the first cut likely in the second quarter of 2027, later than markets expect. – Bernama

CBH Engineering Holding Bhd Outperform. Target price: RM1.16



Source: PublicInvest Research

CBH'S wholly owned subsidiary CBH Engineering SB has accepted a letter of acceptance valued at RM88.1 million from Company A for the design and build contract of a consumer landing station for a data centre (DC) in Selangor. The contract commences on Aug 13, 2026 and is targeted for completion by May 12, 2027.

Outstanding orderbook stood at RM891.7 million, with over 90% attributable to DC-related projects. Its tenderbook stands at RM1 billion, of which approximately 80% remains DC-related. Based on our estimates, this project is expected to contribute approximately RM13.2 million over the contract period, assuming a mid-teen profit margin.

We remain positive on CBH's growth prospects, underpinned by its healthy tender pipeline and structural DC sector tailwinds. Global hyperscaler AI spending is surging, with Amazon, Microsoft, Google and Meta collectively committing over US\$600 billion in 2026 alone, up 36% YoY. Malaysia, particularly Johor, is a direct structural beneficiary of this build-out. The IMF has flagged DC investment as a key driver of Malaysia's projected 4.7% GDP growth this year.

Crucially, the Middle East conflict poses cost-side risks on imported equipment and freight rather than demand-side risks, keeping end-demand resilient. The more relevant near-term constraint is domestic grid delivery capacity, though this could complement CBH's core competency in electrical infrastructure works. While DC remains its core focus, CBH is actively diversifying into BESS and other segments to develop multiple revenue streams and mitigate concentration risk over the longer term.

Outperform with RM1.16. – **PublicInvest Research, Sept 8**

Ringgit ends lower as oil prices rise, Fed rate call looms

THE ringgit closed lower against the US dollar yesterday, weighed by higher crude oil prices and cautious sentiment ahead of the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) next policy decision, an analyst said.

At 6pm, the local currency eased to 4.0605/0640 against the greenback from Monday's close of 4.0440/0485.

Bank Muamalat Malaysia Bhd chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said elevated crude oil prices could strengthen the case for a US Federal Reserve rate hike next week, as markets remained cautious over the central bank's next policy move.

"Other Asian currencies were also mixed, with the (US) dollar-yen hovering at 153 yen as expectations of a Bank of Japan rate hike next week gathered further momentum.

"In a nutshell, market sentiment was anxious about the Fed's next move in the near term," he told Bernama.

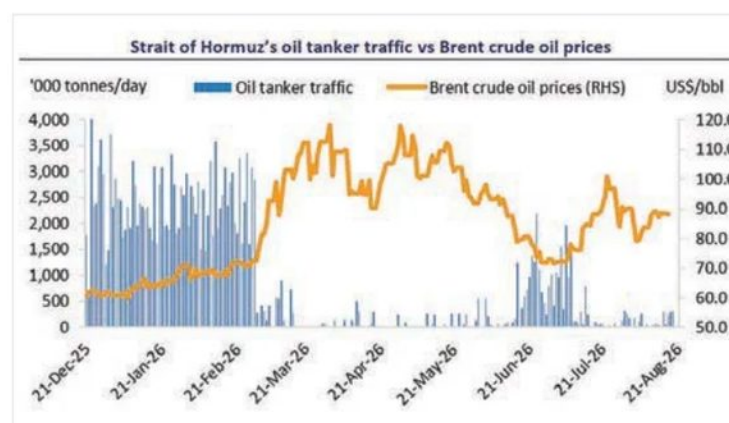
At the close, the ringgit was lower against a basket of major currencies.

It slipped against the euro to 4.7151/7191 from Monday's 4.6991/7044, weakened against the British pound to 5.4926/4974 from 5.4736/4796, and declined against the Japanese yen to 2.6374/6398 from 2.6173/6204.

The ringgit also traded lower against most regional currencies. It inched down against the Philippine peso to 6.48/6.49 from 6.46/6.47 on Monday and declined against the Singapore dollar to 3.2073/2104 from 3.1943/1981.

It fell against the Thai baht to 12.3285/3447 from 12.3041/3231 and weakened against the Indonesian rupiah to 230.3/230.5 from 229.2/229.6 at the previous close.

Malaysia Crude Oil Supply Diversifying oil sources amid Hormuz disruption



Source: Bloomberg

THE Strait of Hormuz is a critical route for global oil trade, accounting for around one-third of global seaborne oil trade and serving as a major export channel for key Middle Eastern oil producers. The escalation of military tensions between the US and Iran in late February severely disrupted crude oil flows through the Strait, as shipping companies avoided the route amid heightened security risks and sharply higher insurance costs.

Malaysia was vulnerable to crude oil shortages when the disruption first occurred, given its reliance on Middle Eastern oil to meet domestic consumption. According to the Finance Ministry, Malaysia consumes around 700,000 barrels of crude oil per day, roughly double its domestic production of 350,000 barrels per day.

In March, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim highlighted that Malaysia's oil supply would only last until May and introduced a flexible work-from-home arrangement for the public sector and government-linked firms to reduce national fuel consumption. To ensure sufficient supplies to meet domestic demand, the economy minister said that the government was working with Petronas to explore alternative crude oil sources from Africa and South America.

We analysed Malaysia's crude oil imports since 2023 to assess supply diversification, focusing on Jan-Feb and March-July to see how the Strait affected import sources.

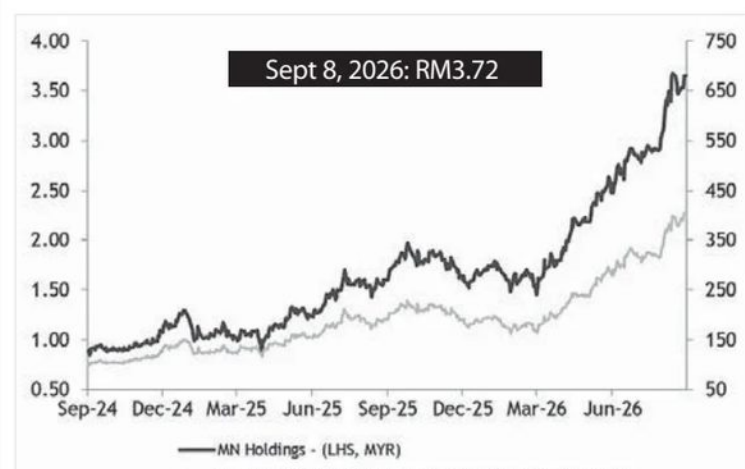
Based on data from the Department of Statistics Malaysia, imports from Hormuz-linked countries accounted for roughly two-thirds of Malaysia's total crude oil imports between 2023 and 2025. – **Phillip Capital Research, Sept 8**

Exchange Rates

FOREIGN CURRENCY	SELLING TT/OD	BUYING TT	BUYING OD
1 US Dollar	4.1170	3.9710	3.9610
1 Australian Dollar	2.9800	2.8600	2.8440
1 Brunei Dollar	3.2460	3.1460	3.1380
1 Canadian Dollar	2.9730	2.8900	2.8780
1 Euro	4.7790	4.6240	4.6040
1 New Zealand Dollar	2.4230	2.3340	2.3180
1 Singapore Dollar	3.2460	3.1460	3.1380
1 Sterling Pound	5.5670	5.3900	5.3700
1 Swiss Franc	5.1100	4.8920	4.8770
100 UAE Dirham	113.0900	107.2000	107.0000
100 Bangladesh Taka	3.4070	3.1810	2.9810
100 Chinese Renminbi	61.5900	58.9800	N/A
100 Danish Krone	65.5400	60.3000	60.1000
100 Hongkong Dollar	52.9300	50.2800	50.0800
100 Indian Rupee	4.4400	4.1200	3.9200
100 Indonesian Rupiah	0.0244	0.0215	0.0165
100 Japanese Yen	2.6950	2.5710	2.5610
100 New Taiwan Dollar	N/A	N/A	N/A
100 Norwegian Krone	45.4800	41.8300	41.6300
100 Pakistan Rupee	1.5400	1.3700	1.1700
100 Philippine Peso	6.6600	6.2700	6.0700
100 Qatar Riyal	113.8700	108.0900	107.8900
100 Saudi Riyal	110.5300	104.9300	104.7300
100 South Africa Rand	26.6200	24.0400	23.8400
100 Sri Lanka Rupee	1.3200	1.1500	0.9500
100 Swedish Krona	44.1400	40.2000	40.0000
100 Thai Baht	13.0600	11.5700	11.1700

Source: Malayan Banking Bhd/Bernama

MN Holdings Bhd Buy. Target price: RM4.19



Source: Maybank Investment Bank

MNH is a Malaysia-based infrastructure contractor specialising in substation engineering and underground utilities, serving both public (TNB) and private clients including data centre (DC) and solar developers.

MNH together with Pembinaan Tajri Sdn Bhd under an 80:20 consortium has accepted contract worth RM67.3 million from TNB for the installation of new 275kV reconfiguration underground cable from LILO point to Intel Penang switching station for 275kV bulk supply. Based on MNH's 80% stake in the consortium, the contract translates into an effective project value of RM53.9 million for MNH. The project has an 18-month execution period and is expected to be completed by 1H'28. Assuming 7% PAT margin for TNB projects, we estimate this project to contribute RM3.7 million PAT across FY27-28.

Inclusive of this latest job win, MNH's FY27 YTD new job wins stand at RM288.4 million, representing 24% of our FY27 full-year replenishment assumption of RM1.2 billion. The award lifts MNH's outstanding orderbook to RM1.7 billion (equivalent to 1.9x FY26 revenue cover). We view this positively, as it signals strong acceleration in TNB's project rollout, while TNB-related tenders account for 54% of MNH's RM5 billion tenderbook. Meanwhile, the new power supply contract for a semiconductor client could also signal the start of a renewed capex cycle in the semiconductor sector.

We maintain our earnings forecast, as this contract win aligns with our RM1.2 billion replenishment assumption for FY27. MNH remains our top pick in the MEP sector, underpinned by its strong market share in power infrastructure projects for DC and TNB.

BUY with RM4.19 TP. – **Maybank Investment Bank, Sept 8**



3D-printed shoes

Pushing boundaries of design - P22

WEEKLY FOCUS

MONDAY

Technology and
social media

TUESDAY

Family
and parenting

WEDNESDAY

Fashion
and beauty

THURSDAY

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Local designers prepare
for next Aidilfitri season

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American heritage brands
hit New York runways

WHAT if a shoe did not have to look, feel or even be made like a traditional shoe?

