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Nation

**Macau scam hits a new high with innocent company bosses losing their jobs for years. >3**



Nation

**Tahfiz ordered to pay RM4.3mil to ex-student paralysed in a school van accident. >8**



**EXCLUSIVE**

# NO GUNS NO BULLETS NO GLORY

Our shooters have been eyeing international glory in Taiwan next month but their target has been shot down. Following a teen's death in June, and subsequent seizure of over 450 guns and 100,000 rounds of ammo from the Selangor Shooting Association's clubhouse, the 20 marksmen have neither weapons nor a place to train – and their dreams at the 42nd South-East Asia Shooting Championships are shattered.

> See Page 4 for report by EDDIE CHUA



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ALL ABOUT THE DRIVE

# Dr M's back on the world stage

PM to deliver Malaysia's national statement at UN general assembly

TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad is set to make a return to the world stage.

The Prime Minister arrives in New York tomorrow for a working visit to the 73rd session of the United Nations General Assembly.

Dr Mahathir will deliver Malaysia's national statement during the assembly's general debate on Friday.

It's been nearly 15 years to the day since Dr Mahathir last spoke at the UN general assembly, which was on Sept 25, 2003, about a month before he retired as Malaysia's fourth Prime Minister on Oct 31.

In his 2003 UN speech, Dr Mahathir railed against the hegemony of rich and powerful countries imposing their will on weaker nations.

He called for a restructuring of the UN, saying that the world had lost its way.

"There is a Malaysian saying that when one loses his way he should go back to the beginning. We need to go back to the beginning," Dr Mahathir said.

Fifteen years on, Malaysia found itself in a new beginning.

When Dr Mahathir takes to the UN podium on Friday, he will be speaking as Malaysia's seventh Prime Minister following Pakatan Harapan's May 9 general election victory.

Foreign Minister Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah in a media briefing on the visit said Dr Mahathir would lay out the framework of the Pakatan Harapan government's foreign policy.



**ABDUL RAZAK AHMAD IDRIS**  
in New York

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cy in his UN speech.

Saifuddin said the fundamental principles of Malaysia's foreign policy would be maintained.

Asean would remain the top agenda in the country's foreign relations.

Malaysia will also continue to practise the policy of neutrality and strive for friendly relations with all countries.

In addition, some older foreign policy elements would be revived. These include the Look East Policy and emphasis on Africa.

"But there are at least two elements which are new on the table, which is human rights and sustainable development goals," said Saifuddin.

Another thing that will not change in Dr Mahathir's UN speech this time around will be his habit of criticising what is wrong with the state of international affairs.

It is a trait that endeared him, and by extension Malaysia, to the developing world during his 22 years as the country's fourth PM from 1981 to 2003.

"Rest assured that for some of you who have followed Tun Mahathir's speeches at the UN, he

would continue to speak out on world issues such as globalisation.

"We don't really want to talk about what happened in the past, but I think what is most important is that the current government wants to have a balanced relation with all countries, which includes the superpowers," said Saifuddin.

The Prime Minister is scheduled to have bilateral meetings with a number of his counterparts on the sidelines of the UN meeting.

Saifuddin, however, declined to provide more information, saying that the details were still being worked out.

Dr Mahathir will be accompanied on his working visit by his wife Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Saifuddin, Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu, Health Minister Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad, and senior government officials.

The Prime Minister will have numerous speaking events in New York aside from his UN engagement.

On Wednesday, Dr Mahathir will take part in a dialogue with members of the US Council on Foreign Relations, a renowned independent think tank.

The dialogue will discuss the domestic situation in Malaysia and relationships with the United States and Asian countries.

The Prime Minister will then take part in a Bloomberg Global Business Forum, on the topic of emerging global trade relationships, later that same day.

The next day Dr Mahathir will deliver a speech at the Asia Society, entitled, "Insights on How Malaysia will Meet the Challenges Confronting the Security, Prosperity and Sustainability in Asia".

He will deliver the keynote address at the "Achieving Sustainable Development Goals: Unleashing the Potential of Islamic Finance" event held at UN headquarters, also on Thursday.

The event is jointly organised by the Securities Commission of Malaysia, the United Nations Development Programme and the Islamic Development Bank.

Dr Mahathir will be meeting with a number of renowned entrepreneurs as well as potential investors from the United States.

On Friday, the Prime Minister will host a dinner for the Malaysian diaspora in New York and its surrounding areas.

Dr Mahathir will arrive in New York from London where he is on a working visit from Sept 22.

He departs New York on Saturday for London to continue the second leg of his working visit to Britain from Saturday to Monday.

Saifuddin said many leaders from other countries were looking forward to Dr Mahathir's participation at the UN general assembly and want to meet him.

"He is active, articulate and vocal, so there is a lot of expectation by many UN member states as to what would be the main content of his speech this time," said Saifuddin.

## Cabinet to get draft of PTPTN repayment method

**KANGAR:** The draft of the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (PTPTN) repayment method will be tabled to the Cabinet in two weeks' time, says its chairman Wan Saiful Wan Jan.

Even though the total arrears was very high, he said PTPTN had the responsibility to assist borrowers to pay off their loans.

"I cannot disclose the content of the draft," he told reporters after visiting a storm-hit school yesterday.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last Thursday lambasted errant borrowers for not settling their PTPTN loans which amounted to RM36bil.

According to Dr Mahathir, the loan defaulters included those with jobs.

Many PTPTN loan borrowers had come out in support of the prime minister's statement saying that his comments on those defaulters were spot on.

**This concerns one's behaviour and morals; when you borrow money, you have to repay, even at RM10 a month.**

Dr Maszlee Malik

Describing the loan defaulters' attitude as "negative", they said any refusal to repay PTPTN loans would affect future borrowers.

Some suggested that the government reimplement the travel ban.

The Star's article on Dr Mahathir calling out to PTPTN loan defaulters had also attracted many comments on Facebook, with many giving suggestions to curb the issue.

Meanwhile, the Education Ministry has called on all quarters, including the opposition, to cease linking PTPTN with the Pakatan Harapan manifesto for the 14th General Election.

Education Minister Dr Maszlee Malik said borrowers were obliged to settle their repayments.

"Whatever the manifesto says, the borrowers have to pay the loan."

"The opposition, they just want to politicise the issue. This concerns one's behaviour and morals; when you borrow money, you have to repay, even at RM10 a month," he told reporters after visiting SK Siputeh in Kedah, yesterday.

Pakatan, in its general election manifesto, among others, stated that it would defer repayment of PTPTN loans for borrowers earning RM4,000 a month and below. — Bernama



### Working visit

Dr Mahathir being greeted by chargé d'affaires Mohd Suhaimi Jaafar and Malaysian High Commission officials upon arrival in London on Saturday. Dr Mahathir is on a two-leg working visit to Britain. The first is until tomorrow, while the second leg is from Sept 29 until Oct 1. He'll be in New York tomorrow.

— Bernama

### Weather

	GEORGE TOWN	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KOTA BARU	K. KINABALU	KUCHING		ALOR SETAR	PENANG	K. LUMPUR	JOHOR BARU	KUANTAN	KOTA BARU				
AM	Thunderstorms	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	Isolated rain		Subuh Zohor Asar Maghrib Isyak	5:51 13:13 16:23 19:15 20:24	Subuh Zohor Asar Maghrib Isyak	5:52 13:13 16:22 19:15 20:24	Subuh Zohor Asar Maghrib Isyak	5:47 13:08 16:15 19:10 20:19	Subuh Zohor Asar Maghrib Isyak	5:41 13:02 16:06 19:04 20:13	Subuh Zohor Asar Maghrib Isyak	5:48 13:06 16:16 19:08 20:13
PM	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	No rain	Isolated thunderstorms											

# More and more falling victim

Macau scam has innocent bosses getting sacked and firm losing RM4.35mil

By CHELSEA L.Y. NG  
and FATIMAH ZAINAL  
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

**PETALING JAYA:** There may have been thousands of stories written about how Macau scammers left their victims penniless.

However, in one case at the Industrial Court last week, the scammers even got the victim's bosses at a multinational company sacked and the firm to lose RM4.35mil in online transactions.

The woman, who was scammed into transferring the millions to various "authorities" at the end of 2013 to help free her "lover", ended up in custody for embezzlement.

Her two bosses – a chief financial officer (CFO) and a marketing and sales operations (HOM) head – had their services terminated in 2014 and were in limbo for over four years as they fought their dismissal in court. They were 55 and 52 years old respectively.

Alice (not her real name) was just over 31 years old when she was introduced to George, a British national, during a casual dinner with a mutual friend at a restaurant five years ago.

She only met him that one time but kept in touch with him online for several months after that. George even proposed marriage.

But then, George claimed to have gotten into trouble with the authorities.



One thing led to another and a desperate Alice began stealing her bosses' passwords to the company's online banking account and transferred RM150,000 to RM500,000 in 13 transactions between October and November of the same year.

Investigations by the company revealed that Alice, who worked as an accounts executive and was trusted by her bosses, had made RM4.35mil in fraudulent withdrawals from the company accounts.

She confessed to the crime and

also how she stole the safeword token and password of the CFO.

And, the company's security manager said at the trial that the HOM was also never informed of the activation of the new safeword token and its password.

## The lucky few who did not fall for it

**PETALING JAYA:** While Malaysia is said to be prime hunting ground for Macau scammers, there were also stories of those who didn't fall for the con.

One such case is that of sales executive Veronica, 35, who was almost scammed in February.

"A lady who claimed to be from the Seremban sessions court called me to say that I have to attend a court session at 3pm."

"In a state of panic, I asked what was the case about and she said that I owe Maybank RM38,000 for a credit card loan."

"She said I needed to go down to the Seremban police headquarters to meet the sergeant and if I didn't, I'd have to pay up the full amount in court."

"I was in Kuala Lumpur and at work so I told her that I would call the police station myself with the case reference number that she gave me," said Veronica.

However, she sensed something amiss when the woman on the other end of the line started to panic.

She was trying to convince Veronica that no one else could help.

"She tried to urge me to pay up quickly. I know that scammers play with your mind by scaring you with urgency, so that you really think that you're in trouble."



"I insisted that I will call the police headquarters myself – and she abruptly hung up," she said.

When Veronica called the police to recount what just transpired, the officer confirmed that it was an attempted Macau scam and that it was common in Malaysia nowadays.

Senior citizens are also common targets.

Retired civil servant Jothi, 83, however, was saved by her quick thinking and ability to remain calm.

A few months ago, a man called her, claiming that he had a letter from the Alor Setar High Court and that she owed the government

RM11,000 in taxes.

"I denied this and he passed the phone to a man who claimed to be a policeman who told me that he was coming to my house to arrest me."

"The man was crass and dominating. I was scared but I stood my ground, denying that I owed any money."

"I told them that my husband was a high ranking policeman and that I would consult my lawyers and sons before I engage further in the conversation," said Jothi.

She said her hands were shaking from fright. She called her sons who told her that it was a scam.

Trader Rahman, 64, almost fell for the scammers when they called him to say that he owed the bank RM7,000 in credit card debt.

"I was shocked and explained that the last time I had a credit card was in the 1990s. But they were so convincing that I actually thought I had missed some payments."

"They told me that they were debt collectors working on behalf of the bank and would come by my house in half an hour to seize my furniture and valuables."

"I was afraid and started gathering my valuables to give to them when they showed up. But my children, who noticed what was going on, convinced me that they were just scammers," he said, adding that he then filed a police report.

The two bosses fought their cases and finally, got their jobs back with backwages totalling nearly RM1.6mil after the Industrial Court ruled that their dismissals were unjust.

They are to report back for duty on Oct 1. They will not lose seniority of service nor their benefits.

The court could have ordered for backwage payment of up to RM3.2mil but court chairman Bernard John Kanny held that he did not want to cause an economic distress to the company and slashed the figure by half.

One of the bosses' lawyers Anand Ponnudurai said that the company had to pay the backwages by Oct 14.

The court also found that the security manager had breached his duty of care when he allowed Alice to log in using the new token and password.

"The court is surprised that the company took no action against the security manager."

"The company's conduct against the HOM was not fair and would appear to be selective persecution."

"The company persecuted and victimised the HOM and made her a scapegoat to cover its own shortcomings in the payment process system."

The court held that "to blame the claimants when things go wrong in light of company's shortcomings was totally unfair and unreasonable".

## 30 fall prey to fraudsters everyday, say police

**PETALING JAYA:** Almost every day, there is a new headline about Malaysians falling victim to scams.

Millions of ringgit have been lost to these fraudsters, with the police saying that many gullible people are still falling prey to this scam, despite numerous warnings.

According to the police, there are at least 30 new cases of Malaysians being cheated via mobile phones daily.

Selangor police chief Comm Datuk Mazlan Mansor said there were 523 Macau scam cases reported this year alone.

"Losses are hitting an estimated RM29mil in Selangor alone," he said.

In Penang, there have been 520 cheating cases committed through fake phone calls involving losses of RM27mil since 2016.

The term "Macau scam" was coined because it is believed that it originated from Macau or that the first victims came from there. This has never been confirmed.

The scam often starts with a phone call from someone pretending to be an officer from a bank, Bank Negara or government agencies such as the Immigration or Customs departments as well as police or debt collector.

The scammer will then claim that the potential victim owed money or had an unpaid fine, often with a short window of time to settle the payment.

These victims are asked to make the payments quickly to get them off the hook.

## Sabah PAS backs minimum marriage age at 14

**KOTA KINABALU:** Sabah PAS is throwing its support behind Sabah mufti Datuk Bungsu @ Aziz Jaafar's controversial suggestion to lower the minimum marriage age to 14.

State PAS commissioner Mohd Aminuddin Aling said all parties should prioritise syarak (Islamic teachings) in discussing matters pertaining to the legal marriage age.

He said the party was concerned with the comments coming from some political leaders and netizens,

which he claimed made fun of Bungsu's statement.

"We believe the Sabah mufti's suggestion is rooted in religious knowledge and is credible."

"He is not telling 14-year-old girls to get married, but merely suggesting that the Islamic view be prioritised in the event that such a situation arises," Mohd Aminuddin said in a statement yesterday.

He urged the government, policy-makers and leaders to consider the views of mufti and ulama (religious

scholars) when deciding on setting the legal marriage age.

A local daily reported Bungsu as saying that people should be allowed to get married early, which according to Syariah law is 14 for girls and 16 for boys, as some of these children can already be considered mature.

Rembau MP Khairy Jamaluddin on Twitter had referred to Bungsu's statement as "madness", while Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religion)

Fuziah Salleh was reported as saying that she disagreed with lowering the legal marriage age.

The Centre for A Better Tomorrow vice-president Ng Yeen Seen urge leaders in the country to exercise wisdom when talking about child marriage, as their statements can influence the public on the issue.

Ng said that leaders in the country should serve as a "beacon" in the protection of child rights in the country.

# Chance for glory out of range

National shooters have no place to train after club sealed

By EDDIE CHUA  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Some 20 national shooters who are to take part in the 42nd South-East Asia Shooting Championships in Taiwan next month are in limbo.

They have no weapons nor a place to conduct their training.

This follows the sealing of the Selangor Shooting Association's clubhouse in Subang.

Police have placed the Olympic standard shooting ranges as off-limits.

The armoury at the clubhouse is also not to be used, causing further dismay to members and national shooters from using its facilities.

For now, this will go on indefinitely.

The 20 shooters were supposed to take part in the Oct 22 to 31 championships in Taiwan.

"The team is likely to call off the competition," a source told *The Star*.

On June 27, a student killed himself in a Subang Jaya college toilet with a Walther GS.

The 19-year-old was a club member and had taken along with him a pistol from the shooting range.

Subsequently, security requirements at the clubhouse were ordered to be beefed up. The association failed to do so and the clubhouse has since been sealed off.

Sources said the clubhouse was home to the



national sportsmen's shooting range. It is also the permanent headquarters of the South-East Asia Shooting Association (SEASA).

The premises boasts a dozen Olympic-standard shooting ranges, accommodating every kind of shooting categories.

The last competition hosted at the clubhouse was last year.

Police also seized a cache of over 450 guns and more than 100,000 rounds of ammunition from the clubhouse.

The source said seven police trucks had to be used to cart away the weapons and bullets. The operation was led by officers from the Selangor police headquarters on Sept 13.

A Selangor police official confirmed the raid and seizure but declined to elaborate.

The source said following the investigation into the student's death and the missing pistol, Selangor police recommended new security requirements and measures for the clubhouse.

"The club was given three months to adhere to the directive. However, when it failed to adhere to the deadline, the raid and seizure were conducted."

The 20 shooters are not the only ones in a quandary. The association's carry-and-use gun licence, subbed out to a council member and a former senior police officer have expired in June - and this has yet to be renewed.

The main licence, which was registered under the sporting category, is leased out to all its members and those from the national squad, enabling them to use the firearms kept at the clubhouse for their shooting activities.

"The club has now no legal permit to carry out any shooting until the main licence has been renewed," a source said.

"The club is currently holding discussions with the police.

"Without the licence, the association's operations would be deemed illegal."

When contacted, an association spokesman declined to comment on the raid.

The association has over 6,000 members who pay an annual fee of RM500 each.

Ban can be a last straw for the disabled, say groups

By CLARISSA CHUNG  
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**PETALING JAYA:** In light of the plastic straw ban in the Federal Territories next year, advocates representing persons with disabilities (PWDs) have urged eateries to provide alternative drinking straws to those with limited physical movements.

"Straws are needed by those with neurological problems or have limited physical movement such as tetraplegics or quadriplegics," said founder and chairman of the non-governmental organisation OKU Sentral Ras Adiba Radzi.

"Restaurants should provide reusable or recyclable straws," she said, adding that the food and beverage outlets should either give them free to PWDs or charge a minimal fee.

Her comments came about following last week's announcement by the government that plastic straws would be banned in Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan from Jan 1 next year.

Federal Territories Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Adnan Mohd Ikhwan, however, made clear that business operators that offered plastic straws to customers for medical reasons would not be penalised.

He also said that although the ban was included as a requirement in the business licence for next year, full enforcement of the ban would only be effected from Jan 1, 2020.

Ras Adiba said the PWD community was supportive of the move to encourage more eco-friendly practices, but urged that the community should not be left behind in lieu of the green initiative.

"We are part of society, we want to help save the environment, but we need to be met halfway," she said.

Senator Bathmavathi Krishnan said eateries could provide a limited number of biodegradable plastic straws specifically for the PWD community.

As metal straws cannot be bent or angled and paper straws may fray in water over time, she said, biodegradable straws might be the "best bet" for the PWD community.

Other straws such as silicone or pasta straws are also viable alternatives, she added.

Malaysian Spinal Cord Injury Advocacy Association also urged restaurants to be aware that the plastic straw ban did not apply to the PWD community.

"Premises that sell food and drinks need to be aware of the exemptions made for the PWD so that there would not arise any confusion when the time comes, especially if it involves additional costs."

"For certain PWD such as those with spinal cord injury (tetraplegia, quadriplegia), cerebral palsy, traumatic brain injury, amputation (of the hands), the ban would affect their daily lives," it said in a Facebook post.

The association added that the suggestion for the PWD to bring their own straws may not be viable for them.

"In certain circumstances, there is no one to help them retrieve these items from their bags," it said.

## Malaysians send words of encouragement to Chong Wei

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians are sending their love and support to badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei, showering him with encouragement to keep fighting in his battle against cancer.

Positive messages continue to pour into his official Instagram (@leechongweiofficial) account since news of his illness broke out on Friday.

Well wishes came not only from Malaysians but also from fans abroad.

Former youth and sports minister Khairy Jamaluddin took to his Instagram to send a get well soon message to Lee.

Khairy also shared a photo of his son together with Chong Wei with the caption: "GWS (get well soon), my friend. Beat this like you've beaten everyone on the court @leechongweiofficial."

The Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) on Saturday confirmed that the former world number one was receiving treatment for nasal cancer in Taiwan and is now recuperating.

In July, BAM issued a statement saying that Chong Wei would not be taking part in two major tournaments due to respiratory problems and he had been advised by doctors to rest.

Celebrity Alif Satar (@alifsatar) and Selangor princess, Tengku Zatashah Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah (@zatashah) prayed for his speedy recovery.

A badminton enthusiast from Indonesia, @m.aditya\_fp said: "I have always been in awe of Datuk Lee Chong Wei and his brilliant games. May Datuk get well soon and continue playing badminton again."

Some netizens expressed hopes that Chong Wei would return to health but accepted it if the badminton legend decided not to play anymore. — Bernama



**Total submission**

A total of 20 youths lying face-down on the road after being hauled up by the police for allegedly taking part in an illegal race. Kuala Muda OCPD Asst Comm Adzli Abu Shah said the incident happened two months ago at Ambangan Height in Kuala Muda. 'Dozens of summonses were issued for traffic offences. We did not instruct the youths to lie down on the road. They followed suit after some of their friends did it,' he said. The image has recently gone viral.

## Hiker found seven days after he went missing

**BAU:** Alert villagers led rescuers to a hiker on the slope of Mount Singai in southern Sarawak here, seven days after he went missing.

Stanley Kho, 22, was found weak at 8.40am yesterday by search and rescue teams scouring the mountain for a week.

Sarawak Fire and Rescue Department assistant operations director Tiong Ling Hii said villagers heard cries for help and alerted the search teams.

"The rescue team members are trying to bring him out but the slope is very steep," said Tiong.

Kho went missing on Sept 17

after he ascended the mountain alone.

Some 40 minutes' drive from Kuching, Mount Singai is known among Catholics as a pilgrimage area as well as a popular trekking spot for adventure seekers.

Some 300 people were involved in the search that included the use of drones.

Among those in the search team were local community leaders and members of hiking groups.



**Precarious:** Rescuers climbing a steep incline on Mount Singai while searching for the hiker near Bau.

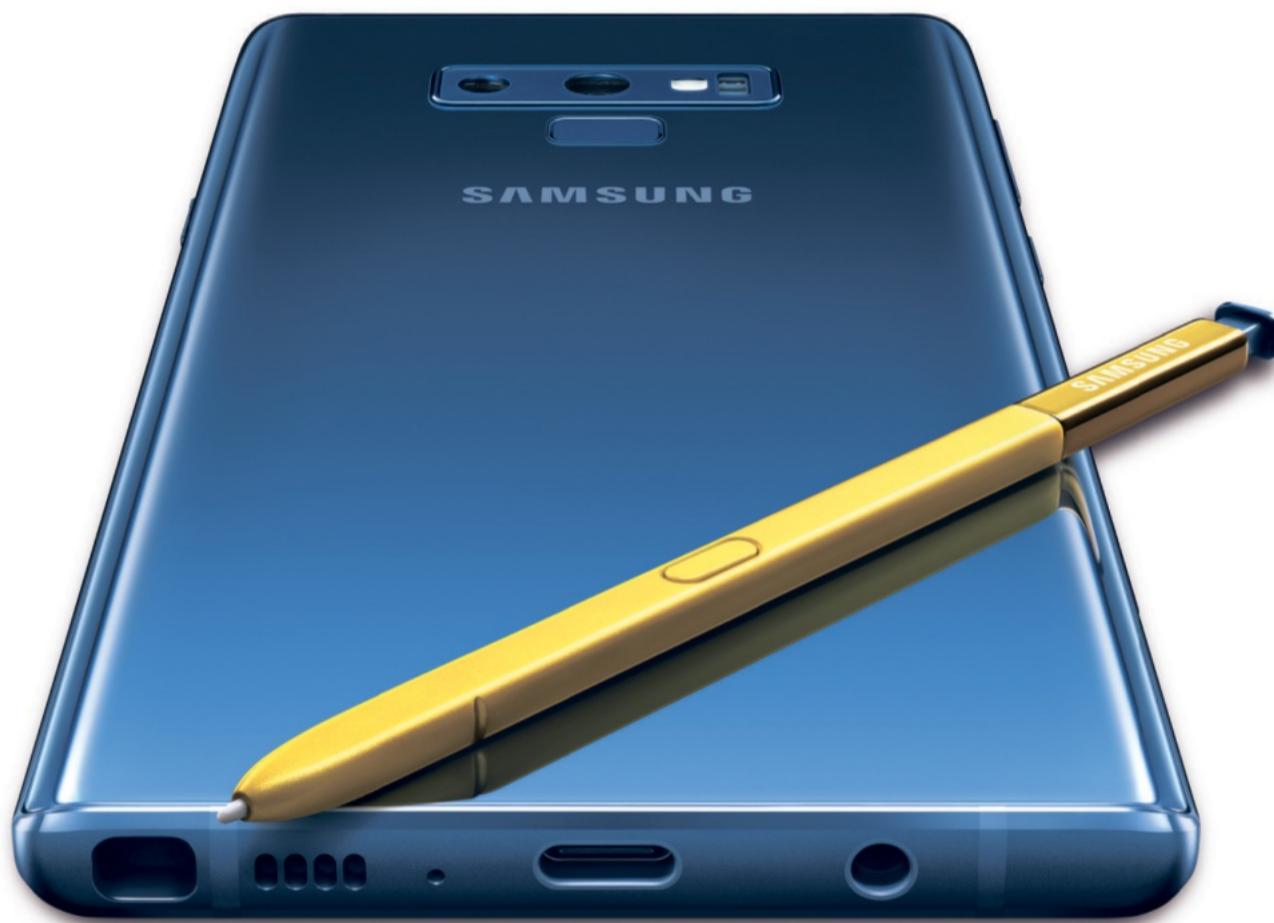
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## Must watch

**Mother of autistic man speaks on his arrest**

Hasnah Abdul Rahman shares how she felt when she found out her autistic son was going to be put in lock-up for a night and how she wished the police would have handled the situation differently.

<https://bit.ly/2zpdGh3>

**Lee diagnosed with early stage nose cancer, says BAM**

Badminton Association of Malaysia issued a statement on the condition of three-time Olympic silver medallist Datuk Lee Chong Wei following viral news that he was diagnosed with third-stage nose cancer.

<https://bit.ly/2la6FDi>

**Shafee: 'Billion Dollar Whale' poorly written**

Lawyer Tan Sri Muhammad Shafee Abdullah said the book 'Billion Dollar Whale', an exposé on Jho Low, was poorly written. However, he is excited to see if it will be used as evidence in the 1MDB investigation.

<https://bit.ly/2Q5r9EA>



# Anwar: We'll sack those found guilty throwing chairs

By STEPHANIE LEE  
and NATASHA JOIBI  
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**KOTA KINABALU:** Those found hurling chairs during the PKR election over the weekend may see themselves thrown out of the party, warned Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The PKR president-elect said for example, the man who had allegedly thrown chairs during the party polls in Kedah, could face action.

"But we will investigate this case first. We are not sure how many are involved (in the incident)," he said after attending a Malaysia Day event

here yesterday.

"Those found with proof doing such things will be thrown out of the party."

Anwar pointed out that while PKR members were free to contest and vote for anyone, they should not throw chairs.

"That person must have mistaken PKR with MIC," he said in jest.

MIC was known for its chair-throwing tantrums in the past.

He was commenting on the controversy during the party's e-voting in Kedah and Penang, which saw fracas and claims of sabotage.

A party member was even bashed

with sticks during the Merbok division election.

The Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) had to be called in.

Anwar also warned those who used power and money politics to stop their nonsense, adding that Malaysia was a "changed nation".

He said he was aware of some unacceptable practices such as threats, money politics and the abuse of power in the coming party polls in Sabah.

"I was told that there are some candidates who are threatening and buying votes. Don't think I am not aware so please, stop all these," he

said, attributing the downfall of the previous government to such unscrupulous activities.

"We cannot have this kind of play anymore and we have to remember who has the power actually – the *rakyat*," he said, warning members against backstabbing and bad-mouthing each other.

Party polls in Kedah and Perak, said Anwar, had also been put on hold due to technical problems.

"There are some complicated matters like the biometric system that needs proper handling. We want to do it properly. So, the polls are put on hold for the time being," he said.