For Wong Kim Yoong, founder of 2AM, that question has shaped the direction of the tech-driven fashion footwear brand, which is using 3D printing to explore forms, structures and materials that would be difficult to achieve through more traditional methods of footwear production.

Following its online launch in China last year, where Wong said the brand was well received, 2AM has now opened its first standalone outlet in Malaysia at IOI City Mall, giving local consumers a chance to see its approach to 3D-printed footwear beyond a screen.

For him, the interest in 3D printing comes from experience, having previously been involved in 3D-printed footwear and wanting to explore how the technology could be used differently rather than simply replicating existing shoe designs.

"I've been involved in 3D-printed footwear before, so I wanted to see how we could do something different and really think outside the box when it comes to footwear design," Wong told *theSun*.

That desire to move away from familiar silhouettes is evident in 2AM's footwear, which uses 3D printing to create unconventional structures while maintaining the qualities expected from something designed to be worn regularly.

When technology becomes part of design

While 3D printing is often associated with prototypes, manufacturing and industrial applications, Wong sees its potential in fashion as something much broader, particularly because the technology gives designers more room to experiment with how a product is constructed.

Instead of approaching the technology simply as a different way to manufacture a shoe, 2AM uses it as part of the design process, allowing the brand to play with shapes and structures that may be difficult to produce through conventional footwear manufacturing.

"3D printing gives us the ability to experiment with forms and structures that are difficult to achieve through traditional manufacturing, and that is what makes it interesting for us," he said.

The material used is equally important to the brand's approach, with its footwear made using recyclable materials engineered to be washable, durable and breathable, while rubber filaments are incorporated to provide flexibility and help the shoes withstand regular use.

That combination is intended to address one of the challenges of

Could 3D printing revolutionise footwear design, production?



The CrissCross collection is designed with functionality and everyday wear in mind.

futuristic-looking footwear, where an unusual design can attract attention but ultimately has little value if the product is uncomfortable or impractical for everyday wear.

For Wong, the technology therefore has to serve a purpose rather than exist simply because it sounds innovative, particularly as the brand is looking to consumers who are increasingly curious about the story behind the products they purchase.

"People are increasingly interested in more than just how a product looks. They want to know how it is made, what technology is behind it and what that technology can actually do," he said.

Between lifestyle and luxury

That thinking has also influenced who 2AM is making its footwear for, with the brand positioning itself towards lifestyle and high-end fashion consumers who are interested in design and innovation but still want products that can fit naturally into their everyday lives.

"We see 2AM as being for people who are interested in lifestyle and high-end fashion but also appreciate design and innovation," Wong said.

The brand's price range, which starts at around RM300 and stretches beyond RM1,000, reflects that positioning, offering products at different points within the premium

➤ Challenging conventional silhouettes, opening door to personalisation



Wong speaks during the launch of the 2AM outlet at IOI City Mall. – ALL HANDOUT PICS

footwear market while maintaining an emphasis on design and technology.

Its Malaysian retail debut is similarly considered, with the IOI City Mall outlet carrying a curated selection rather than attempting to present the entire range at once, creating a space where the footwear can be examined as design objects as much as functional products.

That distinction is particularly relevant for a brand such as 2AM, where much of the appeal lies in seeing the unusual construction of the shoes up close, something that can be difficult to appreciate fully through an online product photograph.

Going green

Sustainability is another element of the brand's approach, although Wong's emphasis is less on treating it as a standalone selling point and more on considering how materials and production methods can evolve alongside the design itself.

The use of recyclable materials is part of that equation, while the shoes' washable and durable construction is intended to make them suitable for repeated use rather than simply serving as short-lived fashion pieces.

At the same time, the environmental impact of footwear extends beyond the material used, encompassing factors such as manufacturing, transportation, energy consumption and what eventually happens to a product when it reaches the end of its life, making sustainability a considerably more complicated issue than simply labelling a material recyclable.

For Wong, however, the larger opportunity lies in using technology to rethink the manufacturing process itself and to consider what could



The Draco collection is inspired by the Chinese dragon, with its scales and other features incorporated into the design.

become possible when designers are no longer restricted to the same production methods that have shaped footwear for decades.

"We want to show that 3D printing is not just about making something that looks futuristic. It can change the way we think about how footwear is designed, how it feels and how it can be made," he said.

Future of 3D tech in fashion

The possibilities Wong sees for 3D printing do not stop at creating distinctive shapes, as 2AM is also exploring how the technology could eventually allow footwear to become more personalised, including applications involving sizing, arch support and customised designs.

Such developments could shift the relationship between consumer and product, moving away from the idea of simply selecting a shoe from a predetermined collection towards

footwear that can be adapted more closely to an individual wearer's needs.

For now, those possibilities remain part of the brand's longer-term plans, alongside potential collaborations with local names as 2AM establishes itself in Malaysia and aspires to expand further across Southeast Asia before eventually looking towards Japan.

The immediate challenge, however, is convincing consumers that 3D-printed footwear is not simply a novelty or a futuristic experiment but a viable alternative to the shoes they are already accustomed to wearing.

Wong believes the answer lies in balancing the unusual with the practical, creating designs that are visually distinctive enough to stand apart while retaining the comfort, durability and breathability expected from everyday footwear.



A selection of sneakers spanning durable, lifestyle and high-street designs.



Zuhair Murad.



Tony Ward.



RSVP by Maglifestyle.

Malaysia **Bridal Fashion** Week

► Global labels Vera Wang, Zuhair Murad, Tony Ward among 30 designers who presented last week

LYFE'S LOOKBOOK

MALAYSIA Bridal Fashion Week (MBFW) recently opened its second edition with *Sejiwa by The Gown Atelier*, a collection specially curated for Malaysians. More than 30 brands with over 300 runway pieces showed across four days in Kuala Lumpur. The long weekend programme extended the showcase beyond the wedding gown into Sangjit, ceremonial, bridesmaid and eveningwear.

MBFW continued to bring together international couture houses, Malaysian ateliers, stylists, buyers, media and wedding-industry businesses across a runway schedule, the Bridal Market and the Designer Pavilion. The 2026 edition presented under the theme "Love Unites" was a reference to the number of cultures, ceremonies and families a Malaysian wedding brought into one intimate occasion.

Organiser and The Gown Atelier chief executive East Chin said: "This year we opened MBFW 2026 with *Sejiwa*, a fully Malaysian curated brand that speaks to the individuality of Malaysian brides, something beyond what's on the rack. The ambition is to nurture a platform where designers, brides and grooms are able to co-create bridal design that speaks to the layered culture and heritage of Malaysia and the region, while bringing global ateliers within reach of couples in the country."

Sejiwa by The Gown Atelier presented 10 looks offering a contemporary expression of bridalwear for the modern Malaysian bride, pairing graceful silhouettes with delicate detailing and luminous embellishment. Vera Wang followed with 12 looks in her distinctive modern bridal language, combining architectural silhouettes, rich textures and understated drama. Tony Ward presented 12 looks featuring sculptural forms, sumptuous fabrics and intricate embellishment



Sejiwa by The Gown Atelier.

characteristic of the couture house.

Proud of Malaysia, a new segment in the MBFW, showcased Malaysia-based designers: Celest Thoi, Yuleza and RSVP by Maglifestyle.

"Our Proud of Malaysia segment is a modest beginning for MBFW to become a shared platform for our local bridal talents to shine, and to gain reach and visibility beyond their own studio," Chin said.

Also showing across the week were Zuhair Murad, Berta Chandra, Rara Avis, Alethea Sposa and White Privee, just to name a few.



Yuleza.



Rara Avis.



White Privee.



Celest Thoi.



WITH Aidilfitri 2027 still several months away, local fashion designers are already entering what they regard as a crucial period in their calendars – planning and preparing for the industry's busiest season.

From developing collections and organising large-scale production to mapping out marketing strategies, every move needs to be carefully planned to capitalise on the surge in demand for new festive attire.

Rizman Nordin and Ruzaini Jamil, founders of fashion label Rizman Ruzaini, said Malaysians' penchant for celebrating Aidilfitri on a grand scale makes the festive season one of the most eagerly anticipated periods for industry players seeking to boost sales.

"Malaysians really go all out when celebrating Aidilfitri. In a way, our festive season lasts almost two months – the 30 days of Ramadan and 30 days of Syawal – because there are so many open houses, reported Bernama.

"So, this is the time for us as fashion designers to maximise sales as much as possible to ensure our businesses remain sustainable," he said at a media conference for the exclusive pre-launch of WarnaRaya x KLCC Raya Runway 2027 (WarnaRaya) recently.

Rizman is among four featured designers at WarnaRaya who will showcase their collections on the main runway, alongside Radzuan, Fiziwoo and Abu Shaef.

For Rizman and Ruzaini, the platform, which combines fashion shows with retail space, not only provides designers with an opportunity to introduce their collections but also allows consumer interest in the designs on the runway to be translated directly into sales.

Behind that potential, renowned fashion designer Datuk Radzuan Radziwill said preparing an Aidilfitri collection was far from a short process, requiring months of commitment before a design could eventually become an outfit for customers.

"From here on, it will be work day and night. It is not that after today's

Fashion designers begin planning for Aidilfitri 2027

➤ Local labels need time to develop ideas, prep production



Shariza says she hopes the event will help local fashion designers profit and prepare for Aidilfitri.

launch, we can rest tomorrow. Not at all. Now is the time to work towards achieving worthwhile results next year. Right now, I am not just excited but also nervous because I have to complete a major collection comprising between 30 and 40 clothing variations, with total production reaching between 2,000 and 3,000 pieces," he said.

Radzuan, who continues to make printed patterns a signature of his contemporary Malay designs, described WarnaRaya as an ideal platform for designers to showcase their creations while generating



Models showcase designs by local fashion designer Abu at the pre-launch event. – PICS FROM BERNAMA

revenue for the fashion industry.

The same challenge is faced by Fiziwoo label co-founders Hafizi Radzi Woo and Izree Kai, particularly as ready-to-wear collections require substantial capital due to the large quantities produced.

They said this requires every brand to have a strong marketing strategy and a distinctive identity to set its products apart in a market offering consumers a wide range of choices.

"Therefore, we need to stand out so that our customer community will continue to support our business and products," they said, adding that demand for new clothing remained

despite challenging economic conditions as people still wanted to celebrate the festive season with their families.