## 10 more held over fracas at PKR polls

**SUNGAI PETANI:** Police picked up another 10 men believed to be involved in the Saturday fracas at the Merbok PKR division election held at a hotel here.

Kuala Muda OCPD Asst Comm Adzli Abu Shah said the men, in their 20s and 50s, were picked up in the Kuala Muda district during a three-hour operation which ended at 2am yesterday.

"The number of arrests have reached 14. One of them was released on police bail due to health reasons," he said.

ACP Adzli said 13 of them had since been remanded for three days starting yesterday.

The case is being investigated under Section 148 of the Penal Code for rioting with weapons.

It was earlier reported that PKR's e-voting at the Kedah party polls got off to a controversial start with fracas and claims of sabotage. A member was left bleeding from the head after he was bashed with sticks.

In George Town, PKR members urged the party to clarify the confusion and problems due to the e-voting system.

Its deputy Youth chief Dr Afif Bahardin said members were dissatisfied with the voting process.

"The election process this time is being done using a new system and what we saw is that the election committee (JPP) was not ready to carry out the election.

"We urge PKR, especially the JPP and our secretary-general Saifuddin Nasution Ismail to take full responsibility, and to provide an explanation to all members," he said. — Bernama

## Kit Siang vows to campaign for Anwar

**PETALING JAYA:** DAP adviser Lim Kit Siang said he will campaign for PKR president-elect Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in the Port Dickson by-election.

He said he would miss the nomination on Sept 29 as he would be away in New Zealand but would return home later to ensure Pakatan Harapan wins the by-election.

"The Port Dickson parliamentary by-election on Oct 13 will be an important milestone in the building of a New Malaysia where Anwar will take his rightful place in Parliament," he said in a blog post.

"We accept these criticisms but we urge Malaysians to have a 'big picture' and a 'long view' mindset, as the New Malaysia we want to build is a work-in-progress which will take more than one general election cycle to accomplish," he said, adding that such a task would require about 10 to 20 years to complete," Lim said.

# Dramatic start to PKR polls

Technical glitches, flaring tempers and fights may undermine the integrity of the PKR election and that is not good for the crucial by-election that will start soon in Port Dickson.

A VIDEO of PKR supreme council member Azmizam Zaman Huri holding off two clashing groups of angry PKR members has become one of the most watched videos in recent days.

Azmizam was trying to cool down one group while Seberang Jaya assemblyman Dr Afif Bahardin tried to hold back the other group.

The situation was quite tense and just moments earlier, a couple of chairs had been flung about by members who were unhappy about the party's new electronic voting system, which they claimed was flawed and open to manipulation.

The Seberang Jaya fracas had come on the heels of another incident in Merbok, Kedah, earlier in the afternoon that saw members bashing each other with long sticks, prompting the FRU to be called in to control the situation.

It was a dramatic start to the PKR polls which has since been suspended till next week.

Azmizam, who is Port Klang assemblyman, had decided to head for Penang to observe the party's e-voting system which is being used for the first time in the country.

His division in Selangor had a problematic time in the last party election in 2014 when tables were overturned and ballot boxes flew through the air.

Azmizam wanted to get a close-up look at the new system kicking off in Penang and learn how to anticipate possible problems.

Instead, he ended up in an all too familiar nightmare – caught in the middle of flying objects.

Had everything gone smoothly on Saturday, Perak and Perlis would have voted yesterday, followed by Negeri Sembilan, Melaka and Johor this weekend.

Everything is on hold for a week in order for tempers to subside and for the election committee to fine-tune the teething problems which polls chairman Rashid Din has described as "technical glitches".

But that is not going to assuage members given the diverse complaints coming in.

Amir Ghazali, who has been with

**Difference of opinion:** A chaotic moment between PKR members after the press conference in Penang. — Bernama



**Analysis**  
**JOCELINE TAN**

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PKR since 1998, got a shock when he found that his name was not in the voter registration list and he was not allowed to vote.

Even more ironic was that Amir is the incumbent Permatang Pauh division chief. He had decided to go for the vice-chief post this time around in order to make way for Nurul Izzah to become the new division chief and for Dr Afif to be the deputy chief.

The technical problem over Amir's voting status saw him ending up with zero votes for the vice-chief post. The former division chief is now left with nothing.

"YB Izzah advised me to lodge an official complaint. I am also asking the party to stop the e-voting system because what happened has created suspicion among members. There are so many complaints, we have lost confidence in the new voting system," said Amir.

A common complaint among some of those voting was that they were unable to vote for the candidate of their choice because the tab-

let device allegedly did not respond to their choice.

It is quite possible that the problem lies with members who are not familiar with using a tablet and having to browse through a long list of candidates for both the central leadership as well as the division leadership.

But such stories of unresponsive tablets can be very damaging for the credibility of the election process. It is like those stories of Bangladeshis voting in the general election, which although untrue, eventually acquired a life of its own.

Moreover, the election is taking place amid reports that several divisions and state had registered rather suspicious spikes in membership in June this year, shortly before the cut-off date for new members to be eligible to vote.

A party figure said the graph charts of the membership spikes looked like the "Petronas Twin Towers". Another common complaint from the Kedah and Penang polls was that the e-voting system did not allow for verification by independent observers.

One of the complainants who lost by one vote had demanded a recount but was told that e-voting is supposed to be "perfect", with no need for a recount.

The Penang fracas happened at the end of a problematic day of vot-

ing in the state. Members, including several from the Bagan division, had gathered at a late night press conference in Seberang Jaya called by Rashid to announce the polls results in Penang.

The election committee, which had suspended the election of nine divisions in Kedah, also announced that the election results of all the other Kedah divisions had been nullified.

The crowd at the Seberang Jaya venue was expecting Rashid to also nullify the results of some of the Penang divisions where there had been similar problems and complaints.

They got angry when he announced that the Penang election results had been accepted in toto by the election committee.

That was when tempers flared. Some of those present tried to stop the committee members from leaving the room and then things got out of hand.

Dr Afif had to calm down the crowd by calling another press conference to air their grievances on their behalf.

"People are questioning the integrity of the new voting system. They think it is open to manipulation, they will not move on if they have no confidence in the process," said Dr Afif, who is also vying for the top AMK post.

Dr Afif claimed that many divisions in Penang are not happy with the way the election was conducted and he wants secretary-general Datuk Saifuddin Nasution to take responsibility and explain.

Rashid has since issued a statement where his explanation of the problems faced last weekend seems to suggest that the party was not well-prepared for such an ambitious system of voting.

But Rashid also seemed confident that the issues have been ironed out and the polls will resume next Sunday in Johor.

The party needs to ensure the polls run smoothly otherwise the negative vibes may impact on the crucial by-election starting soon in Port Dickson.

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# Tahfiz school to pay RM4.3mil

Court orders payment to former student paralysed in accident

**KOTA BARU:** A Sessions Court ordered a tahfiz school here to pay RM4.3mil to a former student who was paralysed in a school van accident that also killed seven of his schoolmates.

Judge Nazri Ismail held van driver, Muhammad Hamzi Mohammad Husham, 25, van owner, CT-One Corporation Sdn Bhd, and Maahad Tahfiz Al-Hashimi Kampung Tualang in Kuala Krai responsible for the damages.

They were ordered to pay Muhammad Faiz Hafizuddin Mohd Izahir, 18, who suffered a head injury and ruptured spinal cord in the accident in June last year, and his mother, Jahsuriawany Mustapha, 46.

The RM4.3mil for Muhammad Faiz, who is now paralysed for life, is to help pay for diapers, food



tubes, urine bag, a bed, mattresses and a personal nurse.

Muhammad Faiz was represented by lawyers R. Kameswary and

Mazlinda Mahmud while the defendants were represented by law firm Tengku Azlina, Azlan Shah and Azman.

**Justice served:**  
Muhammad Faiz being escorted by his parents Jahsuriawany (second from left) and Mohd Izahir Kassim (third from left) together with Kameswary (right) outside the courtroom.  
— Bernama

Kameswary later told reporters that four witnesses, including school founder Datuk Adnan Hashim, were called during the two-day trial.

"Checks revealed that the van did not have insurance for the students and on the day of the accident, the driver did not have a valid driving licence."

"The court ruled that the driver, the van owner and the school are 100% liable for the injuries suffered by the victim," he said.

Seven out of 12 students, including one from Thailand, were killed in the accident while on their way to attend a quranic programme after the van crashed into a house at the 55km mark of the Jalan Kuala Krai-Kota Baru in Kampung Telekong, Kuala Krai. — Bernama

**Tahfiz centre principal charged with sodomy**

**PETALING JAYA:** The principal of a tahfiz centre in Kepong, who was detained by the police for allegedly sodomising nine students from the school, has been charged in court, said Deputy Comm Datuk Zainuddin Yaacob.

It is understood that the victims, aged between 11 and 16, were medically examined and have had their statements recorded.

The Kuala Lumpur deputy police chief said, the suspect, in his 30s, was charged in Putrajaya Sessions Court last Wednesday with 11 offences under Section 14 of the Sexual Offences Against Children Act 2017.

"A teacher at the centre and the nine students had lodged a police report on Sept 13.

"Police investigated and the principal was arrested," he said.

# Prostitute may be next to be caned in Terengganu

By JO TIMBUONG  
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**KUALA TERENGGANU:** Less than a month after two females were caned for attempting to have sexual relations, another woman could face the same fate after pleading guilty to a prostitution charge.

The 30-year-old divorcee pleaded guilty at the Syariah High Court here for preparing to offer sexual

services at a hotel.

According to the statement of facts, the woman was wearing a sleeveless night gown when she was with a man inside a hotel room during a raid by the Terengganu Religious Affairs Department around 11.45pm on Sept 17.

It is believed the woman was offering sexual services for between RM300 and RM3,000, but

only received RM100 from her client that night.

The enforcement team seized several items during the raid, including underwear, condoms, lubricant and a mobile phone.

The woman was charged under Section 25 of the Syariah Criminal Offences (Takzir) Enactment 2001 under which she could be sentenced to a prison term of not more than three years, or fined not more

than RM5,000, or caned no more than six times, or any combination of the punishment.

Judge Rosdi Harun offered a chance for the woman, who is a single mother to a seven-year-old daughter, to plead for a lighter sentence as she said could not afford the fine.

She told Rosdi that she had not received any financial support from her former husband

since they divorced seven years ago.

The court set Thursday to decide on the punishment.

The woman was released on bail of RM3,000 in two sureties while she awaits her sentence.

On Sept 3, two women were caned six times each at the Syariah High Court for attempting to have sexual relations inside a car in Dungun in August.

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# Barisan may disband, says Liow

'Alliance will fall apart if Umno forms coalition with PAS'

By YIMIE YONG

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**BENTONG:** Barisan Nasional will automatically disband if Umno forms a coalition with PAS, warns MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

"I have told Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi that we opposed Umno forming a coalition with PAS. Such alliance with PAS will face problems on racial and religious matters," he said after attending Pahang MCA's annual convention here.

"I have got the assurance from him that the two parties will not form a formal coalition but only cooperate on certain matters. We shall wait and see," he said.

Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi earlier said in a statement that all Umno MPs had signed statutory declarations empowering him to negotiate with

parties outside of Barisan.

He also led several Umno leaders to the PAS muktamar in Kuala Terengganu earlier this month, sparking speculation that Umno would strike up an alliance with PAS.

Liow reiterated that MCA would continue its struggle to promote harmony among the races, moderation and inclusiveness in the country.

"This is also Barisan's spirit of multiracialism and moderation," he said.

On another matter, Liow said Pakatan Harapan should apologise to the *rakyat* for not fulfilling the 10 pledges within the 100 days after the coalition formed the government.

"They should apologise and not find excuses or blame the previous administration. They should also give a timeline when they can fulfil

the promises," he said.

"They promised to give Employees Provident Fund (EPF) to all housewives, but not all are given. They also promised to abolish tolls. Stop distracting the *rakyat*.

"They should just admit they cannot fulfil the promises and apologise."

On party matters, Liow said it was time for MCA to eliminate all inactive branches.

"We cannot deceive ourselves anymore that we still have more than a million members. Time has come for all division chiefs to look into these branches. We need to cut all these inactive branches," he said in his speech at the convention.

Liow later told reporters that the party needs to identify members who were really active and register them again.

"This is my suggestion and I will leave it to the new leader-

ship," he said.

At the annual convention, Pahang MCA chairman Datuk Hoh Khai Mun expressed his gratitude to Liow for his contributions in leading the party.

It is the last time that Liow officiates the Pahang MCA annual convention as MCA president.

Once again, he urged the members to conduct the party election in harmony.

"During my years as MCA president, I have brought everybody together. I hope there will not be camps within the party but a smooth transition to the new leadership," he said.

Other leaders who attended the annual conference were deputy president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, vice-president Datin Paduka Chew Mei Fun, Wanita chief Datuk Heng Seai Kie and Perak MCA chief Datuk Dr Mah Hang Soon.

## 'Third national car will make Malaysians suffer again'

By FOONG PEK YEE

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysians will suffer another round of bailing out a mega project if the Prime Minister proceeds with the proposed third national car project, says MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

He said the country forked out as much as RM360bil during the 30 years that the first Proton national car project was in existence.

This, he said, was in the form of higher car prices and correspondingly higher loans, higher car insurance premiums and higher spare parts costs.

Liow, who is also Selangor MCA chairman, said this when opening the state MCA annual convention at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

On the party which suffered a huge defeat in the 14th General Election, Liow said MCA would not disappear from the political scene or shy away from its responsibilities.

"MCA can stage a comeback and



We solemnly swear: Liow and Dr Wee flanked by members taking the party oath at the opening of the Selangor MCA annual convention at Wisma MCA, Kuala Lumpur.

become stronger than before.

"We must for the time being be a good opposition and continue to play our role in the country," he said.

He predicted that the Pakatan Harapan government would fall within two terms.

Liow made the prediction based on experiences in advanced countries under a two-party system, and also Pakatan's inability to deliver after winning the general election.

He highlighted Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's racial politics and autocratic rule as yet another liability to the coalition.

Liow accused the 93-year-old Dr Mahathir, who was the country's

fourth Prime Minister for 22 years (1981-2003), as anti-Chinese education and anti-Chinese business.

He said Dr Mahathir revived his racial approach upon returning as the seventh Prime Minister.

While Dr Mahathir may find it hard to pitch the Chinese against the Malays this time around, Liow said the Prime Minister had used Chinese nationals instead to create a rift.

Dr Mahathir recently announced that foreigners would be barred from buying property at the multi-billion-ringgit Forest City project in Johor Baru.

The project, with an occupancy rate of about 700,000, is highly pop-

ular among Chinese nationals.

The Prime Minister's Office later clarified that the purchase of properties did not guarantee automatic residency in Malaysia.

Liow added that the "revenge approach" taken by Pakatan on joint venture projects between Malaysia and China, like the RM55bil East Coast Rail Link during the Barisan Nasional regime, did not augur well for the country's economy and development.

Watch the video  
[thestartv.com](http://thestartv.com)



## StarProperty fair goes to Cheras Selatan

**PETALING JAYA:** The next in the series of StarProperty.my Fair will be held at AEON Mall Cheras Selatan starting tomorrow, showcasing some of the latest developments in the country by reputable developers.

The fair will be held from Sept 25 to 30 (Tuesday to Sunday) from 10am to 10pm.

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ties for adults and children, such as the "Decorate Your Cookie Workshop" conducted by the Malaysian Institute of Baking.

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For more information, visit fair.starproperty.my.

## Gerakan to limit terms of division chiefs

By R. SEKARAN

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**GEORGE TOWN:** Gerakan is considering a change to its constitution to have direct party elections and limit division leaders to three terms of three years each.

Outgoing president Datuk Seri Mah Siew Keong said the party was planning to make the changes at the Gerakan national delegates meeting at the state party headquarters here yesterday.

"It is time that members chose the president rather than the delegates to reflect a more inclusive independent party," he said.

On limiting the term of division leaders, he said it was necessary as there were many complaints on the leaders' performances.

"At times, we had to postpone party elections due to preparations

for the general election. The division leaders stay on longer and some behave like warlords.

"Gerakan is now free to move independently as we are not bound by the rules of a coalition.

"And, we are making changes to suit the times and move forward," Mah said at the opening of the Penang Gerakan delegates meeting at the state party headquarters here yesterday.

The party unanimously agreed to leave Barisan Nasional in June after joining the Alliance in 1972. The Alliance was renamed Barisan Nasional two years later.

Mah said Gerakan was also open to cooperation with any party that was in line with its struggles.

"However, for the next six months, we need to strengthen the party from within."

**MCA must find ways to 'connect with members'**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Of the 3,975 voters who supported the MCA candidate in the recent Balakong state by-election, 1,133 are Chinese, says MCA president Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai.

This, he said, was despite the fact that MCA has 7,500 members in the state constituency.

"We managed to contact some 5,000 of them by phone.

"The party must review its membership recruitment system and find ways to connect with the members.

"Recruitment alone is not enough," Liow, who is also Selangor MCA chairman, said when opening the Selangor MCA annual convention at Wisma MCA here yesterday.

The Balakong by-election on Sept 8 was a straight fight between MCA's Tan Chee Teong and Pakatan Harapan candidate Wong Siew Ki from DAP.

Wong polled 22,508 votes to defeat Tan who bagged 3,975 votes. There are 62,219 voters where 61% are Chinese. Turnout was 43%.

The by-election came after its assemblyman Eddie Ng Tien Chee died in a highway accident on July 20.

Despite the defeat in Balakong – coming after the 14th General Election which saw MCA winning only one parliamentary seat and two state seats from the 139 seats it contested – Liow said defeat would only strengthen the party's resolve to reform and make a comeback stronger.

He pointed out that Selangor MCA members remained loyal to the party despite the state being under Pakatan rule since the general election in 2008.

"We did not have exodus to other parties or mass resignations so far," Liow said.

On his decision not to defend his presidential post in the party elections this November, Liow said he would remain in the party and continue to play a new role on a different platform.

According to sources, Liow is passionate about education and this would be reflected in his new role.

Deputy president Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong is going for the president's post.

The MCA elections on Nov 4 will see a new lineup of president, deputy president, four vice-presidents, and 25 central committee members.

"Penang will be a good comeback state for the party because of the proposed local elections to be held two years down the road."

"Our local leaders have always been service oriented and the local elections would give the party a chance to perform before the next general election."

"With the proposed voting age reduction to 18, it is imperative that Gerakan is in the forefront to harness those votes. They will be forming the bulk of voters in GE15," he said.

However, Mah said the sad thing was that many young voters would not recognise the Gerakan logo and party members had a lot of work to do to convince them on the good work the party did.

A total of 205 delegates attended the meeting.

# Mek Tuntung – guardian of terrapins

## Conservationist receives Point of Light award for preservation efforts

By JO TIMBUONG  
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**KEMAMAN:** In Kampung Pasir Gajah, there will be blank stares if one is asking for Dr Chen Pelf Nyok.

Instead, ask for Mek Tuntung.

That is how the local folk refer to her – Miss River Terrapin – in recognition of her research work on the river terrapin population.

When she first arrived, Dr Chen was a one-woman show. In the seven years there, she managed to inspire a village-wide movement to save the endangered creatures.

Thus, it was only fitting that she was given the Commonwealth Point of Light Award.

"When I started the project at 30, I had no idea of the impact my project might have."

"All I wanted to do was build a long-term conservation programme to save the river terrapins," she said.

Dr Chen is a co-founder of the Turtle Conservation Society of Malaysia. She first started documenting river terrapins as a Master's student at Universiti Malaysia Terengganu in 2005.

Her conservation work took her to Kampung Pasir Gajah in 2011



while she was working on her Doctor of Philosophy degree at Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia.

There, she managed to get the buy-in from the village head and convinced a small group of people, who will eventually be known as Geng Tuntung, to help in her conservation work.

The group would gather Tuntung eggs from the banks of the Kemaman river and bring them to the Turtle Conservation Society River Terrapin Conservation Centre to be incubated.

Wazir Mahad, 55, is among the first ones to join Geng Tuntung.

"I used to eat Tuntung eggs but

stopped since working with Mek Tuntung after knowing how destructive it can be," he said.

Wazir often received requests from outsiders to buy the eggs for consumption but refused to entertain them.

Through their efforts, Dr Chen and Geng Tuntung have saved

**That's cute:**  
Treadell having a closer look at a three-year-old river terrapin or tuntung at the Turtle Conservation Society River Terrapin Conservation Centre as Dr Chen looks on.

about 4,500 Tuntung eggs and released about 3,000 hatchlings into the Kemaman river.

In a previous report, she said there was still a lot to do before a significant rise in Tuntung population as females only start laying eggs when they reach 20 years old.

Unlike their sea turtle cousins that can lay up to 100 eggs in 12 days, Tuntung can only lay about 40 eggs a year.

Dr Chen's work also received praise from the British High Commissioner to Malaysia, Vicki Treadell, who described the effort as an example of humans and nature living in harmony.

"Everything is at risk of being lost and it is up to us to restore balance," she said when presenting the award to Dr Chen on Friday.

The Commonwealth Point of Light Award is an honour bestowed by the head of the Commonwealth, Queen Elizabeth II, to recognise exceptional voluntary efforts by individuals across the Commonwealth.

Another Malaysian recipient is Dr S. Madhusudhan, better known as Dr Teddy Bear, who is being recognised for providing free medical services to disadvantaged people.

## Contest draws attention to plight of sharks

By LIEW JIA XIAN  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** To raise awareness and reduce the consumption of sharks and shark fins, Shark Savers Malaysia has organised a drawing competition with the theme "Be A Shark Hero".

Art and craft teacher Carmen Pang, who won the Professional Group Category, believes awareness should start at a young age.

Her artwork is of a young boy holding a flag that states "Save Shark" while riding on a shark.

The 25-year-old teacher from Seremban said awareness would be effective only if children were

taught from young.

Jessica Lee Hew Thung, a contestant in the Student Category, has her mother to thank for her win.

"She coaxed me to join the competition after reading it in the newspaper," said the 16-year-old.

Hew Thung from Kampar, Perak, said she loved to draw.

"It was examination time, so I came up with an idea in one night to make everyone see sharks in a friendlier light," she said.

"I drew many flags from different countries as I want people to know this is a worldwide mission."

Shark Savers is a non-profit initiative dedicated to saving sharks through grassroots action.

Its president Abner Yap said the project was to use visuals as the means to educate and convey messages to the public.

"We can change the world by not harming. We are all in this together," said Yap who has been with the project since 2015.

Malaysian Institute of Art (MIA) board of governors' Datuk Wong Pui Nam praised the group for its efforts in protecting the fish.

"When the buying stops, the killing stops too," he said at the awards presentation yesterday.

The competition received 73 entries. They will be exhibited until Sept 29 at the MIA City Campus, near the Dang Wangi LRT station.



No soup: Pang posing next to her winning entry 'Save Shark.'



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# Four more deaths linked to methanol poisoning, total now 33

**PETALING JAYA:** Another four deaths have been linked to methanol poisoning, bringing the total number of casualties to 33.

Selangor has been the hardest hit with 20 fatalities, followed by Kuala Lumpur (10 deaths) and Perak (three) since the case came to light last Monday.

Most of the victims were Myanmar nationals (11 casualties), followed by Malaysians (nine). The rest were from Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Indonesia.

The identity of four victims remained unknown.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said in a statement last night that the ministry had conducted checks on 586 premises selling alcohol and found 1,816 bottles labelled with a variety of brands that did not meet the Food Act and Food Regulations 1985.

He also urged people who suspect that they have methanol poisoning to seek treatment.

"Those who have symptoms of methanol poisoning such as stomach ache, nausea, vomiting, headache, and blurred vision within five days of consuming alcohol need to seek immediate treatment at any clinic or hospital," he added.

Meanwhile, Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation senior vice-chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye has called for sterner action on illicit alcohol.

He urged the authorities such as the Customs Department, police and local councils to conduct a crackdown on businesses selling such drinks.

"With the help from the Health Ministry and Chemistry Department, random samples should be taken and analysed to determine whether the liquor has been adulterated or it con-

tains high levels of methanol," he said in a statement yesterday.

"A mandatory jail sentence should be imposed on those who sell smuggled or adulterated alcohol."

Existing laws, he said, should also be amended to curb alcohol sales as alcoholic outlets were mushrooming and operating with little regulation.

Lee attributed the methanol poisoning cases to a lack of control over alcohol sales as many shops were selling cheap smuggled or adulterated alcohol.

"The main reasons behind the cases are the adulteration of samsu, beer or liquor with cheap but poisonous methanol which is being commercially sold as methylated spirit.

"It baffles me as to why some of the liquor sold in our country contains methanol that exceeds the permitted level, as shown by an analysis done by the Health Ministry," he said.

# Reasons 22 officers transferred to Intan

Move approved by Ali Hamsa a day before he retired

**Analysis by ROZAID A. RAHMAN**

THE controversial decision to transfer 22 high-ranking federal officers to the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) was made by former chief secretary to the government Tan Sri Dr Ali Hamsa – a day before his retirement on Aug 28.

The public administrative and diplomatic officers were serving in departments such as the Public Service Department (PSD) and Public Services Commission of Malaysia (PSC), and several ministries prior to their transfer.

They were moved to Intan due to issues regarding delay in appointments and salary payments for those who were on contract and political appointees at ministers' and deputy ministers' offices under the new Pakatan Harapan Cabinet.

Based on an investigation by *The Star*, it was found that the delays were due to circumstances that were unavoidable. Several of the officers to the ministers and deputy ministers were late in processing their appointment documents.

*The Star* learnt that among the senior officers who were transferred out were PSD deputy director Datuk Mohtar Abdul Rahman and PSC secretary Datuk Zainal Abidin Ahmad.

The other senior officers were PSD Organisational Development director Mohamad Fauzi Isa and deputy senior director Zohari Said.

There were also officers from the PSD Organisational Development department and three deputy directors at PSD's Service Department who received the transfer order.

Officers from the ministries

who were moved to Intan included Human Resources and Administrative secretaries from the Finance, Education, Defence, Transport and Agriculture ministries.

In a related news, *The Star* was also informed that until Aug 24, 101 were appointed to the ministers' and deputy ministers' offices.

Of the number, 84 have even received their salaries.

It is said that one of the reasons that the officers to the ministers and deputy ministers were paid late was because they did not submit their appointment letters with their signatures on them.

A reason why they did not do so was that there was no specification of the minimum salary. Another reason for the delay is that the officers did not submit their bank account information.

Other factors include the fact that the officers were still working with his or her former employer and had to serve out a three-month notice period.

At the time this analysis was written, it has been estimated that there were about 60 posts at the offices of the ministers and deputy ministers that are yet to be filled due to a lack of candidates or that the candidates were asking for a salary that was not under the Public Service Officer Circular No. 6.

"There were ministers' officers who demanded a higher grade although the new government has agreed to add another position – Special Officer – from one to two who held Grade 54," a source told *The Star*.

Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ismail Bakar said action had been taken against the officers in question.

## Asyraf: Umno doesn't need sympathy from anyone

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Umno need not yearn for sympathy from anyone in its efforts to rebuild the party, says Umno Youth chief Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki.

"It is not necessary for us to crave sympathy from anyone because what is important is that Umno is clear on its intentions," he said.

Party members, he said, should not be disheartened as Umno was still the nation's largest Malay Islamic party.

Speaking to reporters after attending a pre-Umno general assembly meeting yesterday, he said Umno was mindful that it

must be truthful to its members.

"What is crucial is that we do not compromise on the foundation of our struggle," he said when asked to comment on Umno's overture to cooperate with PAS.

On yesterday's meeting, Aysraf said it was held for party president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to prepare his explanation to grassroots members eager to know Umno's direction.

Asked if the Port Dickson by-election was raised during the meeting, Aysraf said it would be discussed at the party's political bureau meeting today.



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# Gamuda Cove keeps nature intact

New residential property to be developed with no effect on area's ecosystem

By GRACE CHEN  
gracechen@thestar.com.my

**SUBANG JAYA:** Nature hikes within a stone's throw from your home – that's what Gamuda Land has planned for its latest development which will have the Kuala Langat Forest Reserve and Paya Indah Wetlands as its neighbours.

Touted as a "City Centre In Nature's Sanctuary", the 620ha leasehold, full township of Gamuda Cove is targeted for completion in 2038.

However, the 20.23ha Discovery Park, which will offer sports facilities and food and beverage outlets, will be fully opened by 2020.

Yesterday, the Gamuda Cove Experience Gallery was launched at Taipan Business Centre here.

Gamuda Land chief executive officer Ngan Chee Meng said one reason why the development company had earned such confidence among investors was the planning it put into its projects.

"We don't just look at the design of our homes."

"For example, with Gamuda Cove, where we have just started with earthworks, biodiversity studies were conducted to study the ground water level and the species of flora, fauna and wildlife in the area to preserve the ecosystem," said Ngan.

He said while the old school of thought was to cut and flatten

everything the moment construction work started, the planners at Gamuda saw things differently.

"If a 15-year-old tree is chopped down, it will mean having to spend another 15 years to nurture a new tree at a higher cost."

"So, why not preserve the existing tree so buyers may enjoy having it in front of their homes?" said Ngan.

He said all units in the Gamuda Cove project were constructed using their industrial building system (IBS).

Similar to the prefabricated concept, half a billion ringgit was invested in two factories to manufacture housing components.

In contrast to the traditional methods of yesteryears, where processes like plastering were done by hand, the manufacture of IBS components are largely automated, ensuring a uniform quality.

"This type of precision addresses issues like wall cracks upon completion," said Ngan.

In his speech at the launch, Gamuda Bhd deputy group managing director Mohammed Rashdan Mohd Yusof said investors might look back at their track record for Kota Kemuning, Shah Alam, and Jade Hills, Kajang, where the property value had appreciated by 132% and 72%.

Located near Tanjung 12, Kuala Langat, Gamuda Cove can be accessed via a direct interchange from the North South Expressway



**Prime development:** (From left) Gamuda Land project director Aw Sei Cheh, human resources general manager Munira Abdul Mury, Gamuda Cove general manager Wong Yik Fong, Ngan, Gamuda Bhd deputy group managing director Mohammed Rashdan Mohd Yusuf, Gamuda Land executive director Datuk Abdul Sahak Safi and marketing and sales executive director Lilian Lung at the launching of the gallery.

Central Link (Elite) Highway built by the developer, estimated for completion next year.

A 7% rebate will be given to early birds who sign up by today. Additional benefits will also be given for referral rewards.

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- 'Direct Selling in a technologically enhanced future' - Keynote address by Mr Magnus Brannstrom, Chairman, World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA)
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# Anwar should stay on course

PD move may be a choppy one but PKR president-elect would be able to ride it out

THE result of the coming Port Dickson by-election is a foregone conclusion for Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. He is certain to emerge as the victor and make his comeback into the Dewan Rakyat.

It will also be his first step towards his progression as successor to Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, which the elder leader has repeatedly said he will pass the baton to the PKR president-elect.

If there is anything to take the shine away from Anwar's win in Port Dickson, it will be the majority that he can secure.

In the May general election, Datuk Danyal Balagopal Abdullah secured a 17,710-vote majority in a three-way fight, which involved PAS and Barisan Nasional. The retired admiral obtained 36,225 votes.

Anwar's challenge will be to convince these Pakatan Harapan supporters to come out in full force to return him to Parliament. The danger is that these Pakatan supporters may assume that their participation will be of no consequence as it is a done deal.

After all, none of the opponents seems keen to take him on. The MIC, which had contested in the last round, has said it is staying out.

Its candidate Mohan Velayatham, managed to garner 18,515 votes while PAS' Mahfuz Roslan polled 6,594 votes (in GE14).

The Islamist party has refused to commit itself. Its elections director Dr Ahmad Samsuri Mokhtar report-



Comment  
**KRISHNAMOORTHY  
MUTHALY**

edly said at the moment, the party was in the midst of evaluating whether to contest, as it had yet to receive details on the by-election.

On the surface, it looks like it's plain sailing for Anwar as there appears to be a lack of serious opposition. But the real danger could be from within the PKR, as Anwar has picked an unusual time to contest a by-election.

Perhaps, he wants to be in the Dewan Rakyat, in time, for the tabling of the Budget in November.

But there are plenty of under-currents in the seas off Port Dickson now. It is seriously choppy, as doubts have been raised, in defiance and openly, on his choices to have a by-election.

The open rebellion by some senior leaders has been well reported, and it is something that Anwar never expected, and certainly unused to, as the party supremo.

All these questions, which had previously haunted him, have been resurrected. He is, again, accused of being a man in a hurry.

Never mind if he's already 70 years old and has languished in prison long enough, and the current PM is

The open rebellion by some senior leaders has been well reported, and it is something that Anwar never expected, and certainly unused to, as the party supremo.

already 93 and impossible to live forever – but he's stuck with the same label of being an impatient man.

He has to answer some questions clearly – why he did not ask his wife or daughter to step down instead? It is actually not that difficult a question to answer but the trouble is that he has not.

Anwar, for example, cannot ask Nurul Izzah to quit her Permatang Pauh seat and contest a state seat, as a constitutional amendment in 1990 to Article 48(6) that an MP resigning his seat is disqualified from contesting for the House for five years. And we all know and acknowledge the competence and efficiency of Nurul.

And what about Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail – if she quits and paves the way for Anwar,

it would mean a Deputy Prime Minister post becomes vacuum, and it will allow someone else to assume the powerful seat.

In the event that something happens to Dr Mahathir, the DPM automatically becomes the successor, and this is the tricky part.

If Anwar becomes DPM, it gets complicated because Anwar will be back actively in government and there lies the danger of possible differences in leadership. Its déjà vu, all over again.

The two have rightly made an agreement – Anwar will take care of reforms in Parliament and serve as a backbencher in support of Dr Mahathir's administration.

"I will be in Parliament to support Dr Mahathir (as Prime Minister), and not to ask him to step down from the government. We will allow him to lead without any pressure."

Anwar also needs to come out clear that he has no plans to play footsie with discredited Umno leaders like Datuk Nazri Aziz, who has offered to campaign for him.

Surely, Anwar must have received feedback that the sentiment on the ground towards Nazri is very bad, as he is a classic example of Umno leaders who flouted their arrogance when Umno was in power.

In simple words – Pakatan voters will not welcome and by not saying no to Nazri openly, it has allowed his enemies to cast doubts and suspicions on his agenda, even if there was none. This is simply because

Anwar has a trust deficit.

He may be a reformed person just like Dr Mahathir, as both are now more mature, wiser and iconic in their own inimitable style and ways of leadership.

Anwar needs to speak clearly with one voice to win the hearts and minds of Malaysians in this social media era.

We all understand the need for Anwar to be an MP and park himself as a successor until the party elections are over.

But he appears trapped in the murkiness, dim and gloomy political imbroglio and embarrassment as Malaysians voice their opinion about him "grabbing" the Port Dickson seat.

Anwar does not need Umno nor PAS – he just needs the majority of Malaysians, who voted out the Barisan government – to stay with him.

These Malaysians, of all races and religions, were just tired of the race and religion card, used by Umno and PAS, and wanted them out.

Stay your course with the people who wanted a New Malaysia, and you will ride through the choppy waters.

**M. Krishnamoorthy** is an associate professor, media coach and author. He was a journalist with The Star and New Straits Times. His sixth book, 'May 9 – People Power Saves Malaysia – Mahathir Leads the Way' was the best seller last month.

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## Global trends Martin Khor

director@southcentre.org

# Tariff war threatens world trading system

US and China today raise tax rates on more of each other's imports. The escalating hostility dims global economic prospects and may destabilise how countries export goods and services.

TODAY marks another milestone in the escalating global trade war that threatens to shake the foundations of the world trading system and cause economic uncertainty at a time of financial fragility. It's an altogether bad development that adds more gloom to global economic prospects.

Last week, the United States announced it would slap an additional 10% tariff on US\$200bil worth of imports from China. Hours later, China said it would put 5% to 10% extra tariffs on US\$60bil of imports from the US.

Both sets of tariff increases come into effect today. But that's not all.

The US also said it would raise the extra tariffs on the US\$200bil of imports from 10% now to 25% at the end of the year. And if China retaliates (which it now has), the US might slap higher tariffs on yet another US\$267bil of Chinese imports.

This comes on top of tariffs on an initial US\$50bil worth of imports that the US had placed on Chinese imports a few months ago, and equivalent tariffs on US\$50bil on US imports that China imposed as retaliation.

And even before that, the US had put extra tariffs on steel and aluminium imports from all countries, except a few that were exempted for the time being.

The US is also threatening to put tariffs on imported auto vehicles and parts, including those from Europe. That is on hold because of a bilateral deal reached, but could be re-ignited if President Donald Trump is not satisfied with European behaviour.

The US itself is experiencing negative effects of this trade war. The prices of the initial US\$50bil of imported Chinese products have started to go up in the US, raising costs for both consumers and producers.

The Chinese are similarly affected. Exports of both countries are also bound to decline, and this will eventually affect their overall economic growth.

There will be collateral effects on other countries. In Asia, those that are integrated in the global supply chain will find less demand for their exports of components to China. The effect on Malaysia is projected by analysts to be around 0.4 to 0.7 percentage point of GNP in 2019.

This could be offset by positive effects. Some companies producing in China are considering relocating to other countries, including Malaysia, to escape the US' punitive tariffs. And some Malaysian products may become cheaper than Chinese products, which will now attract extra duties.

But it is likely that the bad effects will outweigh any such good effects, at least in the short run.

It is clear that the US is to blame for the trade war. Its unilateral actions are against the spirit and rules of the trading system, and have in fact undermined its legitimacy and viability.

The steel and aluminium tariffs were imposed under the US security clause of its domestic trade law, while the other tariff increases are under Section 301 of the trade law. The US actions are against various World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules.

Challenges to the US unilateral measures have been taken by China and other countries at the WTO. If the US is found in violation, which is quite likely, it has to stop its actions or face retaliation: the countries that win the cases heard by the WTO panels of experts are allowed to impose equivalent tariffs on US products.

However, the US has engineered a crisis in the WTO's dispute settlement system so that soon the outcome of successful cases against it cannot be implemented.

This is because the US is now paralysing the WTO's Appellate Body by refusing to allow new members of the body to be appointed to replace those retiring. Soon there

will be only three members left, out of a full body of seven. Two more will be retiring in January 2019. A minimum of three members is needed to sit on a case.

Thus, if a lower-level panel rules against the US' unilateral actions, and the US lodges an appeal that cannot be heard because there are not enough appellate body members, the panel decision cannot be enforced.

This would make the WTO quite a toothless organisation. There would be no legal remedy to enforce penalties for breaking the WTO laws. Countries that impose unilateral tariff increases can get away with it. In turn, other countries would also do the same.

The rules-based trade system is already starting to break down. We are now seeing blatant protectionism by the US and retaliation by affected countries. Within months, the trade war could spread, with the law of the jungle becoming more prominent.

Tears will not be shed in the developing countries if some rules cannot be upheld anymore, such as the WTO's TRIPS agreement on intellectual property. The free trade economist Jagdish Bhagwati has said the TRIPS treaty does not belong in the WTO.

But what all members like about

the WTO is its role in ensuring the predictability that their exports can sell in the markets of its members, with tariffs at rates agreed to at the WTO.

If that predictability is lost, then there can be a lot of uncertainty, as one country after another can unilaterally impose extra tariffs on other countries, which may then trigger retaliation.

This breakdown of the trading system may be the more serious effect of what started as a US-initiated trade war.

Trump may not care what happens to the system, as he has said many times that the WTO is a terrible organisation that the US should leave. And his recent actions, in fact, seem calculated to undermine, if not destroy it.

It is a new world we are looking at, in a scenario that would not have appeared possible a year or even months ago.

Policy makers, companies, analysts and the public should ponder about this, even as they follow the details of the tit-for-tat trade war that the US is waging against China and other countries.

**Martin Khor is adviser of the Third World Network. The views expressed here are entirely his own.**



## Other news & views

Compiled by R. ARAVINTHAN, LIEW JIA XIAN and TAN SIN CHOW

# 'Penang Indian Heritage Museum plays vital role'

THE Penang Hindu Endowment Board's Penang Indian Heritage Museum plays an important role in preserving the rich history and traditions of the Malaysian Indian community, *Makkal Osai* reported.

Indian High Commissioner to Malaysia Shri Mridul Kumar was quoted as saying this by the daily.

The envoy visited the museum and the library set up by the board before attending a prayer session at the Waterfall Hill Temple.

Shri Mridul said he was impressed with the documents preserved by the museum including some old photographs of former Indian premiers Indira Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru.

He urged the museum to be preserved for the future generations as

there were no other such institutions locally.

> At least 45 babies have died within 71 days in a major government hospital due to various complications in Uttar Pradesh, India, *Tamil Nesan* reported.

The Bahraich district hospital serves as a major child health centre for surrounding rural areas.

While the hospital has only 200 beds, there are 450 patients undergoing treatment and the doctors are doing their best to save lives despite facing various shortages, hospital authorities said.

While the state government vowed to improve the health services and add more resources, doctors and patients alike have complained that the situation remains dire.



**Impressive collection:** The Penang Indian Heritage Museum showcases the rich history and traditions of the Malaysian Indian community.

# 78,000 rats caught since rodent campaign started

AT least 78,000 rats were caught in Kuala Lumpur following the launch of a money for rat campaign by Kuala Lumpur City Hall, *Kosmo!* reported.

So far, RM170,000 were paid to those who caught rats, said Federal Territories Deputy Minister Datuk Shahruddin Md Salleh.

There were 64 leptospirosis, or commonly known as rat urine,

cases in Kuala Lumpur this year compared to 160 last year, he said.

The campaign was launched in 2012 with a RM1 reward for each rat caught. The amount was increased to RM3 in 2015.

> A housewife was injured when she fell from the third tier of the Hutan Lipur Sungai Tekala waterfall, reported *Sinar Harian*.

The 34-year-old was on vacation

with her husband.

The woman passed out before the Semenyih Fire and Rescue Department arrived at 3pm. She was believed to have slipped.

"She badly injured her left thigh and we suspect her leg may be broken. She has been sent to Kajang Hospital for further treatment," said a member from the Semenyih Fire and Rescue Department.

> If artiste Nur Ruhainies Farehah Zainul Ilya gets married, she will move to London, *Kosmo!* reported.

But the *Menantu Bilal* actress is not ready to reveal the identity of the man she is courting.

"He had stated his desire to make me his wife. Our family knows of our relationship. He has met my family. For now, he is just waiting for my answer," she said.

# Man gropes M'sian air hostess at Taiwan station

A MALAYSIAN air hostess claimed a man groped her breasts three times at a train station in Taiwan, reported *Kwong Wah Yit Poh*.

But what angered her most was that the local police treated the incident lightly.

The woman, known only as Chen, alleged that the police on duty at the site had apparently told her to relate the attack on Facebook as a reminder to other women to be careful while at the station.

The flight attendant claimed the man blocked her way before asking money from her while ogling at her breasts.

"At first I thought it was just an accident but when he did it three times, I immediately reported the incident to the four policemen on duty."

"But I was shocked when the policemen told me the man was a repeat offender and would always prey on pretty women at the station."

"This is the first time I have been molested in public and I am shocked by the policemen's behaviour," she said.



## STRESS MANAGEMENT & MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

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- Managing employees' mental health in the workplace
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Founder and President  
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Recovering patient of anxiety disorder



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THE STAR, MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2018



**Colours of China** Beh Yuen Hui

[newsdesk@thestar.com.my](mailto:newsdesk@thestar.com.my)

# When pavilion becomes celebrity



### Hot spot:

Crowds packing the Malaysia pavilion, which was a huge attraction at the CAExpo in Nanning, China.

Durians, bird's nest and coffee were among the main reasons the Malaysian exhibitors at the China-Asean Expo in Nanning drew big crowds.

CLAD in striking red with eye-catching images of the Petronas Twin Towers, the Malaysia pavilion at the recent 15th China-Asean Expo (CAExpo) was a compulsory stop for most visitors.

Labelled the "celebrity pavilion", it housed more than 170 exhibitors and was the biggest among those put up by the Asean countries.

Mirroring Malaysia's ethnic and cultural richness, the pavilion showcased diverse goods and services, such as fashion, beauty products, perfume, legal consulting, logistics, education, craft and arts, and holiday packages.

Naturally, the food and beverage (F&B) sector had the strongest presence and was one of the main reasons the pavilion drew so many visitors to the point that people could hardly move in the jam-packed space.

Held annually in Nanning of China's southwestern Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, the CAExpo and China-Asean Business and Investment Summit are events designed to boost trade between China and Asean.

They are also opportunities for officials to meet and exchange ideas on improving trade relations.

This year's expo was from Sept 12 to 15 and it attracted 112 buying missions. Over 11,000 trade purchasers dropped by the 6,600 booths featuring 2,780 exhibitors.

The expo was opened to the public on the last day, when more than 62,700 people showed up.

Malaysian companies recorded nearly RM640mil in sales, a 58% jump compared to RM405.5mil last year. The happiest among them were probably those in the health and wellness category, which contributed sales amounting to RM372.21mil.

F&B came in second with RM218.91mil, followed by the lifestyle segment (RM43.6mil) and services (RM4.94mil).

Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade) director of China and Northeast Asia Ong Yew Chee said the expo was a useful platform for Malaysian companies to promote and market their products and services.

"The positive sales was testimony to the high potential and acceptance of Malaysian products in the Chinese market," he said.

He singled out energy bars; health supplements; skincare and personal care products; and cooking sauces and pastes as products that are likely to do well in China.

This year, more than half the Malaysian exhibitors were newcomers.

For Teoh Siew Chu, retirement may be the end of a career but it was also the beginning of a new chapter.

At 63, she is living her life to the fullest and fills it with colours by running a workshop to

promote the art of handmade batik.

The ex-headmistress of a Chinese primary school developed an interest in batik when the government vigorously promoted it in 2005.

"I went all the way to Kelantan to learn the skill, and the more I learned, the more I love batik. I want to introduce this unique art of Malaysia to the Chinese," she said, adding that her sales at the expo was poor as many potential customers complained of the high prices.

"But these are handmade on high quality silk. Some took me months to finish," she explained. She wished she had brought the cheaper cotton batik pieces.

Teoh spent RM50,000 to open the workshop after retiring in 2011.

Another exhibitor, Tang Han Tiong, came up with products that would illicit a smile. Among the items he showcased at the expo were musang king-scented shower cream and shower gel in engine oil containers.

"We hope our customers will have a fun time using our products," he said.

The idea of making body shower that smells of durian came to him after hearing complaints from tourists that they could not bring the King of Fruits back home.

To him, this novelty product is less about generating income for his company and more about lighting up people's daily lives.

Matrade trade counsel for Guangzhou Zaimah Osman said although Malaysia wanted to introduce more products, there was still much focus on durians, bird's nest and coffee.

"These are our icons and the Chinese will come straight to us if they want these items," she said.

During the expo, 10 memorandum of understanding totalling RM137mil were signed by Malaysian companies and Chinese importers in the fields of F&B, logistics and e-commerce.

Over 1,000 business-matching sessions were organised for Malaysian companies.

Malaysia has won four awards at the expo, namely the Best Industry Organiser, Best Promotion on Investment Cooperation, Best City of Charm Pavilion and Outstanding Organiser.

This year marked the 15th anniversary of Asean-China relations. Side events at the expo to commemorate this included trade and investments conferences, high-level forums, an essay competition, cultural exchange activities and performances.

Topics related to the expo on its official Weibo and WeChat accounts were viewed some 55 million times.

At least 530 economic cooperation projects in the fields of digital economy, new energy, logistics and manufacturing were signed at the event.

AMSTERDAM	BANGKOK	BEIJING	CAIRO	HONG KONG	JAKARTA	NEW DELHI	LONDON	NEW YORK	SYDNEY	TOKYO	
9°	12°	25° 35°	11° 23°	23° 34°	26° 32°	24° 35°	23° 31°	4° 13°	14° 18°	12° 22°	21° 28°



### Religious procession

Devotees carrying a huge idol of the Hindu god Ganesha through the streets of Mumbai, India. During the Ganesh Festival, Hindus bring home idols of the deity and offer prayers in temporary temples in order to invoke his blessings for wisdom and prosperity, culminating with the immersion of the idols in bodies of water, including the ocean, on the last day. — AP

## Labour party's Brexit dilemma

Decisions have to be made on whether a new referendum that could keep Britain in the European Union is a possibility. >20



### Smooth start

Indonesia's presidential election campaign begins with candidates vowing a peaceful contest. >22



### Back to nature

National park in Hawaii reopens after months-long eruption. >27

## Blame game

Iran points finger at Arab separatists and Gulf state over deadly attack during military parade. >25



# Act now, Labour Party urged

UK opposition considers supporting Brexit referendum

**LONDON:** Britain's Labour Party may hold the fate of Brexit in its hands – if only it can decide what to do.

With the United Kingdom and the European Union at an impasse in divorce talks, many Labour members think the left-of-centre opposition party has the power – and a duty – to force a new referendum that could reverse Britain's decision to leave the 28-nation bloc.

Labour's leadership has long opposed that idea and a showdown on the issue loomed at the party's annual conference, which began yesterday in the port city of Liverpool.

Ever since Britain voted in 2016 to leave the EU, Labour has said it will respect the result, though it wants a closer relationship with the bloc than the one Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative government is seeking.

Now, with divorce negotiations stuck and Britain due to leave in March, many Labour members think the party must change course.

"Labour has to come to a decision. The time has gone for sitting on the fence," said Mike Buckley of Labour for a People's Vote, a group campaigning for a new referendum.

More than 100 local Labour associations have submitted motions to the conference urging a public plebiscite, with a choice between leaving on terms agreed by the government or staying in the EU.

Party chiefs were set to decide



**Clear statement:** A campaign bus parked outside a Save Brexit rally organised by the Leave Means Leave campaign in Bolton, northwest England. — AFP

yesterday, the first day of the four-day conference, which motions would be up for debate and votes.

Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn – a veteran socialist who views the EU with suspicion – has long been against holding a second public vote on Brexit, though his opposition appears to be softening.

Corbyn told the *Sunday Mirror* newspaper: "I'm not calling for a second referendum."

However, he added, if Labour's conference "makes a decision, I will

not walk away from it and I will act accordingly".

Deputy leader Tom Watson was even firmer.

"We must back it if Labour members want it," he told *The Observer* newspaper.

Still, Labour faces a major political dilemma over Brexit. Most of the party's half a million members voted in 2016 to remain in the EU, but many of its 257 lawmakers represent areas that supported Brexit.

"For Labour to adopt a second

referendum policy would spell political disaster in all those Labour seats that voted leave," said Brendan Chilton of the pro-Brexit group Labour Leave.

Since the 2016 referendum, Labour has stuck to a policy of "constructive ambiguity" in a bid to appeal to "leave" and "remain" voters alike.

The party opposes May's "Tory Brexit", but not Brexit itself. It calls for Britain to leave the EU but remain in the bloc's customs union with "full access" to the EU's huge single market.

Pro-EU party members, including many Labour lawmakers, say that is both vague and unachievable as long as Labour is in opposition.

The Conservative government's blueprint for future trade ties with the bloc was rejected last week by EU leaders at a summit in Salzburg, Austria. That left May's leadership under siege and Britain at growing risk of crashing out of the EU on March 29 with no deal in place.

Andrew Adonis, a Labour member of the House of Lords who supports holding a second referendum, said Labour cannot sit on the sidelines while the country staggers toward political and financial chaos.

"This is as big a crisis as I can remember in my lifetime," Adonis said. "And no one has a clue at the moment what is going to happen."

"That's why I think we now need to take a stand – we the Labour Party and we the country." — AP



**Sombre task:** Relatives of the victims car

## Israel blamed for downing of plane by Syrian forces

**MOSCOW:** The Russian defence ministry has again blamed Israel for the downing of a Russian plane by Syrian government forces and said Israel appeared "ungrateful" for Moscow's efforts to rein in Iran-backed fighters in Syria.

Syrian government forces mistook the Russian Il-20 reconnaissance plane for an Israeli jet and shot it down last week, killing all 15 aboard.

While the Russian military initially blamed the plane's loss on Israel, President Vladimir Putin later attributed it to "a chain of tragic, fatal circumstances".

The Russian defence ministry presented its latest findings on the Il-20's downing yesterday, laying the blame squarely on Israel.

"We believe the Israeli Air Force and those who were making decisions about these actions are fully to blame for the tragedy," Maj Gen Igor Konashenkov said.

For several years, Israel and Russia have maintained a special hotline to prevent their air forces from clashing in the skies over Syria.

Yesterday, Konashenkov accused Israel of using the hotline to mislead Russia about its plans.

He said the Russians could not get the Il-20 to a safe place as an Israeli duty officer had misled them, telling them of an Israeli operation in northern Syria while the jets were actually in Latakia, in the country's west.

He called Israel's actions "a highly ungrateful response to everything that Russia has done for the State of Israel recently". — AP



**Water everywhere:** Dozens of homes in Pender County, North Carolina, surrounded by floodwaters caused by Hurricane Florence. — AP

## Danger remains after Florence floods recede

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Nearly all rivers and waterways in North and South Carolina have crested, but most will remain at dangerous flood levels for days to come, the US National Weather Service warned, more than a week after the arrival of Hurricane Florence, which has killed at least 40 people.

Swaths of rivers near the Atlantic coast would not crest for days to come, such as the lower Cape Fear River near Wilmington, North Carolina, one of the hardest hit communities, said Bob Oravec, a meteorologist with the NWS' Weather Prediction Center in College Park Maryland.

"This isn't over. Large sections of rivers near the coast won't start cresting until at least early in the week, maybe later," Oravec said early yesterday.

"All that water is going to take a good while to recede. Damage can still be done. It'll be a slow drop."

Meanwhile, remnants of the once mighty storm brought heavy rains northwest up the Ohio Valley,

prompting flood watches and warnings from Texas to Virginia and Maryland, at least through today, the weather service said.

Officials in towns and cities in both North and South Carolina were filling sandbags and finalising evacuation plans, eyeing some rivers that were swollen by heavy rainfall on Saturday.

In Conway, South Carolina, where President Donald Trump visited this week, images posted by the city on Saturday showed water lapping at

homes in an area where residents were being evacuated.

In Lee's Landing in Horry County, some residents used boats to get to safety as the Waccamaw River spilled into neighbourhoods, a local CBS affiliate reported.

More than two dozen flood gauges in North and South Carolina showed flooding on Saturday, the NWS reported.

At least 40 deaths have been attributed to the storm, with most of those in North Carolina. — Reuters



burying coffins to be used to transport the bodies on Ukara island. — AP

## Families bury victims of Tanzania ferry disaster

**UKARA:** Grieving families prepared to bury victims of Tanzania's devastating ferry disaster, with more than 200 confirmed dead after the crowded boat capsized in Lake Victoria.

Hopes were fading yesterday of finding any more survivors after the ferry sank on Thursday, even after rescuers pulled out an engineer who had managed to find refuge in an air pocket in the upturned vessel.

"We are going to start burying bodies not yet identified by relatives," said John Mongella, governor of Mwanza region, where the *MV Nyerere* ferry had been coming in to dock on the island of Ukara.

"The (burial) ceremony will be overseen by Prime Minister Kassim Majaliwa in the presence of clergy members of different denominations," Mongella said on Saturday on TBC 1 public television.

Divers were also set to continue their grim search in the waters around the boat, where they were watched late on Saturday by anxious crowds gathered just metres away on Ukara's shore.

Mongella said 218 people had been confirmed dead, while 41 escaped with their lives – a total figure far above the official capacity of the boat, which was in theory only able to carry 101 passengers.

One survivor was an engineer who shut himself in a "special room" with enough air to stay alive until he was found, said local lawmaker Joseph Mkundi.