Meanwhile, WarnaRaya founder and Usahajana Sdn Bhd chief financial officer Shariza Mahzlan said the 2027 edition, themed *Serumpun*, aims to bring together creative industry players, fashion designers, local brands and celebrity entrepreneurs from Southeast Asia, including Singapore, Indonesia and Brunei, on a single platform.

Shariza said the second edition, scheduled to take place from Jan 22 to 24 next year at KLCC, will feature 98 booths covering fashion, beauty,

accessories, food and beverages, as well as home and living products.

She said the three-day event, held two weeks before Ramadan, would combine an exclusive fashion show at the main hall with a large-scale bazaar at the exhibition hall.

The event is targeting RM5 million in sales and more than 50,000 visitors.

"As a Bumiputera, I want to help Bumiputera entrepreneurs and fashion designers strengthen their businesses and improve their economic prospects. Apart from preparing for Aidilfitri, I hope this platform will help them generate income," she said.

Sharwita shines as Jaya Misra showstopper at Couture Fashion Week

FOR Malaysian top model and fashion personality Sharminidevi Parameispran, better known as Sharwita, taking centre stage as the showstopper for renowned Indian designer Jaya Misra at Couture Fashion Week Malaysia 2026 recently was more than another runway appearance.

Sharwita was the first Malaysian model to wear a Jaya Misra India creation as the showstopper, an opportunity she said was particularly meaningful after more than two decades in the modelling and fashion industry. Speaking to Bernama, Sharwita said the collaboration could open opportunities to work with Jaya beyond Malaysia and explore new possibilities on the international fashion circuit.

"I have worked with many designers over the past 20 years, and of course, I would love to work with Jaya again, not only in Malaysia but also at the international level, as I know she has been travelling to other countries and showcasing her designs

there as well," she said.

For the runway, Sharwita wore a dramatic black creation from Jaya's latest *Ethereal Duality* collection, featuring flowing layers and intricate detailing.

"Wearing Jaya's creation in black was an incredibly powerful moment for me. The gown felt bold, elegant and beautifully commanding. As I stepped onto the runway as the showstopper, I felt confident, feminine and truly empowered.

"Black has always carried a certain mystery and strength, and this design allowed me to embody exactly that," she said.

The *Ethereal Duality* collection explores the relationship between softness and strength through flowing gowns, contemporary drapes, modern *saree* interpretations and structured silhouettes, combining Indian craftsmanship with contemporary global couture.

Sharwita, who has walked the Cannes Film Festival red carpet twice, said she was particularly drawn to the intricate detailing, layers and



Sharwita struts down the runway in Jaya's design. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @PHOTO_BY_BINU



Jaya herself has also been to Cannes, which she says is one of the highlights of her fashion journey. – PIC FROM INSTAGRAM @JAYAMISRAOFFICIAL

beadwork of the creation, which gave her a sense of movement and freedom. She also hinted her next collaboration with Jaya could take place on an international platform, although details have yet to be disclosed.

Jaya, founder and creative director of Jaya Misra India, said this was her third visit to Malaysia and second fashion showcase in the country, having previously presented her work here last year. With more than two decades of experience in fashion, Jaya has showcased her designs at international fashion destinations including Milan, New York, London, Dubai, Tokyo, Toronto and Vancouver, while her creations have also been worn by Bollywood personalities including Amitabh Bachchan, Shilpa Shetty, Shradha Kapoor and Jacqueline Fernandez, among others.

Jaya also attended the Cannes Film Festival this year, which she described as one of the highlights of her fashion journey, and said she received the British Parliament Award and Mother Teresa International Award.

NEW YORK Fashion Week (NYFW) launches this week with a lineup of American heritage brands that have managed to lure in younger Gen Z shoppers, despite broader struggles in the global luxury sector.

The closely watched event will kick off today – the eve of the official start – with runway shows from Ralph Lauren and Coach, which have both seen strong growth in recent months.

Young shoppers in Asia and North America have gravitated toward Ralph Lauren's revamped cable-knit sweaters and polo shirts, and Coach's Tabby bags.

Tommy Hilfiger, also associated with Americana heritage, is breaking a hiatus from the event, hitting the runway after launching a collaboration with National Football League star Travis Kelce.

Tommy Hilfiger "being back is a great addition into the American heritage brands that are here and that are still alive.

"It's kind of a nice fit back into that family," said Tori Lopez, the fashion market editor at *W Magazine*.

Still, demand for premium US apparel has been uneven. Michael Kors, which is also hosting a runway show, has grappled with sluggish sales in recent years, reported Reuters. War in the Middle East has hit tourism in Europe, weighing on

Big Apple's dressed to impress

➤ New York Fashion Week leans into revival of American legacy brands

the luxury sector at large.

Growth in the US, led by native brands and younger consumers' spending, is partly offsetting a slowdown in the Middle East and Europe, consultancy Bain & Company said this summer.

Designer Henry Zankov will officially kick off NYFW tomorrow with his first-ever collection for Diane von Furstenberg. Meanwhile, Thom Browne will close out the event, which runs until next Tuesday

Also on the list of about 70 runway shows and designer presentations are established brands Carolina Herrera, Christian Siriano and Calvin Klein.

London-based designer Conner Ives, a New York native who has dressed celebrities for the Met Gala, is making his NYFW debut. – Reuters



Models present creations from the Fall 2026 Ralph Lauren collection during NYFW in New York City. – REUTERSPIIC

How American football players change what people view as vogue

AMERICA'S National Football League (NFL) players are remembered for what they do on the field but what they wear off it has become just as highlight-reel-worthy in recent years, helping the league and its players harness fashion as a tool to grow their brands.

A rising interest in athletes' game-day outfits has helped the relationship between fashion and sports evolve into a world of opportunity.

Nobody knows better than Kyle Smith, the NFL's fashion editor, whose job is not only to help players with

their style but to teach them about the various ways they can immerse themselves in the fashion industry.

"As I get to talk to our athletes, what I find is maybe they might not know about all the opportunities that exist for them," Smith said.

That includes starting clothing brands or walking shows at Paris Fashion Week, just as Cincinnati Bengals quarterback Joe Burrow and Minnesota Vikings wide receiver Justin Jefferson did in 2024.

Fashion is also an approachable way to gain exposure among new and younger audiences.



NFL players can influence fans' fashion choices by what they themselves wear. – REUTERSPIIC



NFL players, such as JuJu Smith-Schuster, and their endorsements are highly sought after by fashion houses. – PIC FROM FACEBOOK @TEAMJUJU

Social media plays a big role in generating interest as people consume content online, whether it is players' game-day outfits or the league's *Behind the Fit* video series that dives into the stories behind their style.

Something as simple as a player wearing a band T-shirt could also help the league gain a new fan as it continues to grow globally, Smith said.

"Then, you're following (that athlete) from team to team or their whole career and you're buying their jersey. So it's really important for the league to just find a new way to talk to a new audience, especially as we are growing internationally," he said.

While fashion has opened new doors for the league and its athletes, it is also an avenue to tell stories.

"There's so many ways that our players are talked about, as the top wide receiver or top quarterback. But

I know our athletes have such rich backgrounds and interests and things beyond the field," said Smith.

Athletes as assets

Brands are also recognising athletes as valuable assets to market products and reach different audiences.

The league has official partnerships with Swiss luxury watchmaker Breitling and American retailer Abercrombie & Fitch.

NFL players also walked the runway at February's GQ Bowl, where Thom Browne presented his fall 2026 collection ahead of the Super Bowl.

"Now brands are loving sending things over to players, contacting me or the players' agents and (representatives) to make sure the new collections are in their hands, because they can see that it adds a lot of value to the brand. That our players bring value through their own celebrity.

"Players, they do what they want to do. And so, there's that authenticity that I think fashion is always begging for and yearning for, and our players bring that to everything that they do," Smith said.

That authenticity is also helping them become game changers in the men's fashion scene as they sport pieces that may not be considered traditionally masculine, such as when wide receiver JuJu Smith-Schuster wore a knee-length skirt to the Super Bowl in 2023.

"If there's something that they think is cool, they'll wear it. They don't really think about what is traditionally seen as men's wear. The fashion industry is shaping itself a little bit more around our athletes and the potential that our athletes have to shape fashion," said Smith, adding that younger fans look up to players as style guides and trendsetters. – Reuters



Kim is one of the most influential contemporary rappers in South Korea.
— HANDOUT PIC

Rapper Kim Ximya returns with second studio album *Dogma*

WHILE television survival shows have become a defining route to recognition for many Korean rappers over the past decade, Kim Ximya has never followed the conventional path. For nearly a decade, he has built his reputation through music and visual art, earning critical acclaim in Korea and beyond.

Seven years after his last solo album, he returns with *Dogma*, a 10-track record marks a new chapter for one of Korean music's most distinctive voices. Moving fluidly between experimental hip-hop, electronic music and underground club influences, *Dogma* further develops Kim's approach to music – one that remains unconstrained by genre or commercial expectation while maintaining a singular artistic identity.

Working closely with core members of Sound Supply, including Mount XLR, cjb95 and ccr, Kim developed a cohesive body of work that reflects his evolution as a songwriter and producer. The album's sonic journey was further refined through mastering by Grammy

Award-winning engineer Mike Bozzi.

The visual world surrounding *Dogma* continues that multidisciplinary approach. The lead music video for *Dogma* was directed by acclaimed filmmaker, photographer and visual artist Park Chan-kyong. The younger brother and longtime creative collaborator of Cannes-winning director Park Chan-wook (*Decision to Leave*), Chan-kyong has built an acclaimed practice spanning cinema, photography and contemporary art. Together, the brothers have directed award-winning works under the name PARKing CHANce, including a Berlin International Film Festival prize-winning short film.

The physical edition also departs from conventional album packaging, replacing the traditional CD format with a miniature radio-inspired player called the Buddha Machine, which reimagines the album as a listening device and collectible object. Adding to its exclusivity, the Buddha Machine will feature a curated selection of tracks distinct from the digital release.

With *Dogma*, Kim returns with his second studio album, further establishing himself at the intersection of Korean hip-hop, experimental electronic music and contemporary visual culture.

Shi Shi brings life's flavours to Malaysia

➤ Award-winning Taiwanese singer-songwriter to hold Kuala Lumpur concert in December

GOLDEN Melody Award-winning singer-songwriter Shi Shi (Sun Sheng Xi) is bringing her acclaimed world tour *The Taste Of...* to Malaysia on Dec 6 at 6pm, as she takes over

Zepp Kuala Lumpur for a night of unforgettable melodies and emotional connection. Inspired by her conceptual EP of the same name, *The Taste Of...* translates the sweetness,

bitterness, nostalgia and intensity of growing up into a fully realised live production.

Having launched in Guangzhou this past July – with stops in Seoul and Taipei following in the coming months – the Kuala Lumpur show marks a monumental milestone: Shi Shi's first-ever solo concert in Malaysia since her debut.

Known for her distinct vocal tone and boundary-pushing artistry, Shi Shi effortlessly blends pop and R&B with elements of Neo-Soul, jazz, electronic pop and rock. Her talent earned her the prestigious title of Best Mandarin Female Singer at the 35th Golden Melody Awards for her self-produced album *Boomerang*.

Fans can also look forward to hearing her iconic soundtrack hits live, including *Remembered* and *Someday or One Day* from the blockbuster drama *Someday or One Day*, alongside beloved fan favourites such as *Constant Temperature* and *He Isn't Worth It*. The tour's international flair extends to unique tracks such as the Korean-language title song *Tteokbokki*, which weaves food memories of youth and friendship into sound.

Tickets are now available via Book My Show. Adding to the excitement, fans who purchase tickets in designated categories will enjoy exclusive perks – such as a photo opportunity with Shi Shi and a limited-edition signed photocard – and gain access to the post-show album signing session.

2026 [The Taste Of...]

SHI SHI WORLD TOUR

06 Dec (SUN)

MALAYSIA ZEPP Kuala Lumpur



BOOK NOW AT my.bookmyshow.com

Experience the many flavours of life through Shi Shi's music. — HANDOUT PICS

KIK hits the road

KOREAN band KIK has released its collaborative digital single *Road* with Australian artiste Will Hyde, with the track featuring a refreshing sound that captures the theme of reconnecting across physical distances and the passage of time.

Road combines KIK's signature dynamic instrumentation with Hyde's vocals and it highlights a distinctive synergy between both.

Celebrating its first anniversary this year, KIK debuted the live performance of *Road* for the first time at the 2026 Music Flow Festival.

Demonstrating musical growth beyond their rookie status, the band commanded the stage with robust soundscapes and confident stage presence, generating strong anticipation ahead of the official release.

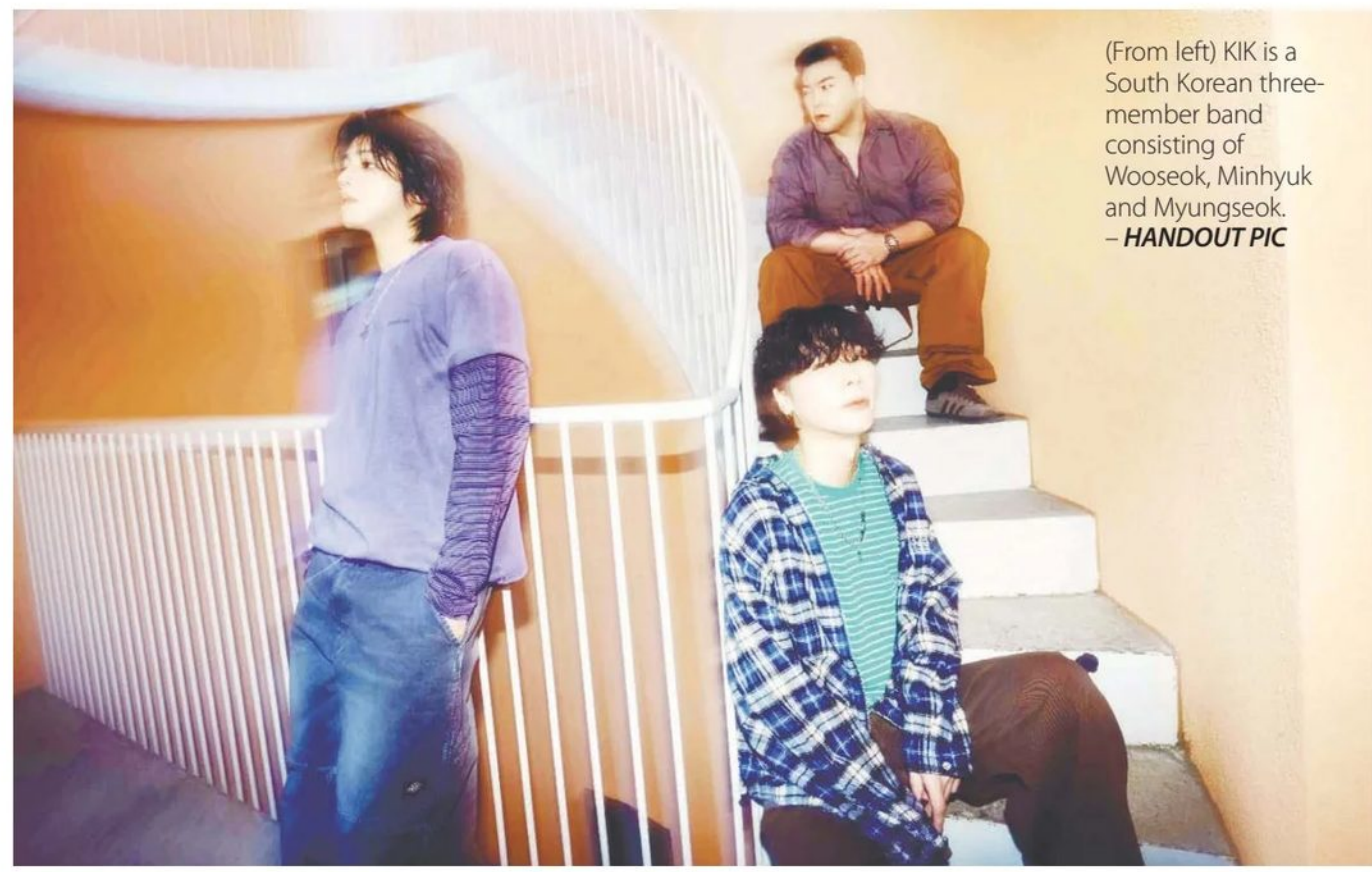
Following its previous international collaboration on *Piece of Peace* with Thai band Dept, KIK continues to broaden its musical spectrum, such as the inclusion of Hyde, an Australian singer-songwriter with roughly 400,000 monthly Spotify listeners and over 100 million cumulative global streams.

Hyde's previously built recognition in South Korea came through collaborations with MRCH and Imzoo, as well as a shout-out from Stray Kid's Bang Chan.

Recently, KIK was named to the Korean lineup for Eurovision Song Contest Asia, which is the first Asian edition of Europe's iconic music competition.

With a legacy dating back to 1956 that launched legendary acts such as Abba, the contest serves as a major platform for KIK, who raised excitement ahead of the finals by premiering an unreleased track titled *F1*.

Meanwhile, member Wooseok is set to balance band and idol activities alongside Pentagon's 10th-anniversary full-group promotions.



(From left) KIK is a South Korean three-member band consisting of Wooseok, Minhyuk and Myungseok.
— HANDOUT PIC

Kimi's Monza miracle compared to all-time great victories

KIMI ANTONELLI said it felt “like a dream” after completing one of the best comeback wins in Formula One history. Few though the championship leader would be in the fight at his home race as he served engine penalties. But from 19th on the grid he roared through and beat teammate George Russell to become the first Italian to win at Monza for 60 years.

The 20-year-old fought back tears of joy as he said: “I didn’t expect it. Unbelievable, unbelievable. I’m so happy. I couldn’t have imagined to be here today but we managed to pull it off.”

The record for the lowest grid position of any World Championship race winner is currently unbeatable with a 22-car grid, though Antonelli’s victory from 19th at Monza puts him at second in the all-time list.

Here’s a quick run-down of the six victories in F1 history that have come from the furthest back on the grid.

17th: **Kimi Raikkonen** (McLaren) 2005 Japanese GP

Fernando Alonso was already champion but Raikkonen stole the show at Suzuka, completing the race-winning overtake on the very last lap.

17th: **Max Verstappen** (Red Bull) 2024 Sao Paulo GP

Angry about a shock Q1 exit in qualifying, Verstappen found six places in the first three corners of the race and went on to all-but secure his fourth title.

17th: **John Watson** (McLaren) 1982 Detroit GP

Watson was so good at comebacks this wasn’t even the best of his career, though it was a stunning recovery after a qualifying crash.

18th: **Rubens Barrichello** (Ferrari) 2000 German GP

Michael Schumacher crashed out of his home race on the first lap but Barrichello picked up the pieces for Ferrari with an emotional first career victory.

19th: **Kimi Antonelli** (Mercedes) 2026 Italian GP

Up to 12th by lap three and in the lead for the first time after 18 trips around Monza. Had to be patient but became the first Italian in 60 years to win his home race.

22nd: **John Watson** (McLaren) 1983 USA West GP

Watson and Niki Lauda started 22nd and 23rd but had supreme race pace to make it first and second by lap 45 of a 75-lap contest. A record that can’t be beaten, only matched, with the current 22-car grid.

Express Newspapers

Russell accepts the inevitable

Antonelli firmly on course to become youngest Formula One world champion

■ BY PHILIP DUNCAN

GEORGE RUSSELL admitted it is going to be “exceptionally challenging” to prevent Kimi Antonelli from beating him to the world championship after his rival produced a stunning fightback drive from 19th to win the Italian Grand Prix.

Antonelli became the first Italian to triumph at Monza’s Temple of Speed since Ludovico Scarfiotti stormed to victory 36 days after England last won the World Cup.

Sixty years on and hit with an engine penalty, Antonelli began Sunday’s contest virtually at the back. But the 20-year-old phenomenon capitalised on an explosive new power unit, a favourable strategy, and a demonstration of passing excellence, to see off a crestfallen Russell by passing him for the lead with just three laps left.

No driver since Ulsterman John Watson won the 1983 United States Grand Prix at Long Beach has taken the chequered flag from further behind.

It marks another piece of history for Antonelli who is firmly on course to become the youngest Formula One world champion.

For Russell, this was supposed to be his year. This was supposed to be his Italian Grand Prix. He started the race 17 positions ahead of Antonelli. However, he is now 66 points behind

the Italian with just 10 scheduled rounds remaining.

Russell has just two victories to Antonelli’s seven. The momentum is with Antonelli and, to add insult to injury, Russell was jeered on the podium by the partisan Italian crowd.

Russell will have earmarked the 13th round of the season as his golden chance to eat into Antonelli’s title lead. But he will head for the inaugural Madrid race this weekend even further behind.