Transport Minister Isack Kamwelwe said on Saturday that 172 of

the victim's bodies had been identified by relatives.

State television cited witnesses who said over 200 people had boarded the ferry at Bugolora, a town on the larger Ukerewe Island. It was market day, which usually sees the vessel packed with people and goods.

Witnesses said the ferry sank when passengers rushed to one side to disembark as it neared the dock. Others blamed the captain, saying he made a brusque manoeuvre.

Dozens of wooden coffins lined the shore on Saturday, waiting to be seen by families as police and volunteers sought to keep hundreds of curious locals at bay.

Aisha William came to collect the body of her husband.

"He left on Tuesday around noon, but he never came home. I do not know how I am going to raise my two children," she said.

Ahmed Caleb, a 27-year-old trader, railed at a tragedy "which could have been prevented", adding: "I've lost my boss, friends, people I went to school with."

The ageing vessel was also carrying cargo, including sacks of maize, bananas and cement, when it capsized.

Tanzanian President John Magufuli on Friday ordered the arrest of the ferry's management and declared four days of national mourning.

In a speech broadcast on TBC 1, Magufuli said "it appears clear that the ferry was overloaded", adding that the government would cover the victims' funeral expenses. — AFP



**Last respects:** Buddhist monks praying in front of a portrait of Quang at the Viet Nam Quoc Tu Pagoda in Ho Chi Minh City. — AFP

## State funeral, national mourning to be held for Vietnam president

**HANOI:** Vietnam has announced a state funeral and two days of national mourning for President Tran Dai Quang, who died on Friday aged 61.

Flags will be flown at half-mast and entertainment venues shut for two days starting on Wednesday, when Quang's body will lie in state in Hanoi before being buried in his hometown in Ninh Binh province the next day.

"His passing is a great loss for our party, state and people," the Communist Party of Vietnam said in a statement yesterday, adding that the funeral would be broadcast live.

Condolences have poured in from across geopolitical divides, with Cuba announcing its own mourning period and US President Donald Trump calling him a "great friend of the United States" in a statement on Friday.

The leaders of Cambodia and China also sent tributes, even though Quang's time in

office since 2016 was marked by tensions with Beijing over disputed waterways in the South China Sea.

The cause of death was identified in state media as a "rare virus", though no further details were provided.

Vice President Dang Thi Ngoc Thinh will take over as head of state – the first female in the position – until a replacement is decided by lawmakers at an unspecified date.

Quang, a former police chief and communist party stalwart, spent more than four decades as an intelligence official and most recently threw his weight behind a crackdown on dissent and corruption, which critics say was aimed at rivals.

Buddhist prayer ceremonies were held over the weekend, including a gathering of hundreds of monks who bowed before a portrait of Quang in a Ho Chi Minh City pagoda. — AFP

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## IN PICTURES

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**Mexico:** Cyclists riding their bikes in the street during Bike and Clean Air Day, where cars and motorcycles have restricted circulation in Guadalajara, Jalisco State. The initiative, called Via Recreativa, attracts thousands of weekly participants. — AFP



**Nigeria:** People dressed in Zangbeto masquerade costumes preparing to parade during a regatta to mark the Badagry festival in Badagry. Zangbeto are the traditional voodoo guardians of the night in the Yoruba religion. — AP



**Germany:** Children dressed in historical clothes take part in the 185th Oktoberfest parade in Munich. Around six million visitors are expected at the festival grounds before Oktoberfest ends on Oct 7. — Reuters

# Presidential race kicks off

## Indonesia candidates pledge calm campaign

**JAKARTA:** Campaigning for Indonesia's presidential election in April has kicked off, pitting incumbent Joko Widodo against a former military general in the race to lead the world's third-biggest democracy.

Opinion polls show Joko, whose down-to-earth style and ambitious infrastructure drive have made him popular with many Indonesians, well ahead of his main challenger Prabowo Subianto.

But his bid for a second term is facing headwinds over his economic record, with the Indonesian rupiah sitting at two-decade lows and fears of a fake news campaign intended to disrupt his re-election.

Some 186 million voters in the world's largest Muslim-majority country are expected to go to the polls on April 17, in an election which will also decide members of national and local parliaments.

Both leaders attended an official campaign launch in central Jakarta yesterday morning, in which they pledged to run a peaceful contest free from hoaxes and the politicisation of ethnicity and religion.

Many Indonesians will be keen to avoid a repeat of last year's Jakarta gubernatorial elections, which were marked by massive street protests led by hardline Muslims opposed to the capital's former governor, who is ethnic Chinese and a Christian.

Analysts say campaigning is likely to focus on the economy, inequality,



**Powerful statement:** Indonesians dressed in superhero costumes marching during a ceremony in Jakarta to the kick off the campaign period for next year's election. — AP

identity politics and rising intolerance across the sprawling Southeast Asian archipelago.

Joko surprised many in August by choosing to run alongside conservative Islamic cleric Ma'ruf Amin.

Ma'ruf, 75, is chairman of the country's top Islamic authority, the Indonesian Ulema Council, and is known for his disparaging views towards certain minorities.

About 90% of Indonesia's 260 million people have traditionally followed a moderate form of Islam, but there are concerns that it is taking a more conservative turn.

The pair will square off against Prabowo and former deputy Jakarta governor Sandiaga Uno, a businessman and private equity tycoon.

Prabowo, who lost to Joko in 2014, was a top military figure in

the chaotic months before dictator Suharto was toppled by student protests in 1998.

Following the strongman's downfall, he admitted ordering the abduction of democracy activists and was discharged from the military.

The first major survey by the Indonesian Survey Circle after candidate registration closed showed Jokowi and Amin with 52% support ahead of Prabowo and Uno (30%).

Pundits say Joko is most vulnerable when it comes to the economy and inequality.

Indonesia's currency has slumped in recent weeks, falling to levels not seen since the country was embroiled in a region-wide financial crisis that sparked economic ruin and street protests that led to the downfall of Suharto. — AFP



**On a mission:** Joko attending a campaign launch in Jakarta. — AFP

## Over 140,000 illegal guns and bombs destroyed across China

**CHONGQING:** Chinese police have solved more than 33,000 cases involving guns and explosives since a campaign against such crimes was staged across the country in February.

Over 140,000 illegal guns and a large number of explosives confiscated or turned over to the police were destroyed on Thursday in 146 cities, including Chongqing, Qiqihar, Nanjing, Wuhan, Guangzhou and Kunming.

During the first seven months of the two-year campaign, the police have caught 288 gangs involved in guns and explosives, busted 421 criminal dens and arrested a large number of suspects.

The number of gun and explosives crimes from January to August dropped 30.5% and 36.1% year on year respectively.

Possession of guns by private individuals is illegal in China.

The country has long maintained high pressure on gun and explosives crimes.

The campaign aims to spread public awareness of the illegal possession of guns and explosives, as well as its threat to public security.

According to Sun Lijun, deputy minister of public security, the crackdown on gun and explosives crimes had been effective so far, although severe challenges still remained.

Sun urged all police departments to maintain high pressure on such crimes. — Xinhua

# Germany seeks to end govt standoff over spy chief

**BERLIN:** The leaders of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's governing coalition were trying to resolve a standoff over the future of the country's domestic intelligence chief and stabilise their six-month-old alliance.

The centre-left Social Democrats want Hans-Georg Maassen removed for appearing to downplay recent violence against migrants, but conservative Interior Minister Horst Seehofer has stood by him.

Last week, coalition leaders agreed to replace Maassen as head of Germany's BfV spy agency but

give him a new job as a deputy interior minister – a promotion with a hefty pay rise.

The move has infuriated many members of the centre-left Social Democrats.

Seehofer leads the Bavaria-only Christian Social Union, the government's third coalition partner.

On Friday, Social Democrat leader Andrea Nahles asked Merkel and Seehofer to renegotiate the deal.

Merkel said she wanted a solution over the weekend, though she has not said what her own opinion is of Maassen.

Merkel's coalition took office in March after the Social Democrats decided reluctantly to join up.

It has already been through one crisis that threatened its survival, when Merkel and Seehofer – a conservative ally, but a longtime critic of her initially welcoming approach to refugees in 2015 – faced off in June over whether to turn back some migrants at the German-Austrian border.

Responding to violent right-wing protests following the killing of a German man, allegedly by migrants, in the eastern city of Chemnitz,

Maassen said his agency had no reliable evidence that foreigners were being "hunted" down in the streets – a term Merkel had used.

A video posted by a left-wing group showed protesters chasing down and attacking a foreigner but Maassen questioned its authenticity.

Seehofer, Maassen's boss, told the *Bild am Sonntag* newspaper yesterday that coalition leaders would have to spend a lot of time in phone calls over the weekend, but would only meet when it was clear how a solution could work.

Seehofer said Maassen was a "highly competent" employee who had not violated any rules and that he would not outright dismiss him.

He also accused the Social Democrats of running a "campaign" against Maassen.

The issue is clouding the government's future at a time when the three parties face major challenges in upcoming state elections, in Seehofer's home state of Bavaria on Oct 14 and in neighbouring Hesse on Oct 28.

The infighting appears to be weighing down their support. — AP

# India launches 'Modicare'

## World's biggest health plan to cover 500 million poor people

**NEW DELHI:** India launched the world's biggest health insurance scheme which Prime Minister Narendra Modi said would cover some 500 million poor people.

The programme, dubbed "Modicare", promises health cover worth 500,000 rupees (RM28,594) to every poor family to treat serious ailments.

The scheme is expected to cost the central and 29 state governments US\$1.6bil (RM6.6bil) per year in total.

## Passengers sing praises for HK bullet train

**HONG KONG:** Hong Kong's controversial bullet train got off to a smooth start, as hundreds of passengers whistled north across the border at speeds of up to 200 kph, deepening integration of the former British colony with mainland China.

While the US\$11bil (RM45.5bil) rail project has raised fears for some over Beijing's encroachment on the Chinese-ruled city's cherished freedoms, passengers at the sleek harbourfront station were full of praise for a service that reaches mainland China in less than 20 minutes.

"Out of 10 points, I give it nine," said 10-year-old Ng Kwan-lap, who was travelling with his parents on the first train leaving for Shenzhen at 7am.

"The train is great. It's very smooth when it hits speeds of 200 kph."

Mainland Chinese immigration officers are stationed in one part of the modernist station that is subject to Chinese law, an unprecedented move that some critics say further erodes the city's autonomy.

The project is part of a broader effort by Beijing to fuse the city into a vast hinterland of the Pearl River

Funding will be increased gradually according to demand.

Modi handed medical cards out at the launch in Ranchi, capital of the eastern state of Jharkhand, calling it a historic day for India.

He called the scheme "a big step towards providing good quality and accessible healthcare to the poor of India. Over 100 million families will benefit".

India's overburdened public health system is plagued by a shortage of hospitals and doctors and

most people use private clinics and hospitals if they can afford to.

But a private consultation can cost 1,000 rupees (RM57), a huge sum for millions living on less than US\$2 (RM8) a day. More than 60% of the average family's spending goes to medicines and healthcare, the government estimates.

Experts have praised the latest programme, but say it should have included primary day-to-day healthcare instead of just secondary and tertiary care for more serious and

long-term treatment.

"Modicare does not extend to primary healthcare which, we believe, is the weakest link in the provision of public health in India," Rajiv Lall and Vivek Dehejia of the IDFC Institute think-tank said in a column for the *Mint* newspaper.

"The crucial point is that poorly delivered primary care inevitably increases the burden on health and finance at the secondary and tertiary levels down the line," they said. — AFP



**Landmark journey:** Passengers waving onboard a Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express train, operated by MTR Corp, during the first day of service in Hong Kong. (Below)

A passenger posing for a selfie in front of the train.

— Bloomberg

Delta, including nine Chinese cities dubbed the Greater Bay Area.

While there have been questions over whether Hong Kong residents would be able to access foreign social media, largely banned in mainland China, in zones subject to Chinese law, some passengers arriving in Shenzhen, on the mainland side, were able to bypass China's so-called Great Firewall.

The rail link provides direct access to China's massive 25,000km national high-speed rail network and authorities on both sides have hailed it as a breakthrough that will bring economic benefits, including increased tourism. — AP



## Needle in strawberry scare hits NZ

**WELLINGTON:** The Australian strawberry scare has spread to New Zealand, with a supermarket chain announcing that needles were found in a box of the fruit sourced from the neighbouring country.

The Countdown supermarket chain said yesterday that it had taken a brand of Australian strawberries off the shelves after a sabotaged punnet – a plastic box – was sold in an Auckland store.

The strawberries, from Western Australia state, were sold in Countdown stores nationwide last week and only one incident of tampering was reported.

"We take food safety very seriously," the company said in a statement, adding that it was in touch with authorities investigating

incidents of needles found in strawberries in Australia in recent weeks. The statement said there had been no reports of any illness or injury in New Zealand.

It added that the brand of strawberries affected by this withdrawal "have not previously had any issues of this nature reported and had not been withdrawn from sale in Australia".

Woolworths Australia, Countdown's parent company, has withdrawn needles from sale as a "precautionary step" as police hunt for the original culprit amid a spate of copycat episodes.

The Australian government last week raised the maximum prison sentence for fruit tampering from 10 to 15 years. — AFP

## Rebels kill 14 in Congo Ebola zone

**GOMA (Congo):** At least 14 civilians were killed in a six-hour attack by rebels on the town of Beni in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, local officials said, warning the unrest may hamper efforts to quash an Ebola epidemic in the area.

The latest outbreak of the deadly disease has been focused in North Kivu and Ituri provinces, which have been a tinderbox of armed rebellion and ethnic killings since two civil

wars in the late 1990s.

Militants believed to belong to the Allied Democratic Forces, a Ugandan Islamist group active in eastern Congo, clashed with Congolese troops in Beni, a town of several hundred thousand people, local civil society leader Kizito Bin Hangi said by telephone.

"Beni is ungovernable. Protests have been declared in the town where the people express their anger with consternation," he said.

## Australia joins bid to rescue injured Indian sailor

**SYDNEY:** Australia joined an international mission to rescue an injured Indian sailor stranded in the Indian Ocean while competing in the round-the-world Golden Globe Race.

The mast of Abhilash Tomy's yacht Thuriya broke off when it was rolled in a storm on Friday and the yachtsman suffered what he described as a "severe back injury".

The 39-year-old Indian navy commander was "incapacitated on his bunk inside his boat" some 3,704km off Western Australia state, organisers said.

Two P8 Poseidons – one from the Royal Australian Air Force and another from the Indian armed forces – flew over the yacht yesterday to inspect it, the Australian Maritime Safety Authority said.

## Pirates kidnap 12 crewmen from Swiss ship

**GENEVA:** A gang of pirates took hostage 12 crew members of a Swiss cargo ship they attacked in Nigerian waters, the vessel's operator has said.

Massoel Shipping said its bulk carrier *MV Glarus*, with 19 crew, came under attack early Saturday morning as it transported bulk wheat from Nigeria's commercial capital Lagos to the southern oil hub of Port Harcourt.

During the attack, around 45 nautical miles southwest of Bonny Island, "the pirate gang boarded the Glarus by means of long ladders and cut the razor wire on deck to gain access to the vessel and eventually the bridge," the company said in a statement.

"Having destroyed much of the vessel's communications equipment, the criminal gang departed taking 12 of the 19 crew complement as hostage," it added.

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# Artists melt ice sculpture in protest of 'fake news'

**WASHINGTON:** Artists melted a tonne of ice spelling out the word "truth" in the shadow of the US Capitol, in a poetic protest at the caustic state of politics in the era of "fake news" under President Donald Trump.

"Truth Be Told," measuring 10 feet wide by seven feet tall, is the sixth sculpture in the "Melted Away" series launched in 2006 by artist duo LigoranoReese.

Marshall Reese and Nora Ligorano, both 62 years old, have collaborated on art projects for nearly four decades, including woven fibre optic mesh, video and new media in clocks, mirrors and books.

Their other temporary monu-

ments shaped out of ice have included the words "democracy", "economy", "middle class", "the future" and "the American dream".

The artists decided to take their call for more transparency and honesty to Washington "because ice is a material that disappears, it's an urgent moment and truth is really melting," Ligorano said, as crowds gathered around the sculpture. "It's speaking truth to power."

Young and old alike touched the sculpture and snapped photographs under sunny skies.

A frozen T collapsed first. The first T and R then collapsed against one another in a big crash, leaving only "UH" for a moment until those letters, too, vanished. — AFP



**Getting the word out:** A passer-by snapping photos of an ice sculpture that spelt the word 'truth' with the US Capitol in the background in Washington, DC. — AFP

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(440653-A)

# Tougher rules for getting a green card

US plans to limit immigrants who use benefits

**SAN DIEGO:** The Trump administration has proposed rules that could deny green cards to immigrants if they use Medicaid, food stamps, housing vouchers and other forms of public assistance.

Federal law already requires those seeking green cards and to prove they will not be a burden or "public charge" but the new rules detail a broad range of programmes that could disqualify them.

The Department of Homeland Security said on Saturday that current and past receipt of certain public benefits above thresholds would be considered "a heavily weighed negative factor" in granting green cards as well as temporary stays.

The proposal "will clearly define long-standing law to ensure that those seeking to enter and remain in the United States either temporarily or permanently can support themselves financially and will not be reliant on public benefits," the department said.

The 447-page proposal published

**How you contribute to your community – and not what you look like or the contents of your wallet – should be what matters.**

Marielena Hincapie

on the department's website will appear in the Federal Register "in the coming weeks," triggering a 60-day public comment period before it takes effect.

Coming less than seven weeks before midterm elections, the announcement could help galvanise voters who have backed or opposed Trump's broad crackdown on legal and illegal immigration.

Immigrant advocacy groups said people may avoid or withdraw from

public aid programmes even at the risk of losing shelter and suffering deteriorating health because they worry they will be denied visas.

Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, said the proposal was "an inhumane attack on the health and wellbeing of so many families and communities across the country."

"How you contribute to your community – and not what you look like or the contents of your wallet – should be what matters most," she said.

"This proposed rule does the opposite and makes clear that the Trump administration continues to prioritise money over family unity by ensuring that only the wealthiest can afford to build a future in this country."

Potentially disqualifying benefits include Medicare Part D prescription drugs, Medicaid with some exceptions for emergency services and disability services related to education, food stamps and Section 8 housing vouchers. — AP

# N. Korea, Iran and Trump the focus at UN

**NEW YORK:** North Korea and Iran will dominate this week's gathering of world leaders at the United Nations, where President Donald Trump will be firmly in the spotlight as he continues to upend global diplomacy.

After warming up to North Korean leader Kim Jong-un and ditching the Iran nuclear deal, the unpredictable Trump takes the podium tomorrow to face foes and increasingly uneasy allies at the UN General Assembly.

He will for the first time chair a Security Council meeting on non-proliferation and weapons of mass destruction that will focus heavily on Iran – likely triggering a clash with other big powers.

"It will be the most watched Security Council meeting ever," US Ambassador Nikki Haley said of Trump's first time wielding the gavel.

The diplomatic gathering will take stock of the thaw in relations between North and South Korea, and ground-breaking US-North Korea moves to address the threat from

Pyongyang's nuclear and ballistic missile programs.

Last year, world leaders shuddered as Trump threatened to totally destroy North Korea and belittled Kim as "Rocket Man on a suicide mission."

An exchange of insults ensued, with Kim calling out the "mentally deranged US dotard".

Trump's address to the assembly will be the "polar opposite of what we heard last year," said Suzanne DiMaggio, an expert on North Korea and Iran at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

The president will tout his face-to-face with Kim as a major diplomatic win but "he should think twice if he plans to repeat his claim that North Korea is no longer a nuclear threat", she said.

Despite the Trump-Kim landmark summit in Singapore in June, there has been little concrete progress on denuclearisation.

North Korean Foreign Minister Ri Yong-ho has been invited by US

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for talks on the sidelines of the assembly meeting. Ri is scheduled to deliver his address on Sept 29.

During key meetings, South Korean President Moon Jae-in will encourage Trump to press on with the rapprochement, but the US president is likely to get a different message from Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who has taken a tough stance on maintaining sanctions pressure on Pyongyang.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will address the fall-out from the US decision to abandon the nuclear deal when he takes the podium shortly after Trump tomorrow.

European countries along with Russia and China are still working to salvage the accord and will use the council meeting chaired by Trump to defend what they consider as a milestone in non-proliferation.

"The Security Council is not going to take kindly to being lectured by President Trump on the subject of Iran," said DiMaggio. — AP

# Maldives polls set to keep president in power

**MALE:** Maldives President Abdulla Yameen is expected to cement his grip on power in the tropical archipelago in an election that opposition and international groups have criticised for a lack of transparency and the suppression of dissent.

The Muslim-majority Indian Ocean nation of 400,000 people has become a theatre of rivalry between its traditional partner, India, and China, which has backed Yameen's infrastructure drive, and prompted concern in the West about Beijing's increasing influence.

Yameen's government has jailed many of his main rivals, including former president and his half brother, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom, on charges ranging from terrorism to corruption.

More than a quarter of a million people are eligible to vote in around 400 polling booths across the coral islands, best known in the West for their luxury resorts. Yameen, 59, is seeking a second five-year term.

Hundreds of people queued outside polling stations in the capital, Male, early yesterday. On some islands, people started queuing on Saturday night.

"I am voting to revert a mistake I made in 2013. I am voting to free President Maumoon (Gayoom)," Nazima Hassan, 44, said after voting in Male.

Abdul Rasheed Husain, 46, in Male said he cast his ballot for Yameen to take the Maldives "to the next level".

Transparency Maldives (TM), one of the few election monitors on the ground, reiterated concerns about the fairness of the electoral rules.

"Obviously, there are many issues



**Strong showing:** Yameen supporters riding on their motorcycles during the final campaign march rally ahead of the presidential election in Male, Maldives. — Reuters

with the electoral process, but we are hoping that the people will be given the space to exercise their fundamental right," Ahmed Tholal, TM's senior project coordinator, told Reuters.

"Having said that, the situation continues to be volatile and unpredictable," he added.

Police late on Saturday raided the main opposition campaign office

saying they came to "stop illegal activities", after arresting at least five opposition supporters for "influencing voters", opposition officials said.

British Ambassador James Duaris said in a Twitter message said that it was "easy to understand why so many are concerned about what might happen on Election Day".

Most poll monitors including

those from the European Union and the United Nations have declined the government's invitation to observe the election, fearing their presence might be used to endorse Yameen's re-election even after possible vote rigging.

The opposition's joint candidate, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, known as Ibu, told supporters he was confident of victory. — Reuters

# Iran vows crushing response to attack

Rouhani points finger at Arab separatists



**TEHERAN:** Iranian President Hassan Rouhani (pic) vowed a "crushing" response after assailants sprayed a crowd with gunfire, shooting dead at least 29 people including women and children at a military parade near the Iraqi border.

The Islamic State (IS) group claimed responsibility for the rare assault in the south-western city of Ahvaz, but Rouhani appeared to blame Arab separatists for the attack.

"It is absolutely clear to us who has done this, which group it is and to whom they are affiliated," Rouhani said on state television shortly before leaving Teheran for the UN General Assembly in New York.

"Those who have caused this catastrophe ... were Saddam's mercenaries as long as he was alive and then changed masters," he said, referring to late Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein.

"One of the countries in the south of the Persian Gulf took care of their financial, weaponry and political needs," Rouhani added.

"All these little mercenary countries we see in this region are backed by America. It is the Americans who incite them," he said.

Four militants on Saturday attacked the parade commemorating the beginning of the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, launched by Baghdad, in the southwestern city of Ahvaz, capital of Khuzestan Province.

Officials and an eyewitness said the gunmen were dressed in Iranian military uniforms and sprayed the crowd with gunfire

using weapons they had stashed in a nearby park.

"We realised it was a terrorist attack as bodyguards (of officials) started shooting," Behrad Ghasemi said. "Everything went haywire and soldiers started running."

"The terrorists had no particular target and didn't really seem to care as they shot anyone they could with rapid gunfire."

Ahvaz lies in Khuzestan, a province bordering Iraq that has a large ethnic Arab community and has seen separatist violence in the past that Iran blames on its regional rivals.

Iran summoned diplomats from Denmark, the Netherlands and Britain over their "hosting of some members of the terrorist group" which carried out the attack, state media said yesterday.

"It is not acceptable that the European Union does not blacklist members of these terrorist groups as long as they do not perpetrate a crime on ... European soil," official news agency IRNA quoted foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi as saying.

After addressing a similar parade in Teheran to commemorate the start of the 1980-1988 war with Iraq, Rouhani warned that "the response of the Islamic Republic of Iran to the smallest threat will be crushing".

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said the attack was carried out by "terrorists recruited, trained, armed and paid by a foreign regime". — AFP

# Swiss canton expected to usher in 'burqa ban'

**GENEVA:** A referendum in Switzerland's northeastern St Gallen region is expected to usher in a "burqa ban", making it the second Swiss canton to prohibit all face-covering garments in public spaces.

At the same time, voters across Switzerland are being asked to cast their ballots on initiatives aimed at boosting local farming and promoting "ethical standards" in food production, including turning a moratorium on genetically modified crops into a full-out ban.

St Gallen is expected to follow the example of the southern canton of Ticino, where a law was introduced two years ago aimed at burqas and other Muslim veils.

St Gallen lawmakers late last year adopted a text which stipulated that "any person who renders themselves unrecognisable by covering their face in a public space, and thus endangers public security or social and religious peace will be fined".

The law passed in the regional parliament with support from the populist right and centre parties.

The issue went up for public approval yesterday after the Green Party and Young Socialists demanded a referendum.

Switzerland's government last year opposed an initiative aimed at creating a nationwide burqa ban, saying it should be up to the regions to determine if such measures are appropriate. — AFP

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## CHINA

# Hospital ship docks in Venezuela amid crisis

**LA GUAIRA (Venezuela):** A Chinese navy hospital ship docked near Venezuela's capital as the Opec nation's deepening economic crisis garners the attention of the United States and other world powers.

Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino was on hand to greet the People's Liberation Army Navy's ship, the *Peace Ark*, on its latest stop as part of the 11-nation "Mission Harmony" tour announced in June.

"This is how you undertake diplomacy in the world," Padrino said, "with concrete actions of cooperation and not stoking the false voices of those who beat the drum of war".

Interest in the goodwill visit has been building since the Pentagon announced in August it was sending its own hospital ship, the *USNS Comfort*, to neighbouring Colombia to provide free medical treatment for thousands of Venezuelan migrants fleeing their homes amid widespread food and medicine shortages.

US Defence Secretary Jim Mattis, in a visit to Colombia last month, called the ship's deployment a humanitarian mission to deal with the fallout of President Nicolas Maduro's mismanagement of the economy.

The United Nations estimates that 2.3 million Venezuelans have fled the crisis-torn country in recent years, mainly to Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Brazil.

But top officials in Venezuela's socialist government saw the *Comfort's* deployment as a threat,



**Colourful welcome:** Venezuelan dancers welcoming Chinese hospital ship 'Peace Ark' upon its arrival at the port of La Guaira, Venezuela. — AFP

part of an effort by the United States to pave the way for a military intervention on humanitarian grounds.

Padrino on Saturday said the Chinese boat's visit was part of the government's "strategic defence operation".

The *Peace Ark*'s humanitarian tours around the world have become a sign of China's outreach

efforts and Beijing's ambitions of gradually expanding its military influence abroad.

The ship, which has 300 beds, eight operation rooms and a medical helicopter, has carried out such missions to more than 40 countries and provided free medical services for more than 180,000 people since it was commissioned in 2008.

Such goodwill visits have been the mainstay of US diplomacy in Latin America for decades.

The Chinese ship has twice before visited Latin America, in 2011 and 2015, but has never stopped in Venezuela. It will also visit the Caribbean island of Grenada and Ecuador on its current deployment.

— AP

## Havana set to restore China Town for anniversary

**HAVANA:** The Cuban government will renovate Havana's China Town ahead of Havana's 500th foundation anniversary next year, local press reported.