The writing appeared on the wall by only the second lap of the restart – after Charles Leclerc crashed out at 256kph – when Antonelli was already up to sixth. By lap 18, Antonelli was second and on Russell’s tail.

Russell and Antonelli traded position five times for the lead. The former remained in front only for a Virtual Safety Car (VSC) to lean the fixture in his teammate’s favour. Antonelli was on the medium rubber – less durable than Russell’s hard tyres – before he was handed 25 laps on fresh mediums to catch and pass Russell.

Russell’s advantage after Antonelli stopped for new tyres stood at 14 seconds but with 10 laps to go, his margin had been trimmed to five seconds. He was looking increasingly vulnerable.

Antonelli looked to have blown his chance when he ran through the gravel at the Variante

del Rettifilo as he attempted to wrest the lead off Russell on the 49th lap.

But Antonelli was immediately back on Russell’s gearbox and he made no mistake when he breezed past his wounded teammate before crossing the line 3.8 seconds ahead.

The strategy appeared to favour Antonelli and Russell might have felt aggrieved with his Mercedes team.

But the magnanimous Brit explained: “The VSC came out at that perfect point for the drivers (behind) to pull the trigger and take the pit stop.

“I didn’t (consider pitting). I actually thought the guys behind me were going to stay out. I am sure the team were quite nervous on the pit-wall watching our battle and they were probably happy to send us out on different strategies.

“I was on the hard tyre and Kimi was on the medium, so if one of us was going to pit, it was going to be Kimi and that is why I was a little bit annoyed with the timing of the VSC because it would have been tough for those guys on the mediums to have competed with anyone on the hards, but it takes nothing away from Kimi’s drive.

“And obviously when you are racing in somebody else’s home country that (the boos) is to be expected. I smiled it off.” – The Independent

Hamilton warned over Leclerc friction

■ BY PHILIP DUNCAN

FERRARI have warned Lewis Hamilton that his on-track friction with Charles Leclerc “is not good for the team”.

The pair collided at the opening corner of Sunday’s Italian Grand Prix, leading Hamilton to accuse his teammate of forcing him off the track.

Although stewards opted against penalising either driver at Monza, Hamilton told fans they “should not be worried about me”.

His comment followed Leclerc’s claim that both were to blame for an incident that cost Hamilton six positions.

“There was no ‘we’ in it,” said Hamilton, placing blame squarely on Leclerc. “I don’t race dirty, I’ve always raced clean and fairly and always left space.” The 41-year-old also called for a “written rules of engagement”.

His former rival, 2016 world champion Nico Rosberg, felt the clash was “100% Charles’ fault”, despite describing Hamilton as “aggressive”.

Leclerc crashed out on the next lap, while Hamilton finished sixth to leave his hopes of catching Kimi Antonelli for a record eighth world championship nearly over.

Reflecting on a dismal result at Monza, team principal Fred Vasseur said: “We will have time to discuss it (with the drivers). But the outcome of Turn 1-2 is not good for the team.”

Hamilton trails Antonelli by 76 points – the equivalent of over three victories – with 10 scheduled races left.

Vasseur, however, defended his choice not to grant Hamilton priority over Leclerc in their pursuit of the title.

Hamilton held a 28-point lead over Leclerc prior to Monza, and is 36 ahead going into this weekend’s inaugural round in Madrid.

In the race’s aftermath, Hamilton stated it is now “far too late” for

Ferrari to back him completely.

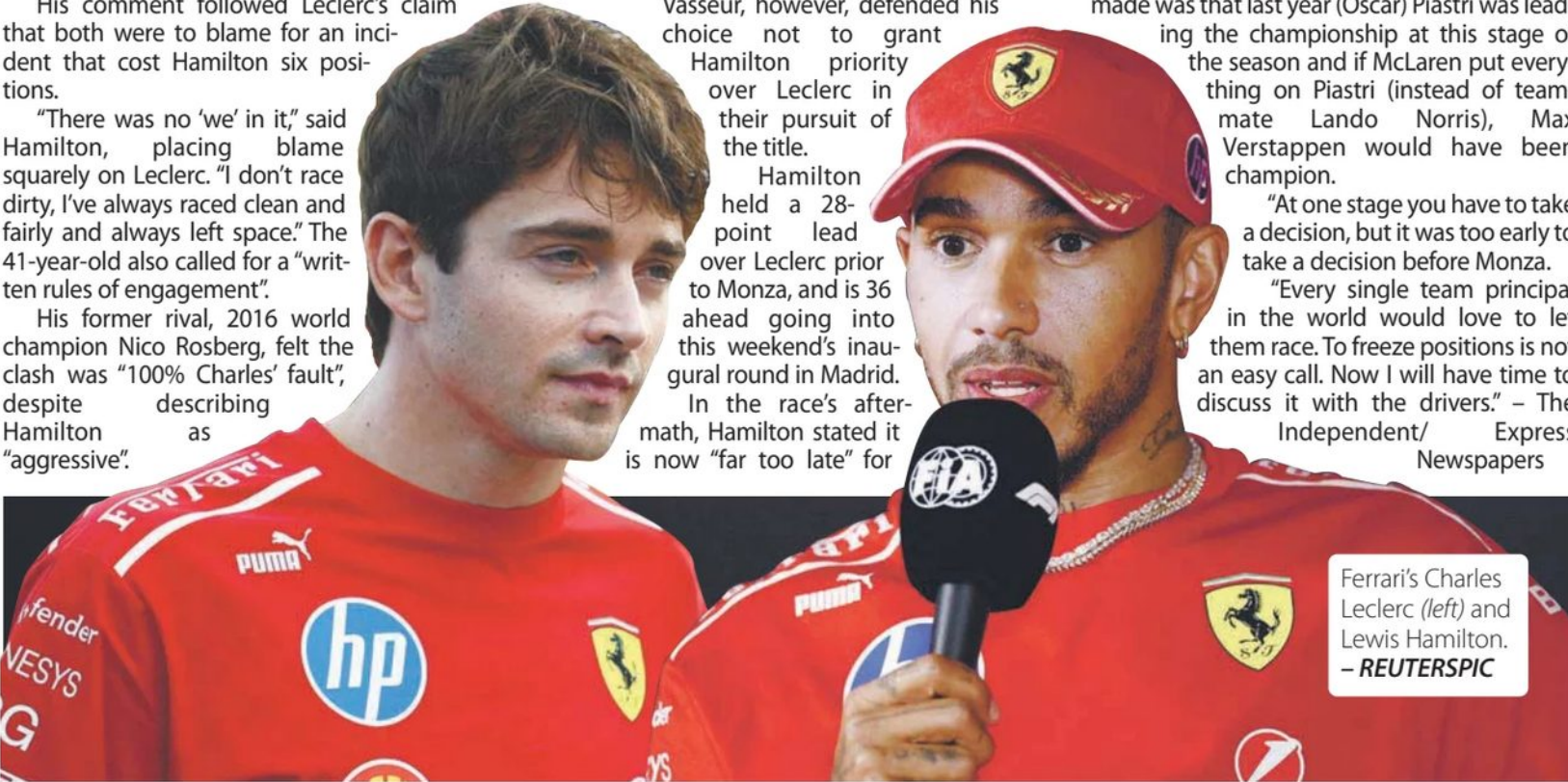
“From today, we’ve just lost so much ground to them on points. It’s far too late for those decisions to come. It’s many, many weeks too late.

“All I can do is just try and turn up. I’ll get up tomorrow morning and I’ll give it my best. I don’t know how many points it is now, but it’s an amount and with the pace that they (Mercedes) have, it is a very, very difficult amount to close up.”

Vasseur countered: “A good comparison that I made was that last year (Oscar) Piastri was leading the championship at this stage of the season and if McLaren put everything on Piastri (instead of teammate Lando Norris), Max Verstappen would have been champion.

“At one stage you have to take a decision, but it was too early to take a decision before Monza.

“Every single team principal in the world would love to let them race. To freeze positions is not an easy call. Now I will have time to discuss it with the drivers.” – The Independent/ Express Newspapers



Ferrari's Charles Leclerc (left) and Lewis Hamilton.
– REUTERS/PIC

Joshua fight is off, claims Gypsy King

■ BY LUKE BAKER

TYSON FURY has claimed that his long-awaited heavyweight showdown with bitter rival Anthony Joshua is off and has instead challenged Oleksandr Usyk to a third fight.

Joshua and Fury have been mooted to square off at New York City’s Madison Square Garden on Nov 20, despite their bout being the biggest between two British stars this generation.

Negotiations have proven difficult, however. Joshua’s promoter Eddie Hearn has said “AJ”’s contract is for a fight in the UK, while Fury’s promoter Frank Warren has said the “Gypsy King”’s deal is more flexible.

Fury appears to have grown impatient over the lack of confirmation, calling Joshua “a coward” last week and now taking to social media to say the Matchroom star has “s***t his pants” over the bout and instead calling out Usyk, to whom he lost twice on points back in 2024.

“AJ has s***t his pants again, yet again,” Fury said in a post on *Instagram* stories. “After 11 years he has finally s***t his pants yet again.

“This will only lead me to a fight with Oleksandr Usyk. Oleksandr you’re his (Joshua’s) trainer and his *sensei* and you know he is a weak minded piece of s***t and that he would never fight the Gypsy King, which you have had the guts to do twice.

“You got the decisions last time, fair play to you. Good luck to you, let’s do it again. Let’s run

it back in November. The ball is now in your court... do you want to fight me this year, 2026, or are you calling quits? Let me know because I am now looking for a new opponent.”

Fury’s brother Shane recently insisted that Tyson will box on Nov 20 regardless of whether Joshua is the opponent and the “Gypsy King” doubled down on that idea shortly after, naming Agit Kabayel, Filip Hrgovic and Daniel Dubois as potential replacement opponents. – The Independent

TRAMLINES

Naomi seeks answers to nagging injury

TWO-TIME US Open champion Naomi Osaka says she'll try to get to the bottom of a lingering left Achilles tendon injury that hindered her in a fourth-round loss to Elena Rybakina yesterday. The Japanese star had received treatment during a medical timeout in her third-round win over Elise Mertens and said the problem troubled her more in her 6-1, 6-4 loss to Rybakina. "The last match I played, I felt a lot in my leg," Osaka said. "Then this morning, it just got a lot worse. I felt like I played the best that I could given the situation. I can't really push off like I want, and when I land, it hurts a little," Osaka added. "I was trying to figure out ways to, I guess, minimize it. I thought if I served a little slower the impact when I land would be less. Yesterday I got an ultrasound, and then I got an ultrasound again just now, and I'm probably going to go get an MRI, because, honestly, I don't really know too much about what's going on," she said. Thankfully we're at the end of the year, so after the Asian swing, we do get two weeks off."

Coco holds off Jovic

COCO GAUFF bested rising US star Iva Jovic yesterday to reach the quarterfinals of the US Open for the first time since winning the title three years ago. Gauff, seeded fourth this year, beat the 14th-seeded Jovic 6-1, 6-4 in 80 minutes. The match marked a rare instance in which two-time Grand Slam champion Gauff, still only 22, faced a younger American in the 18-year-old Jovic, who pushed Gauff in the second set after being routed in the first. "She plays beyond her years," Gauff said. "I'm looking to many more battles out here." Gauff will next face French Open champion and fifth-seeded Mirra Andreieva of Russia in the quarterfinals. Gauff has won all five of their prior meetings. Despite the strong record against Andreieva, Gauff noted that most of the matches have been close. In their last contest, Gauff defeated Andreieva 6-4 in the third set in the quarterfinals of Rome, shortly before Andreieva's Paris triumph. "She's obviously in a different mindset now, at the top of the game, coming off a Grand Slam win," Gauff said of the Russian. "So I expect her to approach the match completely differently from in the past."

Blockx makes Belgium proud

ALEXANDER BLOCKX beat Francisco Cerundolo in four sets yesterday to become the first Belgian man ever to reach the US Open quarterfinals. The 21-year-old Blockx, seeded 28th in his Flushing Meadows debut, outlasted 24th-seeded Cerundolo 6-3, 4-6, 7-5, 7-5. Blockx, who upset fifth-seeded Flavio Cobolli in the third round, backed up that win with a determined performance during which he received "magical medication" from the doctor to combat a "sharp pain in my rib." "I was just holding on to be honest," Blockx said. "Even though I won that first set 6-3, it could have been the other way round." Later, Blockx told reporters he might have retired had he lost the third set. "I was really close to retiring, to be honest," he said. "I was just hanging in there, but I think if I would have lost the third set, I think the chances were really high of me retiring. Even before the match I was already under medication, and during the match I had medication. So if you feel that much pain while having a lot of medication, that's not a good sign." But "eventually it got better," he said. "It would have been a shame if I would have retired and then it got better afterwards. I was just lucky."

Comeback queen

Qinwen Zheng stuns Swiatek with another remarkable win from 0-5 down

QINWEN ZHENG continued her extraordinary US Open run as she produced a comeback from 0-5 down in a set for the second match in a row to knock out six-time grand slam champion Iga Swiatek and reach the quarterfinals.

Former Olympic champion Zheng, who defeated Swiatek in the gold medal match in Paris two years ago, had to qualify to reach the main draw of the US Open.

The Chinese star missed long stretches of the 2025 season due to an elbow injury and had fallen to No. 121 in the rankings.

After qualifying for the main draw and reaching the third round, Zheng trailed former Australian Open

first set at 4-5.

That shows how I'm focused. I guess to come back 0-5 yesterday is not lucky, that's all I can say.

"I'm just really happy to win this match cause it's not easy and it's been a while really. I didn't beat any top 10 player. I just really, really appreciated this win for me, and I want to say thank you for all the fans who

China's Qinwen Zheng celebrates after winning her match against Poland's Iga Swiatek (not pictured) at the US Open in Flushing Meadows, New York. — REUTERS/SPIC

champion Madison Keys 0-5 and was match point down in the third set before winning seven consecutive games to win 1-6, 7-6 (7-3), 7-5 against the American 22nd seed.

Two days later against the eighth seed and former US Open champion Swiatek, Zheng trailed 0-5 in the first yet produced the same trick, winning seven games in a row to clinch the set.

She then converted the only break of serve in the second set to win 7-5, 6-3 and reach the quarterfinals of the US Open for the third time.

Zheng fell onto her back after converting her fourth match point. She has now won seven matches in a row in New York.

"Well, honestly, I have to say, I started the match not so well," she said. "Little by little I found my rhythm on the center court because it's been a long, long time. I just really appreciate it to be here in the Ashe Stadium.

"I just focused point by point and little by little I start to play better tennis, I start to find my game and in one moment I even forgot the score in the

today."

She credited the turnaround in form, in part to a last-minute training block she and her coach squeezed in after another dreadful pre-tournament defeat in the first round of qualifying in Toronto.

"My coach sat down with me and we had a long talk together. He told me, 'You can't continue playing like this. You need to have a training block,'" said Zheng.

"It was really tough, but this is how sport shows. If you don't work hard, you don't have it. So I'm really happy about we make together the work, and then at the end, the effort pays off."

Zheng will play second seed Elena Rybakina next.

"I'm just really happy to be back again," she told reporters. "I mean, if that's what God gives to me, all the losses before, I'm sure that he will give me something back, no?" — The Independent/Reuters

Rybakina move closer to No. 1 ranking

DOUBTS over Elena Rybakina's (pic) fitness lingered until the eve of the US Open and the Kazakh said she was amazed by her progress from an ankle injury after reaching the quarterfinals yesterday to edge closer to the world No. 1 ranking.

The second seed arrived in New York without having played since retiring from her Cincinnati Open quarterfinal against Iga Swiatek last month but has pieced together a superb run to storm into the last eight without dropping a set.

She took apart two-times winner Naomi Osaka in the fourth round to set up a meeting with Olympic champion Zheng Qinwen, and another victory will help her leapfrog Aryna Sabalenka and secure top spot in the rankings next week.

"My preparation wasn't that great. I didn't play for seven days and I couldn't do much in the gym movement-wise, so we had to really go day by day," Rybakina told reporters.



"It's amazing progress. I'm really glad how everything worked out. We didn't even know if I'm going to be able to play or not. I have a great team. Also, a good doctor on the phone all the time.

"I can't say that all the matches were amazing, but today it was one of the best matches I played."

Rybakina had never previously reached the quarterfinals of the US Open and she said her latest run had improved her relationship with the tournament and New York.

"Well, now it's getting better and better," she added. "I usually don't perform that well. Now I feel like this year it's the best for now out of all the years that I've played here.

"I like New York and it's an amazing city. For me, maybe just for two, three weeks, because afterwards it might be too much. I really love the crowd here. I enjoy playing in stadiums like this." — Reuters

Zverev clocks into quarters

ALEXANDER ZVEREV put a slow start to his US Open campaign further behind him as the top-seeded German defeated Italy's Luciano Darderi 6-2, 6-2, 7-6(3) yesterday to reach the quarterfinals.

Playing his fourth straight night-session match and having endured two five-setters along the way, the 29-year-old was in no mood to hang around, powering through the first two sets before staving off a spirited comeback in the third.

The 2020 finalist finished before midnight for the first time this year in New York, with the match ending at 11.48pm (11.48am in Malaysia).

"I don't know what to do with myself, because it's before midnight. I might go to a practice court, or a bar... that was a joke, so relax. I'm feeling happy, compared to the first two matches the level has been going up," said Zverev, pointing to his watch.

Zverev broke early in the second set and moved 4-0 ahead after Darderi missed a drop shot, putting the German in complete control.

But the 21st-seeded Italian raised his level in the third, using a powerful first serve and drop shots to disrupt Zverev's rhythm.

The German held his nerve in the tiebreak to close out the match in straight sets and become the only man to reach the quarterfinals at all four Grand Slams this year. He also reached the last eight in New York for the fifth time.

"I thought that my level was consistent, but he started incredibly well in third set," Zverev said.

"I barely saw anyone hit so hard so consistently. He made it very difficult for me. I'm happy to be in the quarterfinals and playing this way."

Zverev, who won the French Open in June, will next face Dutchman Botić van de Zandschulp for a place in the semifinals.

Van de Zandschulp produced a remarkable comeback earlier yesterday, beating France's Arthur Gea 3-6, 6-7(0), 7-6(7), 7-6(3), 6-4 in more than five hours.

The Dutchman saved a match point in the third-set tiebreak before completing the comeback. "It was a crazy comeback — five hours, 15 minutes, still standing, so that's a good thing," van de Zandschulp said.

The 30-year-old, who reached the US Open quarterfinals in 2021, will now attempt to upset Zverev after his marathon victory. — AFP/Agencies



■ BY **RICHARD JOLLY**

PERHAPS, at the last, there was a touch of vindication. In Richard Hughes' final match as Liverpool's sporting director, the game was decided after just nine minutes.

A devastating burst of two goals in three minutes from Alexander Isak was probably what Hughes had envisaged when he committed a British transfer record of £125 million (RM675m) for the striker.

When Isak went off and Bradley Barcola came on at Portman Road, Liverpool became the first club to field three £100 million (RM540m) signings in the same game, if not at the same time.

Hughes' reign can be framed in high numbers: more than £650 million (RM3.5b) going on new signings in little over a year with Barcola, Isak and Florian Wirtz each accounting for at least £100 million of it.

It was initially a time of high achievement, too: Liverpool have only won two Premier League titles and the second came after Hughes headhunted Arne Slot from Feyenoord as Jurgen Klopp's replacement.

That, it seemed, was the Liverpool way: intelligent recruitment, sometimes eschewing the obvious candidates for the leftfield coups.

And yet by the end of Hughes' reign, Liverpool's reputation was transformed; perhaps his own, too. Last season's expensive underachievement mean that Hughes' departure may be celebrated by many a Liverpool fan.

Last summer's spending spree, recently dubbed the worst in history by Jamie Carragher,

Rebuild gone wrong

Liverpool spent RM3.6b under Hughes and only got worse

forms part of Hughes' legacy.

Isak's brace at Ipswich means he has already equalled his total of Premier League goals from last season; but that was just three. He was the face of a strategy and a spending spree that went wrong, but Hughes was the architect of it.

As Liverpool went from taking 84 points to just 60, from finishing first to trailing in fifth, from losing one of Slot's first 28 games to 20 matches in his second season, the formula the club had developed flaws. The power structure showed cracks.

Michael Edwards, who had hired Hughes, informed the club of his intention to stand down as Fenway Sports Group's director of football.

It is notable, too, that Hughes had ultimate authority for the managerial change. He backed Slot until, suddenly and perhaps sensing the dissent from stands, he did not, which came as a surprise to the Dutchman.

He appointed Andoni Iraola, for the second time, having first taken him to Bournemouth. The Basque may wonder what he has walked into, given the exodus of executives.

The definitive verdict on Hughes' vast outlay can only come with time. For now, it looks as though the risk is that Liverpool spent two-thirds of a billion to get worse.