Havana has been undertaking a recuperation plan since 2017 to prepare for the 500th anniversary of its foundation by Spanish settlers on Nov 16, 1519.

The restoration efforts include the repair of public lighting, sidewalks and parks, street paving and the removal of overhanging electrical cables as many buildings with "high heritage, urban and environmental" value are suffering deterioration.

According to local media's reports about a government meeting on the restoration led by Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel, well-known China Town sites like the offices of the Chinese newspaper *Kwong Wah Po*, launderettes and traditional pharmacies, will all be renovated.

Chinese migration to Cuba peaked at the end of the 19th century. In 1877, a census recorded that there were 47,000 Chinese migrants in Cuba.

However, a census in 2012 suggested the Chinese population in Cuba was just over 100. — Xinhua

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# Beijing cancels joint military talks

Move in protest at US over sanctions

**China is the first country in the world to use both of those systems.**

A US State Department official

had taken possession of the advanced S-400 surface-to-air missile system, in a breach of a US sanctions law imposed in response to Russia's "malign behaviour".

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, insisted that the sanctions were aimed at Moscow, not Beijing.

The so-called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, or CAATSA, was signed into law in 2017 to punish Russia for meddling in US elections, aggression in Ukraine and involvement in Syria's civil war.

"China is the first country in the world to use both of those systems," the official said.

"Both of those systems are extremely sophisticated and very high value."

Russia has deployed S-400s in Syria, according to official Russian news media, and US officials have been discussing the interest other nations, particularly Nato ally Turkey, have expressed in buying the system.

Washington has expressed concern that Turkey's planned deployment of S-400s could threaten some US-made weapons and other technology used by Turkey, including the F-35 fighter jet. — Reuters

# Solar vehicles replacing bush taxis

Resort island cleans up, sets sights on becoming Ivory Coast's premier eco city



**Eco-friendly wheels:** A motorist driving a taxi with solar energy panels on its roof in Jacqueville. — AFP

## JACQUEVILLE (Ivory Coast):

Hi-tech, cheap – and quiet. The Ivorian resort of Jacqueville just outside Abidjan is betting on solar-powered three-wheeler as it looks to replace traditional but noisy and dirty bush taxis.

"It's cheaper and relaxing," said local trader Sandrine Tetelo, of the Chinese-made Saloni or Antara tricycles, which could spell the end for old-school *woro-woro* four-wheelers as Jacqueville looks to make itself Ivory Coast's premier eco city.

The mini-cars, 2.7m-long and two metres high, are covered in solar panels each fitted out with six 12-volt batteries, giving the vehicles a range of 140km.

Returning from a visit to China, the solar cars' promotor Marc Togbe pitched his plan to mayor Joachim Beugre, who was immediately sold.

"We are used to seeing (typically old and beaten up) bush taxis pollute the environment. We said to ourselves, 'If we could only replace them by solar trikes,'" said Beugre.

"The adventure started in January with two little cars," said Togbe, who has created a partnership with local businessman Balla Konate.

Konate wants to extend operations to Odienne and Korhogo in the north, the country's sunniest region.

"Today, a dozen cars are up and running. We are right in the test phase. More and more people are asking for them," said Beugre.

Long isolated, his town, nestled between a laguna and the sea, has flourished in terms of real estate and tourism since the 2015 inauguration of a bridge linking Jacqueville to the mainland and cutting transit time to Abidjan to less than an hour.

For the start of the school year in October, Jacqueville plans to bring on stream a 22-seater "solar coach" designed to help deal with "the thorny issue of pupils' transport".

Many schoolchildren have to travel tens of kilometres from their home village to urban schools.

But a switch to solar and durables may appear paradoxical in Jacqueville, as the area produces the lion's share of the country's gas and oil.

But the municipality sees none of the profits, an issue which has drawn public ire in the past.

The trike project is just one piece in a much larger jigsaw that includes the construction of a new eco city on a 240ha site.

"It will not be a city for the rich," insisted Beugre. "All social strata who respect the environment will be able to live there." — AFP

## Franklin's legacy lives on in museum exhibits

**DETROIT:** The Detroit museum that hosted Aretha Franklin's public visitations after her death is again holding space for her – this time with an exhibit featuring photographs, videos and the red shoes she wore at the first funeral viewing that drew global attention.

Billed as a "tribute to the Queen of Soul", THINK opens to the public tomorrow at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History and runs until Jan 21, Martin Luther King Jr Day.

The show is a prelude to what the museum envisions is a larger, long-term exhibit that would debut late next year or in early 2020. And both could be a proving ground for a permanent museum honouring Franklin and her family.

"My aunt used to always talk about having a Franklin family museum," Franklin's niece Sabrina Owens said. "That's not on the immediate horizon, but I thought this would be a good start to it."

The first show aims to capture and celebrate Franklin's life in an intimate space that is designed to change and offer surprises over time – much like its subject did.

"This mirrors the way she was – adding things to a collection, giving people something different to look forward to. It just goes along with who she was as a person," Owens said. "She just always wanted to change, keep herself relevant."

Besides the red shoes, the exhibit includes a replica of the matching



red dress she wore at the visitation and videos from various performances and appearances.

Visitors are greeted by a large video monitor with three clips playing on a loop, including her scene-stealing turn singing *Think* in the film *The Blues Brothers*.

The images and artifacts span her life, among them a photo of her birth home in Memphis, Tennessee, a framed copy of the first record she cut in her longtime home of Detroit

and a close-up shot of her singing *My Country 'Tis of Thee* at President Barack Obama's 2009 inauguration.

Museum officials said the cultural landmark took great pride in hosting the exhibit, as well as maintaining a connection with Franklin, who died on Aug 16 at 76.

The museum said roughly 31,000 people came to see her during the Aug 29-30 visitation period.

Given how recently she died, museum officials said it was impor-

tant to capture and present some of those elements "of residual grief and love" for the inaugural exhibit.

For the current and planned future exhibit, the museum is working with the Franklin family on creating something that encompasses her life and its impact.

Owens believes that it is a great way to start sharing her legacy, adding: "It's just really good to see my aunt's dream come to fruition." — AP

**Larger than life:** Some of the items on display at the THINK exhibit at the Charles H. Wright Museum of African American History in Detroit. — AP

## US national park reopens after eruption

**HONOLULU:** A national park in Hawaii has reopened after being closed for more than four months because of Kilauea volcano's latest eruption, which caused widespread damage to park infrastructure and dramatically changed its landscape.

Hawaii Volcanoes National Park officials said there were no lines or waiting for visitors to catch a glimpse of the volcano that made headlines when it began erupting in May. Admission was free on Saturday.

The eruption destroyed hundreds of homes outside the park while changing the popular summit crater inside the park.

The park – normally the state's most-visited tourist attraction – had

been closed for 135 days as volcanic activity caused explosive eruptions, earthquakes and the collapse of the famed Halemaumau crater.

Kilauea has been active for decades. But the eruption that began in May has transformed both the park and the rural Big Island coastline that surrounds it.

Outside the park, lava flows consumed entire neighbourhoods, filled an ocean bay and created miles of new shoreline with fresh black sand beaches and jagged rocky outcrops.

Inside the park, molten rock drained from the summit lava lake and vanished from view as the landscape changed monumentally.

The summit crater floor sunk

460m and the overall Kilauea caldera widened – expanding over 1sq m, according to the US Geological Survey. It quadrupled in size as lava drained out of the active vent.

"This eruption was unprecedented in the historic record," Ingrid Johanson, a research geophysicist at the US Geological Survey's Hawaiian Volcano Observatory, said.

"The changes we've seen are more dramatic than anything that's happened in the last 200 years."

Public access to the volcano remains limited because of damage to its infrastructure. But visitors can once again hike around some parts of the summit area and see the aftermath of the historic eruption. — AP



**Nature's splendour:** Tourists exploring the Hawaii Volcanoes National Park after it reopened. — AP

# They may fail ... and learn

AS I watch from my place, I can see parents sending their kids to school on Saturday and Sunday mornings for extra or revision classes. And teachers are expected to attend, no questions asked. Students are, too, but they have a choice and not all of them do. Such sessions are held throughout the term or semester and holidays.

Whether it's primary or secondary schooling, what began as sessions for only the core subjects have quickly extended to every subject where a handful of students are either willing or able to attend.

Teachers have no choice whether they want to be involved in these classes or not. Of course, some are willing but those who refuse may go into the school's "bad" books.

Schools or institutions are known to run numerous events such as monthly assemblies, counselling programmes, mentor-mentee programme, sports and carnivals, the list goes on. For every programme students have to attend, classes need to be replaced. Teachers need to plan and be ready to ensure the teaching hours are met.

Much of this pressure can be traced back to the introduction of wasted "strategic planning" and targets of the administrators.

Academic leaders want us to do everything in our power to prevent a student from failing, so we are required to have them back after lessons or after school to improve or redo minor class assessments. This makes sense, to an extent.

Of course, a teacher's job is to help students reach their potential. If they fail to do this, we need to make the time to help them so they don't make the same mistake again. But this just isn't what happens.

No matter how much time you spend with the students, going over their work, they will still make the same mistakes. They listen, redo their work, and leave. And the same will happen again.

It is a deep concern about pressure to carry out such interventions to compensate for "reluctant" students. Institutions should



consider instructing teachers not to hold sessions outside of the school day.

We need to face reality; we should accommodate and accept failures and the chance for them to build on improving themselves.

We have to act and face the facts. Many have voiced out that students are demanding of our time at their choosing. Even the leaders are hard on us.

We have provided revision materials, tutorials and activities, even e-portals. On replacement classes, every single topic we have ever taught will be repeated, not revised. We expect the students to do nothing, so they don't.

This over-reliance on teachers goes beyond exam results. This doesn't do our students any favours.

If we don't provide them with a chance to fail, they have no chance to grow. If, for every assessment, they know they can just redo it with no impact on their grade, there's no urgency.

The demand for replacement or revision classes doesn't necessarily work in lessons.

In fact, the growing attitude is that lessons don't matter; they'll relearn it all in revision anyway.

It is not good for teachers either. The extra time we're expected to give to students means our workload becomes even more strenuous to manage. Our lives away from school are compromised. School leaders will not bother about our plight and we are left to deal with it ourselves.

We do need to let pupils fail occasionally, without playing the blame game between teacher and student. We need to make them take some responsibility for the standard of their learning.

Give them a chance to improve their work on their own. It might be slow-going, but it could also mean they don't need spoon-fed classes to pass the exams. As educators, we should be making sure students not only know how to give a right answer but that they truly understand the subject too.

**KHERU KHEK**  
Kuala Lumpur

## Traffic congestion worsens at KLIA

THE authorities should seriously look into resolving the traffic congestion, which has gotten worse, at the arrival level of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA). On Sept 22, I arrived with my wife from Melbourne at 7.57pm. It was a good flight and baggage delivery at Carousel C was on time.

I was at the pick-up point at 6C at 8.40pm but my transport driver messaged me at 9pm that he was caught in a massive congestion just before Gate 1. He reached 6C at 9.12pm.

On the outer lane of 6C, there were two cars parked for a good 20 minutes, with one unattended.

On the pick-up lane, a few cars were waiting for their passengers. Several vehicles had even parked on the pedestrian crossing.

There was a man armed with a luminous baton and a whistle, wearing a vest with the word indicating security, around 6C. He did not seem to have the authority to ask any waiting vehicle to move on but just kept on blowing the whistle which did not have any effect.

Controlling the congestion should not be the work of the ordinary security personnel but the police.

Two months ago, the police said they would summon unattended vehicles and

resolve the congestion at KLIA but it was done only for a short while.

KLIA is a world-class facility but I am not wrong to say that problems pertaining to traffic congestion and touts remain unresolved. The third-world mentality of some motorists tarnishes the image of the airport and the country.

As my transport moved out from 6C I noticed several unattended vehicles parked from Gate 7 right up to after Gate 8. The numerous uncollected trolleys around 6C and beyond added to the problem.

**WILLIAM DENNIS**  
Subang Jaya

## Protection from the long-overdue ombudsman

THE government's decision to set up the Ombudsman Malaysia and Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) is a progressive move for the nation.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has announced that the Public Complaints Bureau will be known and function as Ombudsman Malaysia and an Ombudsman Act will be drafted to ensure a more effective management of public complaints in Malaysia.

The Cabinet has also agreed to turn the Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC) into IPCMC which will act as an independent monitoring body that is more holistic.

It is a timely move to address public grievances against any public authority in line with the new government's emphasis on improving service delivery and fighting corruption in the interest of the public.

I hope more efforts could be made to reduce bureaucratic red tape and improve administrative efficiency in all government departments and agencies.

On this score, the setting up of the ombudsman system will be a step in the right direction to address all public grievances against all departments and agencies.

Ombudsman is derived from the Swedish word meaning "grievance person" or "representative or agent of the people".

It is also referred in Oxford Dictionary as the "people's defender" and he or she is appointed to safeguard the citizens against abuse or misuse of administrative power by executive.

They are a citizen's friend and protector entrusted with enquiring personally into alleged wrongs inflicted on the man in the street by a range of public authorities.

In the early 1970s, Malaysia had wanted to consider such a system and had in fact studied the New Zealand ombudsman model with a view towards its implementation. However, it was shelved and in its place the Public Complaints Bureau was set up.

The idea to set up an Ombudsman was again highlighted during the era of Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi when he was

prime minister from 2003 to 2009 but it did not materialise.

I am happy that the past proposals are bearing fruit as we need both of the Ombudsman and IPCMC which I have been advocating for many years.

These reforms would help improve the image of the country as complaints will be handled by an independent body.

Almost all developed countries have an Ombudsman.

In Australia, it helps investigate the government, public schemes, private education providers and private health insurance while in New Zealand, it protects the rights of whistleblowers, and monitors detention camps and disability conventions. It also investigates complaints against state agencies and initiates investigations.

In Sweden or New Zealand, ombudsmen are government officials appointed to receive and investigate complaints made by individuals against abuses or capricious acts of public officials.

We are now more open to such a concept,

## Why check the police only?

I READ with interest the government's decision to set up the Independent Police Complaints and Misconduct Commission (IPCMC) to replace Enforcement Agency Integrity Commission (EAIC). Any mechanism in place to check and balance an organisation is indeed laudable.

Nonetheless, why only specifically for the police department? There are other numerous enforcement agencies in the country where misconduct of officers is also prevalent that needs to be curtailed.

We must take into account that in any big organisation like the police department, there are bound to be black sheep who will tarnish the organisation. Admittedly, the police fall very low in the corruption index but to set up IPCMC solely for the police is rather demoralising for the more than 100,000 members of the force.

A commission of such kind must cover all the enforcement agencies, the Customs, Road Transport Department, Fire and Rescue Department and others.

We appreciate the new government's efforts to rid the country of corruption and provide efficient service to the public but it is hoped that the government will reconsider the move to introduce a commission to cover all agencies.

**DATUK WEE BENG GEE**  
Petaling Jaya

## Main causes of bad debts

I AGREE with Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad that the defaulters of the National Higher Education Fund (PTPTN) are embarrassing and should feel ashamed of themselves.

But as someone who has spent most of his career as a debt collections manager and trainer, I find bad debts are not caused solely by the debtors. There are two main causes:

1. Poor credit assessment at point of entry. The wrong people are given credit.

2. Poor senior management support for collection efforts. For example: Senior management not wanting to be tough, to "let it slide this month", to avoid bad press and complaints, to be "nice". These weak actions teach debtors not to pay.

You can't always blame the debtors if the management created the problem.

But fixing a bad debt problem is easy. First, you need senior management courage to set the credit and bad debt expectations.

Second, management must get out of the way and allow the collectors to collect – by all legal means possible. Then watch the money roll in.

**STEVE COYLE**  
Ampang

with the Ombudsman for Financial Services having already started on Oct 1, 2016.

Bank Negara Malaysia gave its approval for the new body under the Financial Services Act 2013 and Islamic Financial Services Act 2013.

As an independent redress mechanism for financial consumers, it will provide a fair and efficient avenue for financial consumers to resolve disputes against financial service providers.

Under the existing system being practised in other countries, the ombudsmen could either be appointed by the government or Parliament.

We are looking forward to seeing how this system could be implemented to bring about the institutional reforms which should make all our government institutions truly independent and professional to serve the desired objectives.

**TAN SRI LEE LAM THYE**  
Senior vice-chairman  
Malaysia Crime Prevention Foundation

## Your views



**SMS** If you want to have your say immediately, use your cellphone. SMS your comments to The Star on topics and issues related to general news, business and sports (include name/ pseudonym): Type STAR NW (or BZ or SP) followed by the message (of up to 140 characters) and send to 39993. This is a free service. However, normal mobile operators' network charges apply.

## &gt; Get well, fighter

It is sad to hear that our badminton ace Datuk Lee Chong Wei has cancer. I hope he will continue with the recommended treatment. And consume more vegetables and fruits and have a positive attitude. Being a survivor myself, I know it is difficult at first but with support from family and friends, all will be well. We wish our Datuk a speedy recovery. — MAM

Datuk Lee Chong Wei, speedy recovery. May you be blessed with kind doctors to help you as time is of the essence in the fight against cancer.

The nation's worst-kept sporting secret is out. We are sad and praying for your speedy recovery. Never mind if we will not see your smashes in court. Just get well and be a mentor to the budding shuttlers. — Beatle No.5

Be well on the road to recovery soon, Lee Chong Wei! We know you are raring to get back to action. The nation and world await your return earnestly! — Lee Hui Seng

The nation feels sad for Datuk Lee Chong Wei. He is a great badminton player in this era. He has brought fame to our country. Together we pray for his speedy recovery. — Subra

## &gt; Harmful straws

All plastic straws must be banned in the whole country to protect the environment. Let's begin in schools. Teach the students that plastic straw use could harm the environment and kill marine life. Let's drink without straws. — N.V. Subbarow

## &gt; Just can it

A video of the public caning of the women is being circulated through WhatsApp. Hope the women are being counselled on this shocking turn of events. Public caning should be reserved for people who grievously hurt others. — Esther

## &gt; Just do it

The Penang government will never get everyone's approval for the LRT and new highways. Just do it! The majority will accept. — Jack

## &gt; 80% is good enough

The Public Service Department grants 80% sponsorship for students to study abroad and that is good enough. Please be practical and do not whine for a full 100% with our current financial standing. — Kickdebatfella

## &gt; Stop the sale

How many more lives to lose before sale of illicit liquor is decisively eradicated? The authorities need political will to get rid of this menace. — Jhonnlie Bleu

## &gt; Stop the spillover

Section 17 PJ brand new "condo" market. Stall water overflowing onto public road. All stall owners should be fined due to clogging.

# A cog that's inter-connected

MUCH has been said about the civil service in recent days and some even alleged that it has gone off its trajectory as an impartial and independent body. But was there ever such an impartial civil service in the first place? A cursory historical insight will be sufficient to shed light on the matter.

The Reid Commission which was set up to recommend a form of Constitution for an independent Malaya stressed that "... the first essential for ensuring an efficient administration is that the political impartiality of the Public Service should be recognised and safeguarded". And promotion should be based on publicly recognised principles.

Its proposals were accepted with certain modifications and became Part X of the Federal Constitution with the powers of appointment, confirmation, promotion, transfer and discipline of civil servants vested in and exercised by the relevant independent service commissions.

Over the years, however, Part X saw a raft of changes – some were amended and certain new clauses added that have the cumulative effect of whittling down the powers of the service commissions.

Article 144, which speaks of the functions of the service commissions, saw two new clauses added, namely 5A and 5B; the latter with far-reaching implications as all the powers of the Public Services Commission (PSC) or the Education Service Commission, apart from the power of first appointment to the permanent or pensionable establishment, may be exercised by a board appointed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and "... such power or function shall as long as it remains a power or function to be

exercised by the board, cease to be exercisable by the said Commission".

Arising from clause 5B, the Public Services Promotion Board Regulations, 1967 and the Public Services Disciplinary Board Regulations, 1967, with their respective boards comprising serving officers, came into effect. Consequently, clause 5B dramatically turned the civil service to a great degree into a self-regulating body managed by its top officers.

Understandably, these changes have resulted in allegations of nepotism and patronage, particularly on promotion.

It is understandable and necessary that the government has to have direct control of the civil service which is responsible for the day-to-day running of the administration and in the formulation, determination and implementation of government policies.

The civil service can make or break any government, it being the crucial cog in the administrative structure. Hence, the government has to have a say in discipline and promotion. A wise government will knead the civil service dough well to its shape and liking – that is simple logic as any sane businessman would not allow his employees to run his business without a say in their performance, business plan, etc.

Concomitant with such changes, the once-humble Federal Establishment Office was dramatically turned into a mammoth body to become the powerful Public Service Department (PSD) or better known by its Malay acronym, JPA. It has its tentacles in every aspect of public administration including, since 1976, the drawing up of salaries and perks in the civil service. Previously, the government had set up inde-

pendent commissions to study and recommend the remuneration structures for the civil service.

Moreover, there has always been a symbiotic relationship between the PSD and the PSC, which is the most important of the service commissions, with the largest number of government employees in its jurisdiction.

It has been the tradition to appoint the immediate retiring head of the PSD to become the chairman of the PSC. And this has invariably led to opinions that they are like Siamese twins – one the alter ego of the other with the same mindset!

In such a circumstance, the concept of an independent commission overseeing the civil service, or what little is left of it, is indeed debatable. Besides, most members of the PSC are former senior civil servants.

Incidentally, the PSC chairman is also the chairman of the Judicial and Legal Service Commission while the Minister responsible for police affairs chairs the Police Service Commission and the Minister of Defence the Armed Forces Council. Such appointments are provided for in the Federal Constitution.

Isn't it a myth to say that the service commissions and the civil service are independent and impartial bodies? Indeed, such a debate is endless and futile. But what is more important is to ensure that the civil service functions with great skills, honesty, efficiency, and is incorruptible.

A final word on the PSC – its English-language website is badly written with grammatical errors!

NG PENG KONG  
Kuala Lumpur

## Stop those who hog parking lots

I REFER to the report "Cops: Standing in a parking spot to 'reserve' it can cost you RM2,000 or even jail time" in *The Star Online* on Sept 21.

The day before, the Facebook page of the Royal Malaysia Police states that it is against the law to physically place oneself in a parking lot to prevent other vehicles from using it.

Anyone who attempts to "reserve" a parking spot can be fined up to RM2,000 or even sentenced to six months' jail. Those who direct a driver to park or reserve a parking spot is deemed to have violated Section 50(3) of the Road Transport Act 1987.

If enforcement agencies such as the police and Road Transport Department had been actively enforcing this law, the public would have been made aware and less likely to reserve parking lots by occupying them.

If city hall or municipal council enforcement officers are not empowered to enforce this law, then the Act must be amended to include them, as they are often found patrolling the streets.



City hall and municipal councillors seem oblivious to traffic cones, used tyres, old chairs and other unsightly items that are placed on roadside parking lots to deny motorists from using them.

Tables and chairs are not only obstructing five-foot-ways, but at some food outlets, they have also been spread on sidewalks and even parking lots meant for cars.

Lack of enforcement has given the impression that city hall or municipal council officers are on the take.

In Kuala Lumpur, reserved lots are open for public use on Sundays and public holidays, but many businesses have prevented others from using by locking the metal pole installed at the centre.

If workshops for car repairs, tyre changes and accessory installations are allowed to operate in the city or town, they should be made to pay for all the parking lots fronting or surrounding their premises, as motorists attempting to park in any of these lots would be warned or chased away.

If hijackings of public spaces such as parking lots, sidewalks and five-foot-ways are allowed to continue, such open displays would reflect badly on the authorities, as they are perceived by the public as poor enforcement or corruption.

Y.S. CHAN  
Kuala Lumpur

## Make sodomy a crime under sexual harassment law

THE government may consider putting matters relating to sodomy crime under the proposed sexual harassment law, instead of maintaining it under the Penal Code (Act 574) as is the case presently. This is due to the concern put forward by some people that such Penal Code is no longer effective in dealing with the matter in our country.

Sexual harassment is not only confined to small acts of harassment through words or minor touching, it can also involve a high level of harassment like physical sexual attack on the victim. Any act of physical sexual attack can be considered sexual harassment and this includes molestation, sodomy as well as rape.

As long as the act is sexual in nature and done without having any real consent, it can be categorised as sexual harassment. The words "real consent" here need to be further examined by the prosecutor once the sexual harassment case is brought to court.

But the question is whether the victim really has consented to the offence in the first place. Some victims might have verbally consented to

the offence committed but without having any intention to.

This could happen due to the fact that the act was carried out under duress or coercion. For example, the perpetrator could be the victim's employer, as such the victims might have no choice but to give their "insincere consent" to the act. If this happens, the person will become a victim of sexual harassment.

As such, the government can consider putting sodomy offence under the proposed sexual harassment law.

For nearly 20 years, several NGOs have been pushing for the law. The Joint Action Group for Gender Equality (JAG) has been campaigning for the specific legislation of sexual harassment.

Way back in 2001, JAG submitted a draft of a sexual harassment law in the hope that the government would take concrete action towards this serious offence at the workplace.

From the Human Resources Ministry to the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry, consultations, meetings and discus-

sions on the legislation of sexual harassment were held with NGOs and employers' federations. But all this came to naught until today.

As such, it is very important for the government to take the issue more seriously and push forward with the law in order to protect the victims of such hideous crime.

However, all the existing laws have their weaknesses and limitations and can't address the highly complex and sensitive issue of sexual harassment effectively and efficiently. Therefore, having a stand-alone law on such crime is vital to put an end to the matter.

Dr MUZAFFAR SYAH MALLOW  
Faculty of Syariah and Law  
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia



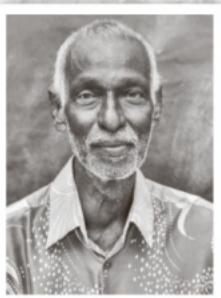
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- Obituary • Condolences
- Acknowledgements
- Requiems • Memoriam

## OBITUARY



**A. Mottan @ Nadarajan, AMN, PPN**  
Ex-IMR Staff  
Ex-Assistant Secretary MIC, WP

Passed away peacefully on  
23th September 2018

Leaving behind loved ones.

Funeral services will be held on 11.00am  
(Tuesday) 25.09.18 at No. 6, Jalan 8,  
Taman Selayang, Batu Caves,  
68100 Selangor thereafter to  
Cheras Crematorium for cremation.

Contact:  
Mr Venugopal 019-2821009  
Dr Kannamah @ Selvi 016-2128627

## OBITUARY



**THERESA DAISY JOSEPH**  
- PPN  
(Ex-Blood Bank-GHKL)  
(MCC Woman Chairperson)

Passed away peacefully today leaving behind

**Daughter:** Adeline Joseph

**Siblings:**  
Josephine Pillai (Dec's) Spouses:  
Peter Joseph (Dec's) Krishna Pillai (Dec's)  
Michael Joseph Kulanayagi Elisa  
Vanitha Joseph

Nephews, nieces and grandnephews / nieces  
and great-grandchildren

Cortege leaves residence No. 25, Jalan Bunga Matahari 3, Taman Maju Jaya, Pandan Indah,  
56100 Selangor on Wednesday 26/9/18  
at 10.00am to Sacred Heart Church for funeral  
service at 11.00am and thence for cremation  
at Jalan Kuari Crematorium Cheras.