Only one of the Hughes buys counts as an

unqualified success so far; Hugo Ekitike, now sadly injured. It is, of course, too soon to judge this summer's four acquisitions, though Jeremy Jacquet looks hugely promising.

But the decision to go all-in on the injury-prone Isak backfired last season; it is far from proven that Wirtz suits the Premier League.

In seemingly paying over the odds, Hughes' Liverpool were culpable for raising fees, which in turn cost them when Paris Saint-Germain quoted them £145 million (RM783m) for Barcola.

Posterity may look more kindly on Hughes' dealings. There have been attempts at long-termism. The ages of buys such as Giovanni Leoni,

Jacquet, Barcola, Wirtz, Ekitike and Victor Munoz mean he may have shaped Liverpool's next decade.

Yet it is undeniable that he leaves with a rebuilding job unfinished and the work to do compounded by the continuing failure of Jeremie Frimpong.

It is no exaggeration to say Liverpool could be looking for five or six first-team signings next summer.

They still have not replaced Mohamed Salah with a specialist right winger. They have key players, Virgil van Dijk and Alisson included, out of contract and Liverpool spent too much time under Hughes risking losing players on free transfers.

Hughes seemed to bank a fine fee for one such, Luis Diaz, and yet his sale to Bayern Munich came to look a mistake.

There will be no soft landing for Hughes' successor, with a host of priorities in the in-tray. As he goes, it is possible to argue that, like Slot, he was first the right man at right time and then suddenly the wrong one at the wrong time. His reign can be presented as a success or a disappointment.

He can say that, for only the second time in three-and-a-half decades, Liverpool won the English title when he was in situ. But it is also true that the silverware came before nearly all of his spending. – The Independent

Kane opens up on *Ballon d'Or* hopes

■ BY **SUNNY BADWAL**

FOLLOWING a remarkably prolific campaign, Harry Kane has expressed his delight at being in contention for the *Ballon d'Or*, describing himself as "extremely proud" of his achievement.

The 33-year-old is the bookmakers' favourite to collect the honour in October after scoring 73 goals for club and country last term, beating Cristiano Ronaldo's career-best single-season record of 69 set in 2011-12, and only being surpassed by Lionel Messi's record 82 goals from the same season.

Should Kane claim the prize, he would become just the fifth Englishman to receive it, following Sir Stanley Matthews, Sir Bobby Charlton, Kevin Keegan and Michael Owen, and the first since Owen's success in 2001.

In an interview with Owen Hargreaves for *TNT Sports*, the Bayern Munich striker said: "I'm extremely proud of the season I put up, for sure.

"Not that long ago, I was that fan wanting to become a professional footballer and I am here now and winning awards and the *Ballon d'Or* is the same.

"Of course, now it is out of my hands, it is down to the voters and the people who decide it. The season I had was my best season by far and we'll have to wait and see."

Kane is yet to score in the Bundesliga this term across Bayern's opening two fixtures, which featured a 5-1 win over Stuttgart and a goalless draw against Schalke.

Yet despite his historic output last season, he remains driven to raise his standards.

He added: "It is a weird one because I am already

focused on this season now and the next season. Can I be better? Can I improve? But I also want to appreciate what I did.

"The thing with football opinions – there are so many opinions, so many arguments for different players and people love this player because he's fast and he's got great IQ and his finishing is great.

"So I think that is what makes football special, all those debates, and the *Ballon d'Or* is definitely one of them. I'm happy that I am in contention."

The England captain admitted to being "amazed" to find his name alongside Messi and Ronaldo, two figures widely considered the game's greatest ever.

He added: "I grew up watching Messi and Ronaldo, the era of them just dominating and dominating.

"Obviously Messi is the only one to have scored more with 82, but even some of their other seasons, and Ronaldo's highest I think was 69.

"These are numbers that I just thought were silly, which they are. They are the two greatest of our generation and arguably of all time. So 73 goals, even for me, I am pretty amazed by that." – The Independent



"The season I had was my best season by far and we'll have to wait and see"

Bayern striker Harry Kane

Vicario praises De Zerbi after leaving Tottenham for Juventus

■ BY **GEORGE SESSIONS**

GUGLIELMO VICARIO has praised Tottenham manager Roberto De Zerbi for being a "man of his word" after a prolonged summer transfer saga ended with his move to Juventus.

The Italian keeper failed to play a single minute under De Zerbi, as a hernia operation in March sidelined him during the early matches of the manager's tenure, allowing Antonin Kinsky to seize his opportunity.

Spurs promptly handed Czech goalkeeper Kinsky a new contract after securing Premier

League safety and allowed Vicario to depart, though his season-long loan switch to Juventus was only finalised on Aug 18.

Asked about his relationship with De Zerbi during an interview with *Sky Sports Italia* this month, Vicario said: "Fantastic, from the first day.

"I thank him, I did it personally the day I signed with Juventus. With me he was a real person, direct and above all a man of his word.

"He gave me the opportunity to take this step that I had in mind, he supported me and I will always be grateful to him."

The Italy international joined Tottenham in

2023 and went on to help the club win the Europa League under Ange Postecoglou two years later.

However, Vicario suffered a downturn in form during the 2025-26 season, departing after making 117 appearances for the club.

His loan to Juventus contains an option to make the move permanent for a fee of €10 million (RM47m).

Reflecting on his final season at Tottenham, Vicario added: "There have been some dynamics that have not aligned, probably for several reasons that make no sense to mention now."

Vicario was one of 19 senior departures from Spurs this summer, but Richarlison stayed after the transfer windows in Turkey and Saudi Arabia closed over the weekend.

De Zerbi omitted Richarlison from Tottenham's 25-man Premier League squad on Thursday, with the Brazilian forward now set to watch on from the sidelines for the rest of 2026.

Spurs are still searching for their first win of the season after being held to a goalless draw by Nottingham Forest on Saturday following defeats by Brentford and Newcastle. – The Independent

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RESULTS & STANDINGS

LA LIGA: Getafe 1 (Satriano 21) Celta Vigo 1 (Starfelt 57), Elche 2 (Lemar 67, Nino 74) Real Sociedad 3 (Ochieng 11, Herrera 31, Sucic 90).

TOP 5	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
Deportivo	4	2	2	0	8	5	8

SERIE A: Cagliari 1 (Maldini 29) Lecce 0, Udinese 1 (Karlstrom 49) Lazio 2 (Fratte 75, Gudmundsson 88).

TOP 5	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
AS Roma	3	3	0	0	10	1	9
Inter Milan	3	3	0	0	8	3	9
Lazio	3	3	0	0	4	1	9
Como	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
AC Milan	3	2	1	0	5	2	7

Coach, family sacrifices fuel Akmal Danish's golden lift

SIX years of waiting and sacrifice, including sending training equipment to his protegee's home in a village, finally paid off for Perak powerlifting coach Freddy Yam when Muhammad Akmal Danish Mohamad Supi won gold at the Selangor Para Sukma 2026 yesterday.

There was no gymnasium or proper training facility, just a space in front of his house that his father turned into a makeshift "training centre", equipped with items provided by Freddy, who began coaching Muhammad Akmal Danish six years ago.

Despite the limitations, Freddy never stopped developing the Kampung Sungai Kuning native's talent, ensuring he had the equipment needed to continue training at home. The competition at the Selangor International Trade Centre (SITC) saw those efforts rewarded when Muhammad Akmal Danish, 18, lifted 137kg to win the men's 80kg event.

It was Akmal Danish's first gold at the Para Sukma after he previously won two silver medals at the Kuala Lumpur 2022 and Sarawak 2024 editions.

For Freddy, the journey with his student was far from easy as they had to find ways to ensure Akmal Danish could continue training despite the limited facilities in his village.

"We have indeed waited a long time for the Para Sukma. His parents and I have also gone through many obstacles and trials.

"When he trained in Selama, there was no gym because it was in the village. So I gave him the equipment and sent it to his house so he could train there," he said in a tearful tone.

Meanwhile, Muhammad Akmal Danish said the 137kg of iron was not the heaviest burden he had ever carried, but rather the responsibility of being the eldest son and repaying his family for all their sacrifices.

He said that apart from the efforts of his coach, who had helped him since he was 12, his parents had also played a major role in yesterday's success by making the long journey from Kampung Sungai Kuning, Selama, to Ipoh to send him for training every month.

"My family, who are very supportive, are willing to send me from a village in the interior of Perak to Ipoh every month for training... that is what makes me strong.

"I don't want my family to have to go through that again because the journey is long and tiring," he told Bernama after the competition. — Bernama

Malaysia sets realistic target

Six golds among haul expected in Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games

MALAYSIA is targeting six gold, seven silver and 20 bronze medals, or 33 medals overall, at the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games from Sept 19 to Oct 4.

Chef de Mission (CDM) Datuk Mohd Sumali Reduan said the target was realistic based on the athletes' current form, recent achievements, medal potential and the strength of continental competition.

"This target is realistic based on current performances and recent achievements. Everyone knows this is a major Games. The Asian Games are not the SEA Games, so naturally the

challenge is greater.

"We also hope there will be a bonus beyond the gold-medal target because we are targeting seven silver and 20 bronze medals," he said.

He was speaking after the Jalur Gemilang Handover Ceremony for the Malaysian contingents to the Asian Games and Asian Para Games at the National Sports Council (NSC) in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday.

At the ceremony, national wushu queen Tan Cheong Min was announced as the Malaysian contingent's Jalur Gemilang flag-bearer for the Asian Games, while para long jumper Muhammad Nazmi

Nasri was selected as the flag-bearer for the Asian Para Games.

Mohd Sumali said the medal target was set following detailed discussions that took into account the athletes' current form and the strength of their opponents.

"We hope that, as at the Commonwealth Games previously, there will eventually be a bonus. At the same time, we pray that we do not fall short of the target because what is important is that we achieve the overall target of 33 medals," he said.

Thirteen sports have been identified as having medal potential, including track cycling, badminton, archery, diving, squash, sepak tak-

raw, hockey, athletics, sailing, karate, wushu, esports and shooting. The Malaysian contingent comprises 352 athletes and 185 officials, who will compete in 30 of the 43 sports contested at the Games. Malaysia will participate in 156 of the 469 events on the programme.

Meanwhile, NSC director-general Jefri Ngadirin said national track cycling star Datuk Azizulhasni Awang is also expected to compete at the Games and help Malaysia achieve the medal target.

CDM for the Asian Para Games Tan Chee Keong said Malaysia are targeting six gold, 10 silver and 18 bronze medals at the Games, scheduled for Oct 18 to 24. — Bernama



Syahir's fitness worries takraw coach

NATIONAL sepak takraw head coach Ahmad Jais Baharun is concerned about the fitness of skipper Muhammad Syahir Mohd Rosdi ahead of the Aichi-Nagoya 2026 Asian Games in Japan from Sept 19 to Oct 4.

Ahmad Jais said Syahir, who suffered a muscle tear in his right leg during the 2026 Sepak Takraw World Cup in Kuala Lumpur in May, is currently only 70% fit.

"In terms of his performance, what he showed during the test matches and also training, I see that it still hasn't reached what we expected and we are still looking for his playing rhythm," he told reporters after the launch of the Mekdi 2026 National Takraw League in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

"He has only just reached 70% fitness and needs to work hard again.

"At the same time, we cannot pressure him because time is getting short and we are afraid that other injuries will occur."

Meanwhile, Ahmad Jais said the national men's squad had shown a slight improvement in momentum ahead of the Asian Games, winning 14 of 16 test matches against

Thailand's Pathumthani University team in Kuala Lumpur recently.

On the target of two gold medals set by the Sepak Takraw Federation of Malaysia (PSM), Ahmad Jais admitted that the high expectations had added pressure on his players.

"Personally, what we are aiming for is one gold medal, but when the Chef de Mission (CDM) for the 2026 Asian Games, Datuk Mohd Sumali Reduan, himself calls out for the national team to achieve two gold medals, it is a big challenge.

"Moreover, the fact that the president (of PSM) himself was appointed as CDM puts a little extra pressure on us. But I believe our players are maturing, and we hope they continue to stay focused," he said.

The national men's squad are expected to compete in two events at the Asian Games — the men's regu and men's team regu.

Malaysia last won the men's regu gold at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta-Palembang, Indonesia, while the country's most recent men's team regu gold came at the 1990 edition in Beijing, China. — Bernama

BRIEFS

BAM still looking for mixed doubles head coach

THE Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) has clarified that no appointment has been finalised for the national mixed doubles head coach position. It said the association was still in the process of evaluating and vetting candidates under consideration for the post. "BAM will make an official announcement once the appointment has been finalised," it said in a statement yesterday. Previously, it was reported that national junior men's doubles coach Pang Cheh Chang had been linked to the position of national mixed doubles head coach. The vacancy arose following the departure of former head coach Nova Widianto of Indonesia, who concluded his stint with BAM at the end of July to return to his homeland. Nova, who joined BAM in January 2023, left behind a significant legacy after guiding Chen Tang Jie-Toh Ee Wei to become Malaysia's first world champions in mixed doubles last year.

Pakistan too good for Young Tigers

THE national men's junior hockey squad suffered their first defeat in the 2026 Junior Asia Cup after losing 5-2 to Pakistan in Moqi, China, yesterday. In their third Pool B match at the Moqi Training Base, the Young Tigers took the lead in the ninth minute through Muhammad Safwan Salihe's penalty stroke. Pakistan, however, fought back with five goals through Nadeem Khan (32nd minute), Rana Abdul Rana Sami (36'), Waleed Rana (39', 40') and Hamza Ali (41'). Malaysia's second goal was scored by G. Dheeressh in the 54th minute. The result means Pakistan continue to lead Pool B with nine points, while Malaysia remain second with six points, followed by China, who also have six points. Bangladesh and Kazakhstan have yet to earn any points. Malaysia will determine their fate in their final group match against China today, with a win crucial to strengthening their position for a place in the semifinals. The Young Tigers were crowned Junior Asia Cup champions in 2012 and finished fourth in the last two editions in 2023 and 2024.

Tahfiz teacher delivers gold for NS

IF success was previously achieved through the doubles event, now tahfiz teacher Muhamad Bazli Alias who represents Negeri Sembilan has proven his individual ability when he brilliantly won the gold medal in the men's wheelchair singles table tennis event, class 1-3 (physical disability). In yesterday's final, Muhamad Bazli, 37, brilliantly denied the challenge of Sabah representative Muhamad Liza Mat Sittim 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5 to emerge champion. It is also the first gold medal for Negeri Sembilan in table tennis in this edition. "I have won gold before but not in the singles event. So I am satisfied to get the singles gold which is also the first gold for Negeri Sembilan in table tennis," he said when met yesterday. Meanwhile, Muhamad Bazli has set a dream to represent the country at the Asean Para Games in Malaysia next year if the event is contested. Meanwhile, in the third-fourth place category, Nur Izhar Idham brilliantly contributed bronze when he defeated his opponent from Penang in a straight sets, 11-7, 11-4, 11-5.



Russell accepts the inevitable

Story on page 28



Comeback queen Qinwen

Story on page 29



From doubles success to singles gold

Negeri Sembilan para table tennis athlete Muhammad Bazli Alias celebrates after winning the men's singles event in class 1-3 final in the 2026 Selangor Para Sukma at the Bukit Raja Hall (MBDK) yesterday. Muhammad Bazli, a tahfiz teacher, defeated Sabah's Muhamad Lizan Mat Sittim (not pictured) 11-9, 11-9, 10-12, 11-5. — **BERNAMAPIC**

More on page 31

Europe beckons

LIVERPOOL and Arsenal face stern tests at the start of their Champions League campaigns tomorrow, while defending champions Paris Saint-Germain and Barcelona begin their European title bids at home.

Liverpool welcome Atletico Madrid to Anfield in the standout fixture of the opening round, while Arsenal travel to Napoli in a meeting of two teams with ambitions of going deep into the competition.

Barcelona host Feyenoord and PSG entertain Slovan Bratislava in matches that appear more straightforward on paper, while Sporting Lisbon face Galatasaray and Stuttgart host Viking.

For Liverpool, the visit of Atletico comes at an important moment for new manager Andoni Iraola, who has overseen an encouraging response after a difficult start to his reign.

The Premier League champions finally recorded their first victory of the season before the international break, beating Ipswich Town 2-0, with Alexander Isak scoring twice. The result followed draws against Newcastle United and Nottingham Forest.

Iraola now faces a very different test against an Atletico side renowned for their organisation and competitiveness under Diego Simeone.

The Spanish club arrive after a 3-0 defeat by Athletic Bilbao, a result Simeone admitted was deserved.

"In the second half, we lost the match in just five minutes; in fact, I believe that two minutes were enough to change everything," Simeone said.

Liverpool have recent history with Atletico in the competition. They edged a 3-2 thriller at Anfield last season, while Atletico famously eliminated Liverpool at the same stadium in the 2019/20 last 16.

The hosts will therefore be wary of a side

Liverpool host Atletico while Arsenal travel to Napoli as Premier League clubs face tough starts

capable of making the game uncomfortable even when Liverpool dominate possession.

Iraola's biggest task will be ensuring his side maintain the intensity that has traditionally characterised Liverpool at Anfield while avoiding the defensive lapses that have cost them points early in the domestic season.

Arsenal, meanwhile, begin another Champions League campaign with the memory of last season's final defeat to PSG still fresh.

Mikel Arteta's side were beaten on penalties by the French champions in Budapest in May after reaching the final for the first time since the competition's early years. They will now begin the long route back to the latter stages with a demanding trip to Napoli.

Arsenal have made an impressive start domestically, winning their opening three Premier League matches, and have built their early success around defensive discipline.

Napoli offer a different proposition at the Diego Armando Maradona Stadium, where the atmosphere is likely to test Arsenal's composure from the outset.

The 2025 Italian champions have also added significant experience, with Kevin De Bruyne among their high-profile recruits, while Massimiliano Allegri's appointment has brought another experienced hand to the club.

For Arsenal, the challenge is to combine the defensive solidity that has characterised their domestic start with enough attacking ambition to threaten Napoli away from home.

The match also gives Arteta an early indication of whether his side can once again compete with Europe's elite after falling at the final hurdle

last season.

Barcelona begin their campaign with a considerably more favourable assignment against Feyenoord at the Nou Camp.

Hansi Flick's side have won all four of their La Liga matches and produced their most emphatic performance of the season at the weekend, crushing Valencia 5-0 at Mestalla.

Lamine Yamal scored twice in that victory, while Fermin Lopez, Raphinha and Pedri were also on the scoresheet. Barcelona have been prolific under Flick and will expect to put Feyenoord under sustained pressure.

The Dutch side arrive with confidence of their own after beating NEC Nijmegen 3-1 away from home. They remain unbeaten domestically but face a huge step up in quality against a Barcelona team determined to improve on last season's European disappointment.

Feyenoord will also be led by former Barcelona player Giovanni van Bronckhorst, adding an interesting subplot to the meeting.

At the Parc des Princes, PSG begin the defence of their Champions League crown against Slovan Bratislava while attempting to put an unexpectedly poor domestic start behind them.

Luis Enrique's side are seeking a third successive European title, a feat achieved in the modern era only by Real Madrid between 2016 and 2018. PSG have already secured back-to-back Champions League crowns under Enrique, but their Ligue 1 campaign has begun with three games without a win.

They lost 2-1 at home to Monaco at the weekend, leaving them seven points behind the

2026 PARA SUKMA GAMES

MEDAL TALLY

STATE	G	S	B	Ttl
1. Selangor	49	32	27	108
2. Sabah	44	30	24	98
3. Sarawak	30	20	36	86
4. Johor	17	14	18	49
5. Perak	9	17	13	39
6. N. Sembilan	7	8	7	22
7. F. Territories	6	15	6	27
8. Perlis	6	6	6	18
9. Kelantan	4	12	10	26
10. Terengganu	4	7	10	21
11. Melaka	3	7	2	12
12. Kedah	3	4	7	14
13. Penang	2	7	5	14
14. Pahang	2	5	9	16
15. Brunei	0	0	0	0

early leaders.

Enrique, however, remains confident that the results do not reflect the quality of his team.

"I think we played a very good game," he said after the Monaco defeat, pointing to the limited opportunities conceded by his side. "We have to accept that sometimes football is like this."

PSG will expect to dominate against Slovan and could use the match to rebuild momentum before the tougher stages of their European campaign.

Sporting Lisbon's meeting with Galatasaray is arguably the most unpredictable of the other three fixtures.

Both sides are accustomed to playing in hostile European atmospheres and possess enough attacking quality to make the encounter an open contest. With the new league-phase format placing greater importance on collecting points consistently, neither will want to surrender an early advantage.

Stuttgart, meanwhile, host Viking with the German side expected to make home advantage count against the Norwegian visitors. — Agencies