Tel: Richard 016-3017230 /  
Vanitha 019-550 9448

## OM SRI SAI RAM



**ROHAN MENON S/O DR. RADHAKRISHNAN**  
BENTONG  
Born: 25-7-1980  
Departed: 24-9-1993

*A son so beautiful and loving  
With a heart so full of giving  
Mature and wise beyond his years  
Left happy memories to bring on the tears  
Ordinary folks remember you even now  
Twenty five long years have flown  
It doesn't matter how long you live  
What matters most is how you live  
You are a testimony to this, your legacy  
Chintu, we are beholden to celebrate your life  
Merits of many lifetimes, to be born to us  
Grateful beyond measure despite the loss.*

Amma, Acha, Brothers & Sister

## 16th Day Prayer (KARUMAKKIRIYAI CEREMONY)



**BALASINGAM S/O RAMAIAH**  
(Staff of Tuanku Jaafar Power Station, Port Dickson)

Born: 12th September 1962

Departed: 11th September 2018

*Our heartfelt gratitude to all relatives, TNB Port Dickson Management and Staff and friends for their kind prayers, love, presence, assistance, messages of condolence, concern and moral support during our recent bereavement.*

16th day Prayers Karumakkiriyai will be held on Tuesday 25th September 2018 from 8.01pm at No 175, Lorong Anggerik 8, Jalan Anggerik 2, Bandar Sunggala, Port Dickson; followed by final rites at Port Dickson (4.00 am) and lunch by 12.00 noon on Wednesday 26th September 2018 at above address.

Deeply missed and mourned by:

**Wife:** KARPAI @ CHANDRA

**Daughter:** NESHALINEE BALASINGAM **Son-In-Law:** GOPI MAHATHEVAN  
**Grand Daughter:** ANUSHREE GOPI

**Sisters:** SELVAMBAL Brother-In-Law: LATE GANESAN  
MUTTUKANNU (ACHI) LATE MAMANDI  
NEELAVATHY LATE JAYAKUMAR  
TAMILMANI RAMACHANDRAN

**Brothers:** GANESAN Sister-In-Law: VASANTHI  
RAMACHANDRAN DIONG MEE LEE

Nieces, nephews, relatives and friends.

*Kindly treat this as our personal invitation.*

Contact:  
016-6270641 (Dinakaran/ 011-36658805 (Sinthu)

## KHALEY AAYE NANAKA SADHI OOTHEY JAYE



**DR.HARBHAJAN SINGH DHILLON**  
s/o Late Harnam Singh &  
Late Mata Kartar Kaur (Seremban)  
Husband of the late Sheila Melagar Singh

Age: 79 years

Deeply missed & forever cherished by

**Children:**  
Inderjit Singh Dhillon  
Charanjeet Singh Dhillon  
Late Paramjeet Singh Dhillon  
Davinder Singh Dhillon  
Davina Kaur Dhillon

**Siblings:**  
Tehal Singh(PJ)  
Naranjan Kaur (S'ban) & Gurbachan Kaur (S'ban)

Grandchildren, a host of family and friends.

Funeral will be held on Monday,  
24th September 2018 at 4pm at Gui Yuan  
Crematorium, Jalan 51A/229 Petaling Jaya. Cortege  
leaves from No.15, SS4A/3, Taman Megah, Kelana  
Jaya, Petaling Jaya at 3pm. Path Da Bhog will be  
held at PJ Gurdwara on 6th October 2018,  
5.00-7.00pm

For details, please contact  
Charanjeet-012-2091332, Davinder: 012-9177768

*Eventhough health limited you physically, your love  
for your children & grandchildren were limitless &  
boundless. Your guiding hand will remain on our  
shoulders, as your unconditional love will remain  
in our hearts forever.*

## 1st Year Anniversary

In loving memory of



**ONG SEW TENG**

Departed On 4th October 2017 (农历八月十五)

*A year has passed but beautiful memories of you  
still linger fresh in our thoughts and forever  
cherished in our hearts.*

*Deeply missed and fondly remembered by  
her husband, mothers-in-law, sons, daughters-in-law,  
godson, goddaughter-in-law, goddaughter, uncles,  
aunties, in-laws, brothers, sister, cousins, nephews,  
nieces, relatives and friends.*

## ATHMA SHANTHI PRAYERS IN LOVING MEMORY



**P.PALANIVELOO @**  
**NADARAJAH**  
( JKR Worker)  
Born 10/4/1949  
Departed 11/9/2018  
Wife: Rajeswary Palaniveloo  
And family requests the  
kind presence of family  
and friends to the **Asthma  
Shanti Prayers** to be held  
on Tuesday, 25th Sept 2018  
at 7.30pm at No.37, Lorong  
Sembilang 8B,D'Anjung  
Teluk Pulau,41100 Selangor  
D.E followed by lunch held  
on 26th Sept 2018.  
*Kindly treat this as our  
personal invitation*  
Contact:  
Mr. Kumandan (016-2502033)  
Mr. Subra (010-2725352)  
Vani (016-3091051)

No words  
can express  
the feeling of  
the dearly missed  
presence  
of a  
departed one.

Memories  
live on in  
a photograph  
a poem  
a living memory  
and/or a  
joyful moment.

And we treasure  
them and  
hold them  
close to  
our hearts.

## 7th Anniversary

In loving memory of the late



**GOH PHEK GIOK (CHENG FUN)**

Called home to be with the Lord on 24th September 2011

Cherished and remembered forever by your loving:

Husband - Yeap Boon Chye,  
Daughter - Yeap Swan Sim,  
Son - Yeap Bu Beng

and their families, relatives and friends.

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## Anderson beats Djokovic to help Team World fight back

**LOS ANGELES:** Kevin Anderson took down Novak Djokovic for a second straight night as Team World rallied to win the final two matches and reel Team Europe's lead back to 7-5 after the second day of the Laver Cup in Chicago.

South African Anderson led the charge by blasting 17 aces past the Serbian world number three in a 7-6 (7-5), 5-7, 10-6 victory that shifted the momentum after the World side had lost the opening two matches of the day to fall 7-1 behind.

"We've had some really close

matches haven't gone our way and I really wanted to put us back in there," Anderson, who lost the Wimbledon final to Djokovic earlier this year, told reporters on Saturday.

"It's not easy playing one of the best players of all time, but what an amazing atmosphere. I felt I played a great match as beating Novak on any stage is great and here in Chicago makes it extra special."

It was another disappointing night for Djokovic, who teamed up with Roger Federer on Friday when the duo suffered a shock doubles

loss to Anderson and Jack Sock.

The 14-time major champion again faltered in a third set, firing a forehand into the net to seal the loss.

"Unfortunately, two lost matches," Djokovic said.

"I gave it my best to beat Kevin. He was playing fantastic."

American Sock and Australian Nick Kyrgios combined to win the doubles match finale, beating Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov and David Goffin of Belgium 6-3, 6-4.

Earlier in the day, Federer and

German Alexander Zverev sparked Europe by winning their singles matches, the Swiss rolling past Kyrgios 6-3, 6-2.

Zverev had to grind out his win against American John Isner, the 21-year-old being forced to save a match point before ultimately prevailing 3-6, 7-6 (8-6), 10-7.

Team Europe needs another six points to retain the title they won in the inaugural competition last year heading into yesterday's final day, when three points are on the line in each of the four matches. — Reuters

## Bertens wins in Korea for third WTA Tour title

**SEOUL:** Kiki Bertens won her third WTA Tour singles title of the season and denied Ajla Tomljanovic her career first with a 7-6 (7-2), 4-6, 6-2 win over the Croatian-born Australian.

The second-seeded Bertens, who won the final six games of the match, was a service break down twice in the first set, but fought back to level and then dominated the tiebreaker thanks to a strong first serve.

Bertens was behind 2-0 in the second set before coming back to take a 4-3 lead with a break, but Tomljanovic broke in the 10th game when Bertens netted a forehand, giving the Australian the second set.

Tomljanovic again took a 2-0 lead in the final set, hitting a blistering forehand to the back of the court on break point that Bertens could only watch streak past her. But the Dutch player again staged a comeback, not dropping another game.

The consolation prize for Tomljanovic, who ended Hsieh Su-wei's eight-match winning streak in the semi-finals, will be a big jump in the rankings.

Tomljanovic, who has lost all three WTA finals she has contested, was ranked in the 900s nearly three years ago due to persistent shoulder problems. But she has moved steadily up in the rankings and is projected to reach at least No. 44 next week, the first time she has been inside the top 50. — AP

# Tokyo Czech-mate

## Pliskova ends winning streak of Japan's Osaka

**TOKYO:** Naomi Osaka's dominant run came to end on Sunday in a 6-4, 6-4 loss to fourth-seeded Karolina Pliskova in the final of the Pan Pacific Open.

Playing in her first tournament since upsetting Serena Williams to win the US Open on Sept 8, third-seeded Osaka hadn't dropped a set previous to yesterday's final but was frustrated from the outset by the big-serving Czech player.

Pliskova came into yesterday's final having won her last four dating to the Brisbane International in January 2017 – and kept that streak alive while putting an end to Osaka's 10-match winning streak.

Pliskova needed three dramatic sets in each of her matches to reach her second final of the season.

"I was just happy it didn't go to a third set," Pliskova said.

"Naomi was playing so good all tournament but I think she was a little bit tired today."

Osaka started well with a pair of aces to win the opening game but Pliskova won her first break point of the match and took a 3-2 lead.

The 20-year-old local favourite was barely tested in her first three matches of the tournament but faced a much sterner challenge against Pliskova.

The frustration boiled over when Osaka double faulted in the ninth game of the second set to set up Pliskova's second break. The 20-year-old tossed her racket to the ground before collecting her composure, but it was too late.

Pliskova broke Osaka for a second time to go up 5-4 and then



**Victor and vanquished:** Winner Karolina Pliskova (right) posing with loser Naomi Osaka after the women's singles final of the Pan Pacific tennis tournament in Tokyo yesterday. — Reuters

hammered her sixth ace to secure her 11th career title.

It was the second time Osaka came up short in the tournament. Two years ago, Osaka lost in the final to Caroline Wozniacki, this year's top-seeded player who was eliminated by Camila Giorgi in the second round.

Osaka has been in the spotlight both on and off the court since arriving back in Japan after her historic win in New York.

Despite being encouraged by the sold-out crowd at Tachikawa Arena, Osaka wasn't able to stage a comeback. She finished with 26 unforced errors and admitted to being

exhausted after the match.

"I've literally never felt more tired in my entire life," Osaka said.

"To play the final of the US Open and then to come here, I think I did pretty well. So if there is anything I can take from this it is that I am proud of myself." — AP

## Marquez moves 72 points clear after win at Aragon GP

### RESULTS

**MotoGP:** 1. Marc Marquez (Spa) Honda 41:55.949, 2. Andrea Dovizioso (Ita) Ducati 0.648 seconds behind, 3. Andrea Iannone (Ita) Suzuki 1.259, 4. Alex Rins (Spa) Suzuki 2.638, 5. Dani Pedrosa (Spa) Honda 5.274, 6. Aleix Espargaro (Spa) Aprilia 9.396, 7. Danilo Petrucci (Ita) Ducati Pramac 14.285, 8. Valentino Rossi (Ita) Yamaha 15.199, 9. Jack Miller (Aus) Ducati Pramac 16.375, 10. Maverick Vinales (Spa) Yamaha 22.457.

**Leading overall standings:** 1. Marc Marquez (Spa) Honda 246 points, 2. Andrea Dovizioso (Ita) Ducati 174, 3. Valentino Rossi (Ita) Yamaha 159, 4. Jorge Lorenzo (Spa) Ducati 130, 5. Maverick Vinales (Spa) Yamaha 130, 6. Cal Crutchlow (Bri) LCR Honda 119, 7. Danilo Petrucci (Ita) Ducati Pramac 119, 8.

Marquez said.

"I put the soft rear tyre because during the weekend every time I put the hard I felt okay, but I didn't

Johann Zarco (Fra) Yamaha Tech3 112, 9. Andrea Iannone (Ita) Suzuki 108, 10. Alex Rins (Spa) Suzuki 92.

**Moto2:** 1. Brad Binder (Rsa) KTM 39:59.247, 2. Francesco Bagnaia (Ita) Kalex 1.526, 3. Lorenzo Baldassari (Ita) Kalex 2.055.

**Leading overall standings:** 1. Francesco Bagnaia (Ita) Kalex 234pts, 2. Miguel Oliveira (Por) KTM 215, 3. Brad Binder (Rsa) KTM 144.

**Moto3:** 1. Jorge Martin (Spa) Honda 37:49.030, 2. Marco Bezzecchi (Ita) KTM 5.984, 3. Enea Bastianini (Ita) Honda 6.045.

**Leading overall standings:** 1. Jorge Martin (Spa) Honda 191pts, 2. Marco Bezzecchi (Ita) KTM 178, 3. Fabio di Giannantonio (Ita) Honda 150.

feel good.

"Sometimes I put the hard to be safe, but today I said, 'okay, I'll take a risk'. I was riding really good, real-

ly smooth in the beginning.

"I was able to follow Andrea in a good way, and we were fighting in the end, a great fight."

Suzuki's Andrea Iannone briefly threatened to make it a three-way fight for first place but settled for third ahead of Alex Rins.

Lorenzo crashed for the second race in a row after drifting wide in the first corner, and was left with a dislocated toe.

Dovizioso, who started second on the grid, had a slender lead over Marquez after Lorenzo's crash, with a bunch of riders close behind, but the two leaders began to pull away after the halfway mark. — Reuters

## Thiem and Klizan finale

**ST PETERSBURG:** Martin Klizan's perfect record in ATP finals will be tested by top-seeded Dominic Thiem in the St Petersburg Open decider.

Klizan is 6-0 in finals, including a win in St Petersburg six years ago, and the Slovak is coming off a victory at the Austrian Open last month.

Klizan ended Stan Wawrinka's latest bid on Saturday for a first title since his return from a knee injury. Klizan bounced back from losing the first set of their semi-final to beat Wawrinka 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

Thiem defeated Roberto Bautista Agut, the big-hitting Austrian firing in 15 aces on his way to reaching his fifth final of the season.

Thiem is 10-7 in career finals and 2-2 this season, most recently losing the Roland Garros final to Rafael Nadal. — AP

## Joshua overpowers Povetkin to retain world heavyweight title

**LONDON:** Britain's Anthony Joshua retained his world heavyweight titles by inflicting the first stoppage defeat of Alexander Povetkin's professional career with a ruthless seventh-round finish at Wembley Stadium.

A previously close contest turned in Joshua's favour decisively on Saturday when he sent the Russian crashing to the canvas with a straight right hand and left hook.

Povetkin gamely beat the count but Joshua piled in before referee Steve Gray stopped the contest at one minute and 59 seconds of the

seventh round.

Victory saw Joshua extend his unbeaten professional record to 22 wins from 22 fights, with 21 knockouts in front of a raucous home crowd.

"Povetkin is a very tough challenger and he proved it tonight," Joshua told Sky Sports.

"I realised he was strong to the head but weak to the body. "I got my knockout streak back, I found my right hand again."

Joshua was putting his International Boxing Federation (IBF), World Boxing Association

(WBA) and World Boxing Organisation (WBO) belts on the line against 39-year-old Russian challenger Povetkin.

This fight was the latest in a line of professional heavyweight title bouts, featuring the likes of Muhammad Ali, Joe Frazier and George Foreman, between two former Olympic champions, with Joshua having won gold in front of his home crowd at the 2012 London Games – eight years after Povetkin stood atop the podium in Athens.

Joshua, 28, had a significant height and reach advantage of sev-

eral inches over Povetkin.

Friday's weigh-in also confirmed a significant size difference, with Joshua tipping the scales at 17 stone 8 pounds compared to Povetkin's 15st 12lbs.

This fight saw Joshua returning to the scene of arguably his greatest triumph, an 11th-round stoppage of former champion Vladimir Klitschko last year.

Klitschko was the only man to have previously inflicted a blemish on Povetkin's now 36-fight record, with a points win back in 2013. — AFP



## Herbert takes two-shot lead in Portugal

**VILAMOURA:** Australia's Lucas Herbert (pic) will take a two-shot lead into the final round of the Portugal Masters after carding a seven-under 64 at the Dom Pedro Victoria Golf Course.

Herbert's score of 19-under on Saturday in Vilamoura, his best after 54 holes on the European Tour, put him ahead of Englishman Tom Lewis, who struck his lowest European Tour round of 61.

Herbert had a one-shot lead after the first round and found himself in a three-way tie for first place after day two with England's Eddie Pepperell and Oliver Fisher, who had carded the first 59 round in European Tour history.

The Australian had five birdies to turn in 30 on Saturday and got two more – on the 11th and 15th – before a bogey on the par-three 16th and a birdie on the penultimate hole.

Pepperell signed for three-under and a share of third place with Sweden's Marcus Kinhult, while Fisher was a further shot back in a group of three in fifth after a two-under 69.

Spain's Sergio Garcia, who will represent Europe at next week's Ryder Cup, returned a three-under for a share of 27th place in a group with eight other players on nine-under. — Reuters

## Nesbitt hits a historic 59 in Brasil Open

**CARY (North Carolina):** Canadian Drew Nesbitt carded the first 59 in PGA Tour Latinoamerica history at the Brasil Open.

Nesbitt recorded the feat in the second round at Porto Feliz, including a hole-in-one in a score that was a 20-stroke improvement on his opening round.

"My goal obviously was just to make the cut," Nesbitt said.

"Shooting 59 was absolutely incredible. This is a golfer's dream to shoot a sub-60 round and to do it on this Tour especially was that much more special."

Nesbitt's round could hardly have started any better, holing out from 100 yards for eagle at the par-four 10th, and he added another eagle at the par-five 11th.

The left-hander aced the three-second with a nine-iron from 159 yards.

"I knew I could just put a good swing on a nine-iron, and anything that landed behind the hole with any amount of spin would come back toward the flag," he said.

"I happened to land it in a perfect spot, with the perfect amount of spin, and it found its way into the hole."

Nesbitt's 59 came a day after the European Tour also had its first 59, notched by Englishman Oliver Fisher in the Portugal Masters second round. — Reuters

# Out of the Woods?

Tiger on the verge of ending five-year victory drought



**Ardent fan:** A man in a tiger suit watches Tiger Woods on the fourth tee during the third round of the PGA Tour Championship golf tournament in Atlanta on Saturday. — AP

"This is a spot I'd much rather be in than certainly four or five back."

And having won 106 tournaments around the globe, Woods was quizzed if there was any further room for a 107th victory prize.

"I am sure there would be room somewhere in the house if I happened to go on and win this event," he said.

Woods' last victory came 1,875 days ago in August 2013 when he captured the WGC-Bridgestone Invitational.

The 14-time Major winner is a

two-time former Tour Championship winner and enjoys a remarkable record of winning 54 of 57 PGA Tour events when holding the 54-hole lead.

The 42-year-old returned to golf this season after missing most of the previous two years with a debilitating back injury.

However, Woods has progressed steadily during his comeback season, leading the British Open during the final round in July before finishing second at last month's PGA Championship.

He fired a 62 earlier this month

and has also done enough to force himself into the USA team for next week's Ryder Cup.

Behind Woods, McIlroy is lurking menacingly after carding a four-under 66.

Overnight leader Rose remains in the hunt but will look to improve on the final day after a two-under 68.

Kyle Stanley and Spain's Jon Rahm are a further three shots back on six-under, six strokes behind Woods.

Paul Casey, Tony Finau and Billy Horschel are seven off the lead on five-under. — AFP

## RESULTS WORLDWIDE

### GOLF

#### PORTUGAL MASTERS

**Leading third-round scores (Bri-Irl unless stated):** 194: Lucas Herbert (Aus) 63-67-64; 196: Tom Lewis 72-63-61;

198: Marcus Kinhult (Swe) 68-65-65; Eddie Pepperell 64-66-68; 199: Mikko Korhonen (Fin) 66-69-64; Renato Paratore (Ita) 66-66-67; Oliver Fisher 71-59-69; 200: Pep Angles (Spa) 65-65-65; Li Haotong (Chi) 65-67-68; 201: Andy Sullivan 69-66-66; Raphael Jacquelin (Fra) 66-68-67; Jason Scrivener (Aus) 66-67-68; Shane Lowry 64-69-68; Adrien Saddier (Fra) 66-66-69; 202: Ryan Fox (Nzl) 70-68-64; Jordan Smith 68-67-67; Kim Koivu (Fin) 66-68-68; Matt Wallace 64-67-71; 203: Matthew Baldwin 69-68-66; Nicolas Colaerts (Bel) 68-69-66; Gonzalo Fernandez-Castano (Spa) 67-69-67; Lucas Bjerregaard (Den) 68-68-67; Lee

Soo-min (Kor) 67-69-67; Ashley Chesters 66-70-67; Richard Sterne (Rsa) 69-66-68; Ricardo Gouveia (Por) 67-66-70; Selected 204: Sergio Garcia (Spa) 66-70-68; 205: Thorbjorn Olesen (Den) 68-69-68.

#### US PGA TOUR CHAMPIONSHIP

**Leading third-round scores (US unless stated):** 198: Tiger Woods 65-68-65; 201: Rory McIlroy (Nir) 67-68-66; Justin Rose (Eng) 66-67-68; 204: Kyle Stanley 69-68-67; Jon Rahm (Spa) 68-68-68; 205: Paul Casey (Eng) 68-71-66; Tony Finau 67-67-67; Billy Horschel 71-65-69; 206: Aaron Wise 70-69-67; Dustin Johnson 69-70-67; Gary Woodland 66-72-68; Xander Schauffele 68-70-68; Justin Thomas 67-69-70; 207: Webb Simpson 69-70-68; 208: Tommy Fleetwood 69-69-70; 209: Hideki Matsuyama (Jpn) 72-66-71; 210: Marc Leishman (Aus) 73-69-68; Patton Kizzire 71-71-68; Jason Day (Aus) 68-73-69; Rickie Fowler

65-72-73; 212: Bryson DeChambeau 71-75-66; Cameron Smith (Aus) 70-73-69; Kevin Na 72-68-72; Patrick Cantlay 71-65-76; 214: Brooks Koepka 69-78-67; Francesco Molinari (Ita) 70-75-69; 215: Keegan Bradley 73-73-69; Bubba Watson 70-72-73; 218: Patrick Reed 72-74-72; 221: Phil Mickelson 73-72-76.

#### TENNIS

#### KOREAN OPEN

**Final:** Kiki Bertens (Hol) bt Ajla Tomljanovic (Aus) 7-6 (7-2), 4-6, 6-2.

#### LAVER CUP

**Europe 7 World 5:** Alexander Zverev (Europe) bt John Isner (World) 3-6, 7-6 (8-6), 10-7 (10-point tie-break); Roger

Federer (Europe) bt Nick Kyrgios (World) 6-3, 6-2; Kevin Anderson (World) bt Novak Djokovic (Europe) 7-6, 5-7, 10-6; Jack Sock-Nick Kyrgios (World) bt Grigor Dimitrov-David Goffin (Europe) 6-3, 6-4.

#### METZ OPEN

**Semi-finals:** Matthias Bachinger (Ger) bt Kei Nishikori (Jpn) 2-6, 6-4, 7-5; Gilles Simon (Fra) bt Radu Albot (Mda) 6-3, 6-1.

#### PAN PACIFIC OPEN

**Final:** Karolina Pliskova (Cze) bt Naomi Osaka (Jpn) 6-4, 6-4.

#### SAINT PETERSBURG OPEN

**Semi-finals:** Dominic Thiem (Aut) bt Roberto Bautista Agut (Spa) 6-4, 6-3; Martin Klizan (Svk) bt Stanislas Wawrinka (Swi) 4-6, 6-3, 7-5.

# Rodriguez stars as Bayern maintain perfect Bundesliga start

**BERLIN:** James Rodriguez shone for Bayern Munich, scoring a goal and winning a penalty, as the German champions made it four wins from their first four Bundesliga games with a 2-0 victory at Schalke to stay top.

Rodriguez struck with just eight minutes gone at Gelsenkirchen's Veltins Arena, expertly slipping his marker, former Bayern teammate Sebastian Rudy, to power home a header from Joshua Kimmich's cross.

It was a sublime effort which left Schalke with too much to do, as they ended up suffering a fourth consecutive league defeat after finishing second last season, while Bayern are the only team with a 100 per

## RESULTS

Hertha Berlin 4 Moenchengladbach 2, Hoffenheim 1 Dortmund 1, Wolfsburg 1 Freiburg 3, Nuremberg 2 Hannover 0, Augsburg 2 Bremen 3, Schalke 0 Bayern 2.  
Leading standings: Bayern 12, Hertha Berlin 10, Dortmund 8, Bremen 8, Mainz 7.

cent record.

The 27-year-old Colombian, making his first league start this season, should have scored his second when he squandered a golden chance five minutes after the break.

Veteran winger Franck Ribery sliced through Schalke's defence and squared with goalkeeper Ralf Faehrmann beaten, but Rodriguez slumped to the turf, head in hands, after firing wide with the goal at his mercy.

To compound Schalke's problems, United States international Weston McKennie, 20, was carried off with a leg injury on 50 minutes.

Rodriguez then effectively settled the matter on 63 minutes after a foul in the area by Alessandro Schoepf.

Star striker Robert Lewandowski stepped up and smashed home the resulting spot-kick to make it 2-0.

Schalke had little to offer and only a superb save from Faehrmann kept out a long-range free-kick from David Alaba, which curled wickedly 12 minutes from time.

"We made a superb start and in the end deserved the win," said Bayern's ex-Schalke midfielder Leon Goretzka. — AFP



**Run for it:** Bayern Munich's Franck Ribery and Schalke's Salif Sane vying for the ball in the Bundesliga match in Gelsenkirchen on Saturday. — AFP

# More VAR drama

Late Brozovic winner rescues Inter in Genoa thriller

**MILAN:** Croatia's Marcelo Brozovic grabbed a late winner as Inter Milan followed their Champions League heroics against Tottenham with a 1-0 Serie A win at Sampdoria as tensions ran high during a game in which three goals were disallowed.

World Cup runner-up Brozovic scored four minutes into injury time in Genoa on Saturday after Radja Nainggolan and Kwadwo Asamoah both had goals ruled out for Inter, with Sampdoria's Gregoire Defrel also denied by VAR.

Inter Milan coach Luciano Spalletti was also banished from the touchline by officials for his wild celebration of the winning goal.

"I turned towards the camera to shout 'goal' and the fourth official told me I had done it with too much force," Spalletti told streaming service DAZN.

"It was too important a goal, like a liberation, and they interpreted it

RESULTS & STANDINGS						
	PARMA	2	CAGLIARI	0	FIorentina	3
	FOIRENTINA	3	SPAL	0	SAMPDORIA	0
	SAMPDORIA	0	INTER	1		
	P	W	D	L	F	A Pts
JUVENTUS	4	4	0	0	9	4 12
FIORENTINA	5	3	1	1	11	3 10
SASSUOLO	5	3	1	1	12	8 10
NAPOLI	4	3	0	1	6	6 9
SPAL	5	3	0	2	4	4 9
SAMPDORIA	5	2	1	2	9	3 7
INTER	5	2	1	2	6	4 7
PARMA	5	2	1	2	6	5 7
GENOA	3	2	0	1	6	6 6
LAZIO	4	2	0	2	3	4 6
ROMA	4	1	2	1	7	7 5
TORINO	4	1	2	1	4	4 5
UDINESE	4	1	2	1	4	4 5
CAGLIARI	5	1	2	2	4	7 5
ATALANTA	4	1	1	2	7	6 4
AC MILAN	3	1	1	1	5	5 4
EMPOLI	5	1	1	3	4	6 4
BOLOGNA	4	0	1	3	0	5 1
FROSINONE	4	0	1	3	0	10 1
CHIEVO	4	0	2	2	5	11 -1

The three points give Inter just their second win of the Serie A season and move Spalletti's side up to seventh – equal on seven points with Sampdoria – after five games.

Both sides had early chances with Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic saving Fabio Quagliarella's overhead kick, with Asamoah preventing top-scorer Defrel breaking through.

Matias Vecino nodded an Antonio Candreva cross just over the bar.

But there was controversy just before the half-time whistle when Belgian Nainggolan volleyed in from a free-kick.

His goal was disallowed after a long consultation with VAR because captain Mauro Icardi was offside in the build-up.

After the break, Asamoah was also denied because the ball had gone out of play before being pulled back by Danilo D'Ambrosio, while Defrel missed the chance to take sole possession of top spot in the

as something with too much emotional reaction," added Spalletti. "I didn't do anything wrong."

The win followed Inter's 2-1 Champions League comeback victory in the final minutes against Tottenham on Tuesday.

"The team had demonstrated their character in the previous game (Tottenham) and did it again tonight, always remaining in the game and fighting, even with some risk."

"But we are Inter and we have to play until the win."

**I turned towards the camera to shout 'goal' and the fourth official told me I had done it with too much force.**

Luciano Spalletti

**I'm innocent:** Inter Milan manager Luciano Spalletti was banished from the touchline by officials for his wild celebration of the winning goal. — AFP

Serie A scorers' charts when what would have been his fifth goal of the season was ruled out for offside.

Minutes later, Brozovic made no mistake when he collected a deep cross from fellow Croatian Ivan Perisic in the fourth added minute, beating Emil Audero in the Sampdoria goal with a low, deflecting strike.

"I think this week will be the turning point in our season," said Brozovic.

Earlier Fiorentina moved second with a 3-0 win in Tuscany, spoiling SPAL's promising start to the campaign.

Ferrara outfit SPAL had been riding high in second, three points behind champions Juventus, before the tie in Florence with just one goal conceded in four games.

But Croatian World Cup runner-up Marko Pjaca opened the floodgates after 18 minutes with Serbian defender Nikola Milenkovic heading in a second ten minutes later.

Italian international Federico Chiesa completed the scoring in the 56th minute as Fiorentina bounced back from last week's 1-0 defeat by Napoli to climb to two points behind Juventus. — AFP

**Frustrated Ibrahimovic remains coy on Galaxy future**



**LOS ANGELES:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic (pic) plans to discuss his future with Los Angeles Galaxy chiefs after a frustrating first season in Major League Soccer.

Swedish star Ibrahimovic has made a prolific start to his MLS career, scoring 17 goals in 22 games since joining the Galaxy from Manchester United in March.

However the 36-year-old striker's efforts have not been enough to transform the Galaxy's fortunes, with the club languishing in the bottom half of the Western Conference and struggling to make the playoffs.

Ibrahimovic, who has a contract through the 2019 season, was reluctant to confirm his plans for next year, according to comments in the *Los Angeles Times*.

"I don't know. This I have to discuss," Ibrahimovic said when asked about 2019.

"This is not the moment to talk about that. It's something I'll discuss with the club. What they want, what I want. So let's see."

Ibrahimovic said while he was pleased with his fitness, he was less happy with the Galaxy's results.

"I'm happy, I'm physically strong, I feel good. I'm producing, so I just need to (be) winning games, and then everything is perfect," he said.

"It's easy to talk, but we need to do it."

Ibrahimovic cited the Galaxy's failure to staunch their defence this year as being behind the club's struggles.

So far the club has shipped 59 goals in 29 games, the second worst goals conceded tally in the league.

"Conceding so many goals, you don't win," Ibrahimovic said.

"You cannot win the competition like that. It's difficult, and that comes from everybody, not only the defence." — AFP

## Valverde yet to decide on Barca future despite strong start to the season

**BARCELONA:** Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde has admitted he is not sure if he will still be manager of the club next season.

Valverde's contract expires at the end of the current campaign and he confirmed on Saturday he has an option to extend the deal by another year.

"I have a contract and I have a possibility to extend it a year more," Valverde said.

"The contract is there but we know what can happen in a season and the season is long. You have to see how the team does."

"Everything seems good but we are still in the month of September and we have a lot ahead."

Coaches like Pep Guardiola and Luis Enrique have left Barca in recent years after citing the fatigue involved in managing at the Nou Camp.

"I don't know about exhaustion

or anything like that," Valverde said. "We are still in September, there is plenty of room to feel exhausted, it is only just beginning."

Barcelona won La Liga and the Spanish King's Cup last season in Valverde's first year at the club.

After their shock Champions League exit to Roma in the quarter-finals, however, reports suggested his future was in doubt.

Barca president Josep Maria Bartomeu has said the club will want to know Valverde's position by March.

"I do not remember the deadline but the ideal date to know the future would be about the month of March," Bartomeu told Spanish radio station Onda Cero last week.

"I would like him to continue because we are happy with his work. Just look back at the results and performances of last year."

— AFP



**Keeping his options open:** Barcelona manager Ernesto Valverde's contract expires at the end of the season. — Reuters

## Battling giants



### Asensio scores the winner as Real squeeze past Espanyol

**MADRID:** Real Madrid moved top of La Liga after Marco Asensio's goal proved the difference in a scrappy 1-0 win over Espanyol.

More pressing for Julen Lopetegui will be the defensive slackness on Saturday that made this arguably the least assured of the six competitive games he has overseen so far, including last weekend's draw away to Athletic Bilbao.

There were changes, with Gareth Bale, Marcelo and Dani Carvajal all rested, the latter not even included on the bench, following Real's win over Roma in the Champions League on Wednesday.

But if they gift Atletico Madrid the same chances in the city derby next weekend, they may not find their opponents so generous. Atletico had earlier ground out a 2-0 win away to Getafe.

"The game was nervous and in the last 15 minutes we lacked control," Lopetegui said. "These post-Champions League games are always really dangerous and we know it."

Carvajal's absence meant a debut for Alvaro Odriozola, who joined from Real Sociedad in the summer, while Thibaut Courtois replaced

Keylor Navas to continue Lopetegui's rotation strategy in goal.

Espanyol twice could have scored on the counter-attack. The first sprung from a poor header from Raphael Varane but Pablo Piatti dragged his finish wide.

Soon after they were in again, as Hernan Perez's shot had to be parried by Courtois and Didac Vila's rebound blocked by Casemiro.

The hosts were more impressive going forward and in the 41st minute, they took the lead. Luka Modric's scuffed shot landed kindly at the feet of Asensio and he did brilliantly to harpoon the ball into the far corner.

Referee Mateu Lahoz ruled the goal out for offside but Real were saved by VAR and then later the crossbar, as Borja Iglesias' scooped finish was denied late on.

"We are not going to win 5-0 every game," Varane said.

Atletico's victory was more comfortable and they had Thomas Lemar to thank after the Frenchman scored his first goal for the club and instigated another against Getafe.

The result was all but secure when Getafe's

### RESULTS & STANDINGS

	RAYO	1	ALAVES	5
	EIBAR	1	LEGANES	0
	CELTA VIGO	3	VALLADOLID	3
	GETAFE	0	ATLETICO	2
	REAL MADRID	1	ESPAÑOL	0
	REAL	5	4	1
	BARCELONA	4	4	0
	ALAVES	5	3	1
	CELTA VIGO	5	2	2
	ATLETICO	5	2	2
	ESPAÑOL	5	2	1
	SOCIEDAD	5	2	1
	GETAFE	5	2	1
	EIBAR	5	2	1
	GIRONA	4	2	1
	BILBAO	3	1	2
	BETIS	4	1	2
	LEVANTE	4	1	1
	SEVILLA	4	1	1
	VILLARREAL	4	1	1
	HUESCA	5	1	1
	VALENCIA	4	0	3
	VALLADOLID	5	0	3
	RAYO	4	1	0
	LEGANES	5	0	1
P	P	W	D	L
F	A	Pts		

**Ikone rocket boosts Lille up to second in Ligue 1**



**PARIS:** Jonathan Ikone's (pic) thunderous strike earned Lille a 2-1 victory over Nantes that sent them second in Ligue 1 and maintained their strong start to the new season after narrowly avoiding relegation last term.

Portugal defender Jose Fonte scored his first Lille goal since joining from China's Dalian Yifang in July with a looping header on nine minutes at the Stade Pierre-Mauroy.

Midfielder Ikone doubled Lille's lead with a magnificent goal on 68 minutes, taking a delightful first touch to control a high ball before unleashing a scorching, dipping 25-yard shot past Ciprian Tatarusanu.

Nantes grabbed a consolation through Kalifa Coulibaly as Lille, who finished just above the relegation play-off place last season, won for the fourth time in six games to draw to within two points of defending champions Paris St Germain.

Montpellier climbed to third as Gaetan Laborde's first-half tap-in secured a 1-0 win over Patrick Vieira's Nice, while Toulouse are level on points in fourth following a 0-0 draw at Angers.

"When you play a match at this level, if the opposition wants it more than us it's not a good start," said Vieira, whose side were beaten after back-to-back wins over Lyon and Rennes.

"I didn't like the lack of desire and determination from the team," he added. "It's not a (Mario) Balotelli problem, it's a team one." — AFP

### RESULTS

Lille 2 Nantes 1, St Etienne 2 Caen 1, Reims 0 Dijon 0, Angers 0 Toulouse 0, Montpellier 1 Nice 0, Strasbourg 3 Amiens 1. Leading standings: PSG 15, Lille 13, Montpellier 11, Toulouse 11, Marseille 10.

## Pochettino hails Spurs' mental strength to halt losing streak

**BRIGHTON:** Tottenham Hotspur manager Mauricio Pochettino praised the mentality of his side to grind out a much-needed 2-1 win in sodden conditions at Brighton to halt a run of three straight defeats.

Harry Kane ended a five-game goal drought from the penalty spot and Erik Lamela doubled Tottenham's lead before Anthony Knockaert pulled a late goal back for Brighton.

"The players were suffering a lot. The pressure was high, they wanted to deliver a result for the fans, for themselves, and for us (the coaching staff)," said Pochettino, after the first three-game losing run since he took charge in 2014.

"I think the spirit we showed today was the spirit I wanted to see in the other games."

"I'm so happy with the attitude, the spirit. Then we know very well we have great quality, great players, and we can play amazing football."

Victory moves Spurs back up to fifth in the Premier League, still six points adrift of leaders Liverpool.



**A collective effort:** Tottenham's Harry Kane (centre) shielding the ball from Brighton's Shane Duffy during the Premier League match at the American Express Community Stadium on Saturday. — AFP

Like many of his teammates, England captain Kane has looked jaded from his heroics in winning the Golden Boot at the World Cup in recent weeks.

But he remains deadly from the spot as he hammered home his third goal of the season.

"Today was about mentality, getting around the pitch, pressing high

and harder and I think we did that," said Kane.

"We could have put it to bed and won 3-0 or 4-0 but it's good to get back to winning ways. The gaffer will be pleased and we can build on this."

Pochettino had left Kieran Trippier and Toby Alderweireld at home for Tuesday's 2-1 defeat to Inter Milan in the Champions League, but both were recalled among five changes from the side that lost at the San Siro and had a big impact.

Alderweireld's powerful header from Trippier's corner was brilliantly saved by Mat Ryan early on.

Despite Tottenham's dominance in possession, the Australian international goalkeeper wasn't forced into another save until Spurs took the lead three minutes before half-time.

Referee Chris Kavanagh pointed to the spot when Glenn Murray jumped with his arm above his head to block Trippier's free-kick and Kane sent Ryan the wrong way from the spot. — AFP

## Hearts miss chance to bolster title bid



**GLASGOW:** Hearts dropped their first points in the Scottish Premiership this season as the leaders were held to a goalless draw by Livingston.

Having enjoyed five successive wins, Hearts were left frustrated by missed chances at Tynecastle.

They saw a first-half penalty from Steven Naismith (pic) saved by Liam Kelly, while Craig Wighton nodded wide after the interval when he should have done better.

Hearts are now five points clear of second-placed Hibernian, who won 3-0 at Dundee.

Florian Kamberi capitalised on a superb pass by Martin Boyle to open the scoring before the winger turned from provider to scorer by finishing a slippery run with a fine strike.

Thomas Agyepong made it three with a clinical late strike.

Hamilton's clash with St Mirren was delayed by 10 minutes due to a false fire alarm at Hope Stadium and it was the hosts who better dealt with the distraction as they ran out emphatic 3-0 winners.

Fredrik Brustad opened the scoring by stabbing home after Steven Boyd's shot had initially been saved by Craig Samson.

Mickel Miller notched the second from the penalty spot after Dougie Imrie had been brought down by Jordan Kirkpatrick before the English forward completed the rout with a pinball shot that struck both posts.

Aberdeen beat Motherwell 1-0 thanks to James Wilson's goal. — AFP

## Model Citizens



**Right on target:** Manchester City's Riyad Mahrez (right) rifling a shot in the Premier League match against Cardiff at the Cardiff Stadium on Saturday.  
**Inset:** Pep Guardiola. — AP/Reuters

## It's an exceptional group, Guardiola salutes City

**CARDIFF:** Pep Guardiola insisted it was his players who deserved the spotlight after the Manchester City manager returned to the dugout to inspire a 5-0 thrashing of Cardiff.

Guardiola was back on the touchline in the Welsh capital on Saturday and the champions were back in the old routine after their shock midweek defeat at home by Lyon in the Champions League.

The Spaniard had watched that match from high in the stands as he served out a suspension.

But he played down any significance in being closer to the action as Riyad Mahrez scored twice, his first goals for the club, in an emphatic victory which kept them in touch with the Premier League pace-setters.

"I don't play," said Guardiola, after watching Sergio Aguero, Bernardo Silva and Ilkay Gundogan help his team score five or more goals for the 10th time since he took charge before the 2016-17 season.

"The managers, we are there to be there when they have little doubts, to support them."

"I don't know what's going to happen with these guys. It's the same group, they keep reacting, they are an exceptional group."

"But they know when the situation is not good in terms of results, the closer I am to them. They deserve all my respect. They made me happy the last two seasons, and that's why, always, I will be with them."

City were 3-0 ahead and cruising at half-time, before Mahrez replaced Aguero on the hour mark and scored twice, his first goals since his move from Leicester in July.

The Algerian has only started two Premier League games for the champions and Guardiola admitted he wished he could offer more minutes on the field to both Mahrez and young England hopeful Phil Foden, who also came off the bench in the second half.

"It's good for him to get the first goals," added Guardiola.

"Of course it's important for him. He came here, he's an incredibly talented player. He deserves to play more minutes, like Phil Foden."

"It's a pleasure to watch Phil play football and, of course, Riyad as well."

"But the season is too long and they have to be ready, prepared, because they are going to play a lot of minutes."

City are now only two points behind leaders Liverpool after emphatically banishing any sug-

gestions their European angst might leak into their domestic form.

They toyed with Cardiff for much of a one-sided contest and if they had doubled their scoreline then the Bluebirds, who dropped into the relegation zone, could have had few complaints.

"After a not good result in midweek, we responded with the same level we had for the last 12 or 13 months," Guardiola said.

"The first 20-25 minutes is always complicated, not easy, but after one or two goals immediately it was easier."

For Cardiff manager Neil Warnock, the defeat means they are still seeking their first victory of the campaign.

They also lost full-back Lee Peltier with a dislocated shoulder, which Warnock expects will keep the defender out for a number of months.

Warnock acknowledged the divide in class between the teams and added: "It was a long afternoon. We are finding it difficult at the moment against the top clubs."

"But, like I have said before, it's not going to define our season."

"It will knock our chins to the floor for a bit, but the lads have got to get over this and get on with next week." — AFP

## Burnley get first league win

**LONDON:** Burnley moved off the bottom of the table after their first Premier League win of the season with an emphatic 4-0 victory over Bournemouth.

Czech striker Matej Vydra, making his first start for the club, opened the scoring in the 39th minute and two minutes later the Clarets had doubled their advantage with a close-range finish from Aaron Lennon on Saturday.

Sixth-placed Bournemouth, whose three wins in five games had helped give them 10 points to start to the campaign, had the majority of possession but were finished off after the break.

Substitute Ashley Barnes scored twice for Burnley in the final seven minutes with former Everton wing-man Lennon having a hand in both goals as they moved up to 16th on four points. — Reuters

## Chelsea stumble as West Ham battle to goalless draw at London Stadium

**LONDON:** Chelsea dropped their first points of the season as West Ham held Maurizio Sarri's team to a 0-0 draw at the London Stadium.

Chelsea had won all five of their Premier League matches before the weekend, going toe to toe with Liverpool, who won again on Saturday to make it six wins out of six.

The visitors dominated possession at the home of their London rivals yesterday but failed to create many clear-cut chances and had to deal with West Ham's constant threat on the break.

Olivier Giroud won his battle with Alvaro Morata for a starting spot up front for Chelsea, keeping his place for the second Premier League match in succession.

But Marko Arnautovic, West Ham's leading goalscorer this season, missed out after failing to recover from an injury he sustained against Everton last week.

Chelsea enjoyed more than 70 per cent of possession in the first half but West Ham were dangerous when they were able to break out, Michail Antonio proving a real handful.

After a cagey opening spell, Chelsea established control but the home side could have taken a lead against the run of play just before the half hour.

Felipe Anderson was quick to seize on a loose ball and played in Antonio, who blasted over with his left foot.

That chance breathed new life into the

home crowd and the players and Antonio drew a smart save from Kepa Arrizabalaga in the West Ham goal just two minutes later after a fine run from Andriy Yarmolenko.

As the sun came out at the London Stadium, Chelsea again established control and nearly took the lead when N'Golo Kante headed wide.

The match fell into a similar pattern in the second half, Chelsea searching for openings around the West Ham box but Felipe Anderson and Yarmolenko looked dangerous when the home side broke forward.

The home side dealt well with the threat of Willian and Eden Hazard and Giroud – picked for his more physical threat – struggled to make a big impression on the game.

The Frenchman was replaced 20 minutes into the second half by Morata, who went close to breaking the deadlock moments after coming on only to see Lukasz Fabianski pull off a stunning stop from close range.

But with about 13 minutes to go West Ham had a wonderful chance to win the match, when the unmarked Yarmolenko headed just wide at the far post after a cross by Robert Snodgrass.

Fabianski pulled off another fine save as the clock ticked into injury time, diving to his left to deny substitute Ross Barkley and Willian blazed wide as Chelsea applied intense late pressure. — AFP



**Nowhere to go:** Chelsea's Eden Hazard (in yellow) trying to get past West Ham players during the Premier League match at the London Stadium yesterday. — AFP

# Mour loathing

## I did not like my team: Jose fumes at United draw

**MANCHESTER:** Jose Mourinho was highly critical of the attitude of his Manchester United players after they were held to a 1-1 draw by Wolves at Old Trafford.

Mourinho even claimed he was more pleased with their last home display – the 3-0 defeat to Tottenham – than he was this latest effort.

The United manager saw a run of three consecutive wins, all of them away from Old Trafford, come to an end in lethargic fashion on Saturday.

"Not a good performance, not a good result but a fair result," said Mourinho.

"Wolves, by the way they faced the game, I think they deserve it. They play like I like to play which is like the World Cup final."

"That is the attitude I like my teams to have in every match. We didn't have that. They did. That attitude made a difference."

United looked to have weathered a strong opening by Nuno Espirito Santo's team, most notably when keeper David De Gea made a spectacular save to keep out Willy Boly's goal-bound header from a Joao Moutinho corner.

That save was all the more important as, within seconds, United were in front after Fred

scored his first goal for the club.

French international Paul Pogba touched the ball on skilfully after collecting Conor Coady's headed clearance, and Fred deposited an unstoppable 18-yard shot into the Wolves goal.

But, by the time they equalised seven minutes into the second half, Espirito Santo's team was good value for a goal even if it owed much to poor United defending.

Pogba gave the ball away in midfield, leading to an attack in which Helder Costa beat Luke Shaw far too easily on the United by-line.

His cross found Raul Jimenez who laid the ball off for Moutinho to claim his first goal in English football with a lethal left-foot finish from the edge of the area.

"I expect my team to play better than we did," added Mourinho. "If we had played against Wolves like we did against Tottenham, then I think we would win."

"It is a bit of a contradiction but I'm more disappointed today than I was against Tottenham."

"Against Tottenham we lost the game but I liked very much my team's performance."

"Of course, we had a better result and one point is better than zero. But I did not like

my team."

The Wolves goal, in particular, was a major disappointment and recalled the worrying days of August when United lost consecutive games to Brighton and Spurs, while conceding three times in each.

But Mourinho was more concerned by what he saw as his team's poor attitude as he came close to suffering consecutive home league defeats for the first time in his career.

"I can't explain the difference of attitude because I never had a difference of attitude," he said. "For me it is difficult to explain that."

After throwing on Juan Mata and Anthony Martial as substitutes, United created a handful of late chances with Romelu Lukaku missing the best, heading wide from six yards.

But Wolves had chances of their own to claim a first Old Trafford win in 38 years and, in the dying seconds, substitute Adama Traore burst through only to shoot selfishly over the goal.

"What I want now is to work harder tomorrow than we did before," said Espirito Santo.

"It's a growth, a building of the team. Let's improve, let's get better so we can (be) every week like this." — AFP



## Leaders Leeds' unbeaten run snapped by Birmingham

**LONDON:** Leeds' unbeaten start to the Championship season ended as Birmingham secured their first win of the campaign with a shock 2-1 victory at Elland Road.

Che Adams was the hero for the Midlands side on Saturday as he scored two goals in the opening 30 minutes to inflict a first defeat for Leeds manager Marcelo Bielsa and allow his opposite number Garry Monk a winning return against his former club.

Second place Middlesbrough failed to capitalise as they were held to a goalless draw by Swansea but moved level on points with Leeds at the top of the table.

West Bromwich Albion recorded their fifth straight home win at the Hawthorns with a 2-0 victory over Millwall as goals from Dwight Gayle and Kieran Gibbs helped them move up to third.

Sheffield United surrendered a two-goal lead over bottom side Preston North End but still came away with a 3-2 victory while there was another win for Frank Lampard as Derby County joined Wigan Athletic in the top six.

The pressure is mounting on Aston Villa manager Steve Bruce after his side were beaten 2-1 by Sheffield Wednesday. Saido Berahino scored and missed a penalty as Stoke were beaten 3-2 at home by Blackburn Rovers.

Ipswich Town are still searching for their first victory of the season after they were held at home by 10-man Bolton Wanderers and remain in the bottom three. — Reuters

## RESULTS

Reading 3 Hull 0, Stoke 2 Blackburn 3, Sheffield United 3 Preston 2, Nottingham Forest 1 Rotherham 0, Derby 3 Brentford 1, Ipswich 0 Bolton 0, West Brom 2 Millwall 0, Middlesbrough 0 Swansea 0, Leeds 1 Birmingham 2, Aston Villa 1 Sheffield Wednesday 2, QPR 0 Norwich 1.

**Leading standings:** Leeds 18, Middlesbrough 18, West Brom 17, Sheffield United 16, Wigan 16.

## It's a surprise: Klopp wowed by Liverpool's hot start

**LIVERPOOL:** Juergen Klopp admitted Liverpool's flying start has surprised him as they won their sixth successive Premier League game to return to the top of the table.

The comfortable 3-0 victory over Southampton at Anfield was wrapped up by half-time on Saturday courtesy of an own goal from Wesley Hoedt, Joel Matip's header and Mohamed Salah's simple finish.

The victory marked Liverpool's best start to a season since they won eight league games in a row in 1990-1991.

Klopp's red-hot men have now won seven successive matches in all competitions this term.

Southampton manager Mark Hughes, now without a league win in 12 visits to Anfield with six different teams, admitted the second

half was simply "damage limitation" for the Saints.

And Klopp was happy to welcome another unexpected milestone on his team's journey.

"I lost seven games in a row once, that felt different! But then we won game number eight 5-0, very cool," he said.

"It's a surprise, but all the performances we showed so far were good enough to win the games."

"Different challenges, different styles of opponent, the boys were there, really in the situation and in the game."

Klopp was also able to offer good news on the only possible down-sides on the day for Liverpool, the half-time removal of Xherdan Shaqiri and the second half substitution of Virgil van Dijk, who left the pitch clutching his ribs.

Klopp revealed Shaqiri's early

substitution in his first Liverpool start was purely tactical despite his involvement in the build up to the first goal – his shot hit Shane Long before going in off Hoedt – and his superb 25 yard free-kick against the bar which led to Salah's tap-in for the third.

"I said to Shaq at half-time that I'd never taken a player off at half-time after such an influential half," Klopp said.

"He was not injured, but I wanted to control the game, go back to our normal formation, and that helped us."

The Swiss international understood the decision, according to his manager.

"He's a fantastic boy so there was no problem. I explained it to him, usually I don't explain substitutions but I thought today it made a bit of sense," Klopp added.

"It's just good to have him. You saw the free kick, it was outstanding. What a ball!"

Van Dijk, said Klopp, aggravated bruised ribs which he carried into the PSG game in midweek.

"He had already before the PSG game kind of a bruised rib, which is very uncomfortable, and today he got another hit there," he said.

"It's not cool, but should not be too serious."

"He said he couldn't shout any more, so that's obviously 60 per cent less of his level!"

Klopp's 600th competitive game as a manager saw Liverpool extend an impressive home league record, unbeaten now in 18 games and 17 months at Anfield.

No opposing player has even scored here in the league since February, with Liverpool scoring 23 in the same period. — AFP

## Red Warriors wary of Sabah fightback

By K. RAJAN

**PETALING JAYA:** Kelantan are still not out of the woods despite their 2-1 win over Sabah in the first leg of the Malaysia Cup quarter-finals.

The Red Warriors edged 10-man Sabah with goals from Baktyiar Duishobekov in the 29th minute and a Nik Akif Syahiran Nik Mat spotkick in the 45th minute at the Sultan Mohd IV Stadium on Saturday.

The plucky Rhinos who were reduced to 10-men following Randy Baruh's sending off in the 39th minute for rough play, proved that they are not pushovers as Hamran Peter's 43rd minute strike kept them in the tie with a vital away goal.

Kelantan coach Yusri Che Lah reckons that his side did well to extend their unbeaten run at home



to seven matches but they left the job unfinished and now face a tough match in the return leg in Likas Stadium on Saturday.

"We wasted a number of chances to kill off the tie in the first leg itself and we will have to play a difficult match at Sabah's home in our next match," said the former international.

"Sabah will come harder against us in the second leg because one goal will be enough for them to win

the tie on away goal rule and advance to the semifinals."

Yusri admitted that Kelantan need to focus and play an attacking game in Likas now,

"We can't go there looking to defend our lead because they are a formidable side in front of their fans."

Yusri said although his men have a tough match in their hands, he believes they have it in them to advance to the last four.

He added the form of his 19-year-old midfielder Nik Akif - who has scored two goals in the last two matches - is a massive boost for the team.

"I'm very happy over Nik Akif's performance. He's a very important player in our starting XI and I hope he can continue his hard work for the team," he added.



**Sheer joy:** Kelantan's Baktyiar Duishobekov celebrating after scoring against Sabah at the Malaysia Cup quarter-finals. — Bernama

By LIM TEIK HUAT

THE just concluded Malaysia Games (Sukma) aquatics competition in Ipoh was not just about blooding future champions but it was also a refreshing sight to see many former swimmers and divers performing their duties as coaches.

The 2000 Olympics swimmer Marilyn Chua was in charge of the Selangor swimming team while former SEA Games gold medallists Die Ung Manggang and Kevin Yeap were coaching Sarawak and Perak respectively.

The 1998 Asian Games bronze medallist Elvin Chia handled Sabah while there were others - Wong Tuck Kar for Selangor, Yap See Tuan for Pahang and Low Xue Ting for Johor.

These were former swimmers who made names at the Sukma and went on to make the country proud in the bigger stage and now, they have returned to bring up the next generation of swimmers.

And it is the hope that the Amateur Swimming Union of Malaysia (Asum) will wake up from

## Training the next gen

Coaches must adopt new training methods

its slumber and recognise the change of guard and help improve the standard of these local coaches.

The standard of Malaysian swimming has declined in recent years and it lags behind Singapore, Vietnam and Indonesia.

Long-time Selangor swimming coach Ong Kooi Jin (**pic**) is hoping there will be better education and training for the younger crop of coaches.

"The sport is evolving and the training methods we use in the past may no longer be effective now,"



said Kooi Jin, who was the coach during the 1989 SEA Games in Kuala Lumpur, when Malaysia bagged 11 gold medals in swimming - a feat that has not been repeated since.

"We've to constantly keep up with new methods, and education for the coaches is important. They are the ones bringing up the youngsters and they need to do it the right way."

There were a total of six Games records and one national record

this time.

At the last Games in Kuching two years ago, 13 records sank but there was no national record.

Tia'a Faang Der of Johor bettered the boys' 400m individual medley national record of 4:30.85 set by Sebastian Soon of Federal Territories two months ago when he won the race in 4:30.48.

Faang Der also smashed the previous Sukma record of 4:34.14 held by Die Ung since 2002.

The 20-year-old Johor swimmer went on to break his own Games record in the 200m butterfly, posting 2:02.30 to erase his previous mark of 2:02.93.

Elynn Tan Yilin of Penang shone with five gold medals in the sprint events while Arvin Shaun Singh of

Terengganu pulled off a superb win in the boys' 400m and 1,500m free-style distances.

Elynn, Arvin, Melaka's 200m backstroke winner Goh Chia Tong and Selangor's Jordan Yip will be around at the next Games in Johor in 2020.

"More records will be broken when the swimmers grow older and are able to swim faster. It will be an exciting time at the next Sukma as swimmers from other states come up to provide stronger challenges," added Kooi Jin.

Selangor bagged a total of 20 golds in swimming at the last Games but they ended with 12 this time. Penang, Johor and Federal Territories shared the bigger spoils with six golds each.

## Open road lies ahead for team Terengganu

**IPOH:** Syed Mohd Hussaini Syed Mazlan did not achieve big things when he was cycling for the country but he has now cemented his place as one of the most respected local coaches around.

Terengganu cycling coach Syed, who represented the nation at the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games in 1998, has again lifted the East Coast state's cycling team to lofty heights.

At the Malaysia Games (Sukma), Terengganu dominated not just in the road and track disciplines but also in BMX to bring back a total of 14 gold medals out of 24 events contested.

Nur Aisyah Mohamad Zubir was the biggest star in cycling as she rode her way to an unprecedented seven gold medals at a single Sukma.

She swept all three events on the road (30km individual time trial, 50km criterium, 80km road race) and went on to win all four events on the track as well (10km scratch, 3km individual pursuit, 4km team pursuit and keirin).

It was the third time Terengganu finished as overall champions. They also finished with 14 golds in the last edition in Sarawak in 2016. At the Perlis Sukma in 2014, Terengganu bagged six golds.

The 40-year-old coach said his dream is to produce more young cyclists to be good enough to represent the state first and also the country.

"I was the coach who brought Anuar Manan and Adiq Husainie Othman to compete in the road race at the London Olympics in 2012. Both were from Terengganu and I was asked to come back after that to take charge of the Terengganu cycling (team)," said Syed.

"I learnt a lot from the London Olympics experience. In fact, I employed the 'system booster' training method to get our cyclists to win here," he added.



**Ride on:** Terengganu cycling coach Syed Mohd Hussaini Syed Mazlan (carrying orange bag) cheering for Nur Aisyah Mohamad Zubir (with coloured scarf) who finished her campaign by winning the girls' keirin final for her seventh gold in Sukma cycling.

Syed is also learning techniques from a European coach on how to maximise the fast twitch muscles to make the cyclists sprint even though they are doing endurance training. To him, that is the difference between winning and losing in road racing.

"The challenge is to know how to pace the intensity of training as there is a risk of running injuries. I think Terengganu is the only team

using this method.

"I am still learning new things along the way," said Syed, who is pleased with the outcome from Sukma.

"We could have made a clean sweep of all six events in the road discipline but Muhammad Shahmir Aiman Abdul Halim fell 200m before the finish line while leading the boys' 160km road race," he added.

## Ginting rules China Open

**PETALING JAYA:** Indonesia's rising star Anthony Ginting emerged as the China Open champion after dumping reigning world champion Kento Momota of Japan.

Yesterday, the 22-year-old Ginting kept his game solid to beat the 24-year-old Momota 23-21, 21-19 in a tight men's singles final that ran for 63 minutes in Changzhou.

It was the world No. 13 Ginting's second win over Momota within a month, having disposed off the 2018 Japan Open winner in the third round of the Asian Games in Indonesia last month.

En route to the final, the crafty player has also beaten homestay Lin Dan (first round), Viktor Axelsen of Denmark (second round), Chen Long of China (quarter-finals) and Chou Tien-chen of Taiwan (semi-finals).

### FINAL RESULTS

**Men's singles:** Anthony Ginting (Indonesia) bt Kento Momota (Japan) 23-21, 21-19.

**Men's doubles:** Kim Astrup-Anders Skaarup Rasmussen (Denmark) bt Han Chengkai-Zhou Haodong (China) 21-13, 17-21, 21-14.

**Women's singles:** Carolina Marin (Spain) bt Chen Yu Fei (China) 21-16, 21-12.

**Women's doubles:** Misaki Matsutomo-Ayaka Takahashi (Japan) bt Mayu Matsutomo-Wakana Nagahara (Japan) 21-16, 21-12.

**Mixed doubles:** Zheng Siwei-Huang Yaqiong (China) bt Zhang Nan-Li Yinhui (China) 21-16, 21-9.

# Satisfying Sukma

## Quality of athletes up to mark, says Shapawi

By K. RAJAN

**IPOH:** National Sports Council (NSC) director general Datuk Ahmad Shapawi Ismail is pleased as punch with the quality of the athletes at the Malaysia Games (Sukma) in Perak.

Six national records, one in swimming and five in weightlifting, and 54 Games records – weightlifting (22), shooting (10), archery (9), swimming (6) and track and field (7) – were set in Ipoh.

Shapawi said there was vast improvement in track and field events with several old records broken including the ones held by girls' pole vaulter Roslinda Samsu (18-year-old record), Zaiful Zainal Abidin in the boys' 400m (16-year-old) and Masliza Shaari in heptathlon (22-year-old).

Shapawi applauded the states for putting in a great effort.

"This year's Sukma showed the quality of the athletes, it shows the state sports council have worked harder to prepare their athletes," said Shapawi.

He, however, admitted that there was still a significant gap between states in certain sports like gymnastics, diving and cycling.

The good thing is that all the contingents participated in most sports but there's a gap between states in several sports like gymnastics and cycling. Some states are very dominant.

"There's a need to introduce compulsory routines to make it a level playing field in sports such as gymnastics and diving.

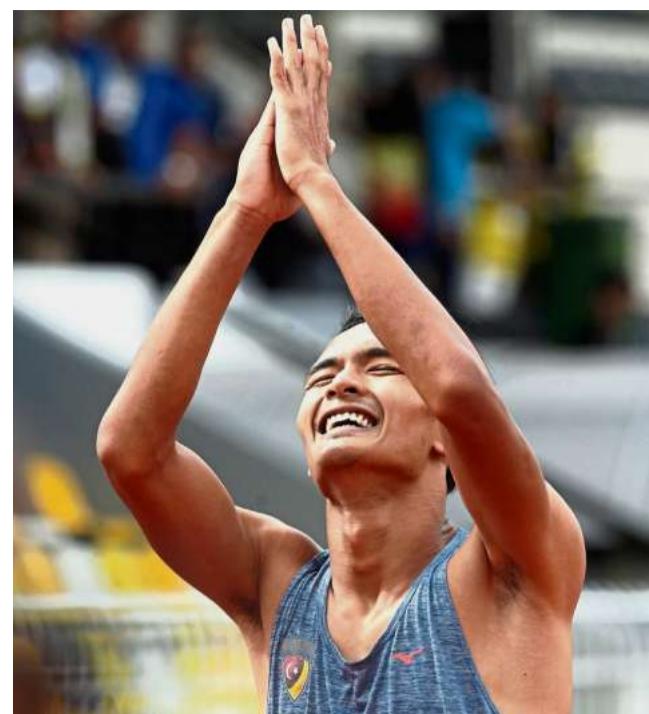
"Compulsory routines are practised in China and I think it can be implemented in the Sukma. We don't want states to shy away from certain sports, we want more participations."

Shapawi added that he was worried about a dwindling number of Indian athletes and hopes to see a higher participation in the future. There were 261 Indian athletes, 4,252 Malay, 1,028 Chinese and 469 of other races.

"Indian athletes used to be show stealers in Sukma especially in athletics but their numbers have dwindled and steps must be taken to increase the number," he said.

On the outstanding performance of weightlifters, Shapawi was cautious about heaping praises on them as the sport is still overshadowed by doping controversies.

"I'm proud of the performance of weightlifters but one weightlifter has been tested positive for doping in the pre Games screening test and I prayed that we don't have to deal with any doping cases here."



**Sheer joy:** Muhd Ilham Suhaimi of Selangor celebrates after winning the boys' 400m race in 47.02 to better the old record of 47.34 set by Zaiful Zainal Abidin 16 years ago. — S. S. KANESAN / The Star

## STARS OF THE 19TH MALAYSIA GAMES (SUKMA)



### ALICIA LI ANN SOOSAI (SWIMMING)

Johor's Alicia will be one of the dominant swimmers when her state hosts the next Sukma in 2020. She will turn only 15 on Oct 9 but she has already won three Sukma gold medals by sweeping all three breaststroke titles – 50m, 100m and 200m – in Perak. She also delivered a bronze in the 200m individual medley. Malaysia has always produced good female breaststrokers such as Siow Yi Ting, Christina Loh and Phee Jing En over the decade. And there are high hopes that Alicia will take over the mantle.



### RAYNA HOH KHAI LING (RHYTHMIC GYMNASTICS)

Rayna has showcased her potential as the country's next rhythmic gymnastics sensation with her superb performance in the Sukma where she made a clean sweep of all five golds at stake. The 15-year-old Convent Bukit Nanas student came out tops in all four apparatus – ball, clubs, hoop and ribbon – as well as the team event. The Federal Territories gymnast will look forward to another inspiring outing in the Youth Olympics in Buenos Aires, Argentina, from Oct 6-18.



### AIDIL SHOLEH ALI SADIKIN (BADMINTON)

The boys' singles shuttler made heads turn with a shocking win over top seed and Asian junior champion Leong Jun Hao of Federal Territories in the quarter-finals before beating former international Yeoh Seng Zoe of Penang in the semi-finals. The Selangor boy lost to Tan Jia Wei from Penang in the final but the youngster, who trains under former great Rashid Sidek, showed he is a star in the making. Other top performers were doubles shuttlers Aaron Chia, Soh Wooi Yik, Toh Ee Wei and Anna Cheong.

### SONIA CASSENDRA MASNE (WEIGHTLIFTING)

Sonia, only 18, was one of the few bright sparks in the weightlifting competition at the Merdeka Hall in Tapah. The lass from Johor lifted 96kg in the snatch and 120kg in the clean and jerk events to set Games and national records. Sonia, who defied her mother's objection to become a weightlifter, showed her dogged determination to excel. She's a breath of fresh air in a sport that has been plagued by doping issues of late. In total, the weightlifters set five national records and rewrote 22 Games records.



### EUGENIUS LO (ARCHERY)

The Sabahan ruled the archery field by taking home four gold and two silver medals. The compound specialist, who first took up archery as a hobby, won the boys' individual compound and three distances – 30m, 50m and 70m. His silvers came from the 90m distance and team compound with Chin Shi Yi and Mecedger Sage Edie. Eugenius broke the Games record en route to the gold in the 50m and 70m distances and also equalled the national record in winning the 30m distance.



### AZREEN NABILA ALIAS (ATHLETICS)

The 18-year-old from Terengganu is on the right track to be the next national sprinter. She proved it by winning three golds in the 100m, 200m and 4x100m and smashed the 10-year blue riband event with a time of 11.81. Her effort was just 0.07 seconds short of the SEA Games qualifying mark of 11.74. She has the ability to improve further and feature in next year's SEA Games in the Philippines. Azreen also posted a personal best of 24.76 in the 200m. She needs proper training and guidance to achieve her dreams of becoming the nation's sprint queen.

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<b>M 4D classic</b>	<b>1ST PRIZE</b> <b>3134</b>
	<b>2ND PRIZE</b> <b>2635</b>
	<b>3RD PRIZE</b> <b>1396</b>
<b>SPECIAL</b>	<b>CONSOLATION</b>
<b>5166 5734</b>	<b>1112 5332</b>
<b>8837 8168</b>	<b>4363 8853</b>
<b>5906 9204</b>	<b>7969 6304</b>
<b>0213 8085</b>	<b>0460 3637</b>
<b>9737 4817</b>	<b>2326 6403</b>

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<b>GROUP 4</b>	<b>3 4 3</b> OR <b>5 9 6</b>
<b>GROUP 5</b>	<b>3 4</b> OR <b>9 6</b>
OR	<b>3 5</b>
<b>GOLDEN NUMBER</b>	<b>0 1</b>

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Jackpot 1 – Group 1 + Golden Number  
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**Jackpot 2 RM 271,610.25**  
Jackpot 2 – Group 2 + Golden Number

All jackpot amounts stated above are for this Draw. Subject to Terms and Conditions of the Scheme. Please visit [www.magnum4d.my](http://www.magnum4d.my) for more information.

## THE RECORD BREAKERS (Old records in bracket) \*Marks of new events are automatically national records

### NATIONAL RECORDS



#### > SWIMMING

- Boys  
400m individual medley: Tia'a Faang Der (Joh) 4:30.48 (4:30.85).

#### > WEIGHTLIFTING

- Girls  
75kg snatch: Gabriella Teo Samuel (FT) 86kg (85kg).  
90kg snatch: Nur Afiqah Nadhrah Mohamed Borhan (Sel) 92kg (91kg).  
Above 90kg snatch: Sonia Cassandra Anak Masne (Joh) 120kg (new event).  
Above 90kg clean and jerk: Sonia Cassandra Anak Masne (Joh) 96kg (new event).  
Above 90kg total: Sonia Cassandra Anak Masne (Joh) 216kg (new event).

### GAMES RECORDS

#### > ARCHERY

- Boys  
Compound 90m: Fahrur Rosi Choirol Anuar (Pah) 335 (330).  
Compound 70m: Eugenius Lo (Sab) 349 (342).  
Compound 50m: Eugenius Lo (Sab) 351 (349).  
  

#### > ATHLETICS

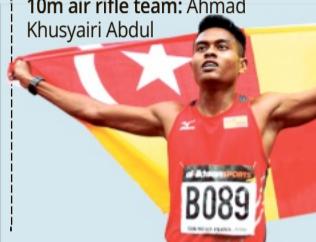
  - Boys  
200m: Muhd Aqil Yasmin (Sel) 21.01 (21.03).  
400m: Muhd Ilham Suhaimi (Sel) 47.02 (47.34).  
Hammer: Johnny Ling Siew Hong (Swk) 57.37m (56.98m).  
Triple jump: Andre Anura Anuar (Sab) 15.91m (15.75m).  
  
• Girls  
100m: Azreen Nabila Alias (Ter) 11.81 (11.82).  
Pole vault: Puteri Nur Adillah Shik

(Nse) 3.80m (3.76m).

Heptathlon: Winnie Eng May Xin (FT) 4,510 points (4,453).

#### > SHOOTING

- Boys  
50m pistol: Qamarul Naim Abu Aziz (Ter) 541 (540).  
25m rapid fire pistol: Low Wei Chern (Pah) 563 (558).  
25m rapid fire pistol team: Low Wei Chern, Ridwan Awaluddin, Shasmainur Ariff Mohamad Shah 1652 (1636).  
10m air rifle team: Ahmad Khusyairi Abdul



Razak, Loo Jie Ren, Aiman Syafiq Zainal Ariffin (Prk) 1828.5 (1817.2).

#### > SWIMMING

- Boys  
400m individual medley: Tia'a Faang Der (Joh) 4:30.48 (4:34.14).  
200m butterfly: Tia'a Faang Der (Joh) 2:02.30 (2:02.93).  
50m breaststroke: Foong Wei Tze (Mel) 28.86 (29.31).  
200m breaststroke: Ng Jing Fu (Sel) 2:17.47 (2:19.12).  
4x200m freestyle: Federal Territories (Keith Lim, Steve Khiew, Sebastian Soon, Chan Jun Jian) 7:40.17 (7:43.67).  
10m air rifle team: Ahmad Khusyairi Abdul

- Girls  
50m freestyle: Keith Lim (FT) 23.19 (23.45).  
94kg clean and jerk: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 182kg (181kg).  
94kg snatch: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 142kg (141kg).  
94kg total: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 324kg (322kg).  
105kg snatch: Hafiz Shamsuddin (Prk) 143kg (142kg).

### > WEIGHTLIFTING

- Boys  
56kg clean and jerk: Mohd Yusoff Nandong (Sel) 137kg (136kg).  
56kg snatch: Mohd Yusoff Nandong (Sel) 116kg (115kg).  
Total: Mohd Yusoff Nandong (Sel) 253kg (251kg).  
69kg clean and jerk: Darul Najmi Dollah (Ter) 164kg (163kg).  
77kg snatch: Erry Hidayat (FT) 138kg (137kg).  
77kg total: Erry Hidayat (FT) 304kg (299kg).  
94kg clean and jerk: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 182kg (181kg).  
94kg snatch: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 142kg (141kg).  
94kg total: Nasir Roslan (Pah) 324kg (322kg).  
105kg snatch: Hafiz Shamsuddin (Prk) 143kg (142kg).

Above 105kg snatch: Jerry Anak Gawan (Swk) 143kg (140kg).  
Above 105kg total: Jerry Anak Gawan (Swk) 319kg (312kg).

#### > Girls

- 53kg snatch: Elly Cascandra Engelbert (Sab) 92kg (90kg).  
58kg clean and jerk: Marceeta Marlyne Macus (Sab) 97kg (96kg).  
63kg clean and jerk: Nur Atikah Mahamad Sobri (FT) 102kg (101kg).  
63kg snatch: Nur Atikah Mahamad Sobri (FT) 82kg (81kg).  
63kg total: Nur Atikah Mahamad Sobri (FT) 184kg (182kg).  
69kg clean and jerk: Farhana Nabila Mohd Shamsudin (Ked) 104kg (95kg).  
69kg snatch: Farhana Nabila Mohd Shamsudin (Ked) 82kg (75kg).  
69kg total: Farhana Nabila Mohd Shamsudin (Ked) 186kg (166kg).  
90kg clean and jerk: Nur Afiqah Nadhrah



# Grouses to look into

## Poor scheduling and cramped venues mar the Perak Sukma

By LIM TEIK HUAT

**IPOH:** Future Malaysia Games (Sukma) organisers can do better with the scheduling of sport events.

Poor scheduling stood like a sore thumb during the track cycling competition.

Due to bad weather, track cycling at the Velodrome Rakyat in Ipoh almost became a washout.

It rained for the first two days, causing events to be postponed as the track was slippery and unsafe for the cyclists.

The organisers had no choice but to wait for the sun to come out the next day to dry the timber track, resulting in further delays.

And it was the athletes who paid dearly as Terengganu cyclist Nur Aisyah Mohamad Zubir, for example, could hardly catch her breath as she had no rest in between her events.

The 3km individual pursuit scheduled on Friday was postponed to the following day.

It left Nur Aisyah with no choice but to face a gruelling schedule involving the 3km individual pursuit, 4km team pursuit and also three rounds of keirin as dark clouds loomed in the horizon.

Why can't the schedule for track cycling be completed to ensure the events finish on time regardless of the weather?

An outdoor track is at the mercy of the unpredictable Malaysian weather and surely the organisers are aware of this. Were there any back-up plans?

Either spread the events over four days or allow a spare day as the rules state that all sports events at a multi-Games must end by 5pm before the closing ceremony in the evening.

And the National Sports Council (NSC) should also ensure that sports follow the Olympic format.

As it is, there is no overall category in Sukma weightlifting. Gold medals were only awarded for the snatch and clean and jerk events in Ipoh.

At the Olympics, there is only one gold medal given out for the combined total from snatch and clean and jerk events.

The Perak Sukma was also a challenge to cover as sports events were held in places as far as Behrang and Grik, which is close to two hours drive from Ipoh.

It was made worse when schedules were changed at the last minute.

There were also grouses about venues that were cramped and unfit to host a national level competition like Sukma, so it is something worth looking into when Johor hosts it in 2020.

We can surely do better than this after 19 editions of the Sukma.

**Almost a washout:** Rain forced a hectic change in schedules for track cycling at the roofless Velodrome Rakyat during the Malaysian Games in Perak.

**WINNING NUMBERS** da macai PAYMENT GUARANTEED IN FULL Draw Date: 23/09/18 (Sun) Draw No: 4783/18 Venue: PERAK TURF CLUB

### 1+3D SUPER 1+3D

1st Prize	5555
2nd Prize	6931
3rd Prize	8241
Starters	Consolation
6517 5573	8271 7769
8464 6838	1281 8691
4732 8123	5338 9605
1478 7320	0123 4478
6599 4517	6030 6055

#### 1+3D Jackpot

Jackpot 1 RM3,142,353.20

5555 + 6931	6931 + 5555
5555 + 8241	8241 + 5555
6931 + 8241	8241 + 6931

Jackpot 2 RM639,407.60

Winning pair matches any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of 10 Starter Prizes.

#### 3+3D Bonus

1st Prize	Bonus	1st Prize Bonus
675 555 + SNAKE		RM3,077,963.30

2nd Prize	Bonus	2nd Prize Bonus
016 931 + DRAGON		RM50,000.00

3rd Prize	Bonus	3rd Prize Bonus
168 241 + DRAGON		RM2,554,060.90

Starters	Consolation
496 517 685 573	468 271 547 769
928 464 226 838	861 281 188 691
834 732 688 123	385 338 699 605
341 478 287 320	640 123 514 478
476 599 124 517	096 030 746 055

#### 3D

1st Prize	2nd Prize	3rd Prize
555	931	241

#### 3D Jackpot

Jackpot RM753,735.40

555 + 931 + 241	931 + 241 + 555
555 + 241 + 931	241 + 555 + 931
931 + 555 + 241	241 + 931 + 555

Winning combination matches the Top 3 Prizes in any order.

#### 3+3D 2nd Prize Bonus

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## SPORTS TOTO RESULTS

DRAW NO: 4836/2018 DATE: 23/09/18 (SUN)

### TOTO 4D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

#### 4D

1st Prize 5 4 5 1

2nd Prize 3 7 5 3

3rd Prize 6 0 5 8

#### Special

#### Consolation

0252	4159	5947	6989
6900	5746	1522	5135
7105	8407	8460	8245
2969	6973	9877	9394
6170	1968	9576	3648

#### 4D JACKPOT

Jackpot 1

RM 7,930,933.87

5451	3753	3753	5451
5451	6058	6058	5451
3753	6058	6058	3753

Jackpot 2

RM 141,619.72

Winning combination of any 1 of Top 3 & any 1 of Special prizes.

### TOTO 5D & 6D PRIZE PAYMENTS GUARANTEED IN FULL

#### 5D

1ST 7 0 2 6 7

4TH 0 2 6 7

2ND 4 4 1 6 4

5TH 2 6 7

3RD 2 9 6 9 3

6TH 6 7

#### 6D

1ST 0 8 2 2 0

SUKMA  
QUALITY OF ATHLETES  
UP TO  
PAR, SAY NSC >38

TENNIS  
PLISKOVÁ SPOILS  
OSAKA'S  
PARTY IN TOKYO >31

THE STAR, MONDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2018

Star ONLINE [thestar.com.my/sport](http://thestar.com.my/sport)



**Who's playing catch-up now?**: Liverpool manager Juergen Klopp congratulating Joel Matip after the 3-0 win over Southampton in the English Premier League match at Anfield on Saturday. **Below:** A disappointed Jose Mourinho during Manchester United's match with Wolves at Old Trafford which ended 1-1. —AFP / Reuters



FIXTURES & STANDINGS ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE						
WEST HAM	0	CHELSEA	0			
BRIGHTON	1	TOTTENHAM	2			
BURNLEY	4	B'NEMOUTH	0			
CARDIFF	0	MAN CITY	5			
C. PALACE	0	NEWCASTLE	0			
LEICESTER	3	HUDS'FIELD	1			
LIVERPOOL	3	S'HAMPTON	0			
MAN UTD	1	WOLVES	1			
FULHAM	1	WATFORD	1			
P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
LIVERPOOL	6	6	0	0	14	2 18
MAN CITY	6	5	1	0	19	3 16
CHELSEA	6	5	1	0	14	4 16
WATFORD	6	4	1	1	11	6 13
TOTTENHAM	6	4	0	2	12	7 12
MAN UTD	6	3	1	2	9	9 10
B'MOUTH	6	3	1	2	10	11 10
LEICESTER	6	3	0	3	11	10 9
ARSENAL	5	3	0	2	10	9 9
WOLVES	6	2	3	1	6	6 9
C. PALACE	6	2	1	3	4	6 7
EVERTON	5	1	3	1	8	9 6
BRIGHTON	6	1	2	3	8	11 5
S'HAMPTON	6	1	2	3	6	9 5
FULHAM	6	1	2	3	8	13 5
BURNLEY	6	1	1	4	7	10 4
WEST HAM	6	1	1	4	5	11 4
NEWCASTLE	6	0	2	4	4	8 2
CARDIFF	6	0	2	4	3	14 2
HUDS'FIELD	6	0	2	4	3	14 2



FOOTBALL  
**GUARDIOLA  
SALUTES HIS  
MODEL CITIZENS >35**

# Role reversal

After six matches in the English Premier League, things could not be more different for arch-rivals Manchester United and Liverpool. While Jose Mourinho was highly critical of his players' attitude after the 1-1 draw with Wolves at Old Trafford, Juergen Klopp claimed Liverpool's flying start has surprised him after their sixth straight win – a 3-0 victory over Southampton at Anfield. Mourinho lamented: "Wolves play like I like to play – which is like the World Cup final. That's the attitude I like my teams to have." A thrilled Klopp said: "I lost seven games in a row once, that felt different!" >36

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**Star**

# Biz

**Valuation issues in Apex-Mercury proposed merger** >2



**End of HK's easy money era affecting home prices** >6

By LEONG HUNG YEE  
hungyee@thestar.com.my

**BEIJING:** China Communications Construction Co Ltd (CCCC), the contractor for the 688km East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), hopes the suspension of the project will not be prolonged.

Vice-president Sun Ziyu said the company believed that the issues regarding the ECRL could be resolved amicably but the review should not take too long as it would cause more losses.

"ECRL is the one project that has been significantly affected since the new government took over the country's administration."

"The value of the contract is high due to the long and complex alignment of the track via tunnels and bridges," Sun told a delegation of Malaysian journalists during a visit here organised by the China Embassy in Malaysia.

"It is understandable for the new government to review such a big project, but they should not take too long to come to a decision. For any country, infrastructure development is vital, and the people's livelihood should be the main focus," Sun said.

"We fully understand the new government's concern about the debt crisis, but as a public company we are also accountable to our shareholders," Sun said.

ECRL, a key component in the Belt and Road Initiative, comprises a rail line linking Selangor to Pahang, Terengganu and Kelantan.

In July, Malaysia Rail Link Sdn Bhd (MRL) had notified CCCC to suspend work on the project on the grounds of national interest.

The suspension came after the Finance Ministry disclosed that the final cost of the ECRL project is RM81bil and that CCCC needs to cut the construction cost significantly to make it viable financially.

The ECRL project was first approved by the government on Oct 21, 2016 while the engineering, procurement, construction and commissioning agreement was signed with CCCC on Nov 1, 2016.

"We have received suspension notice from the asset owner and we are discussing with them on future arrangements," Sun said.

"We will follow the contract and we

# CCCC still upbeat about ECRL project

China contractor hopes government review will not take long



**Amicable solution:** Sun (left) and CCCC (International) president Chen Zhong at the press briefing. Sun says the company is accountable to its shareholders.

believe that the issue could be resolved by negotiations.

"However, we are suffering losses every day as long as the suspension is still in effect.

"Therefore, we cannot afford for it to be suspended and leave the issue unresolved for too long," Sun said.

CCCC had begun earthworks, excavating tunnels, building road foundation, procuring

bridge construction equipment and materials, and the hiring workers.

According to Sun, the group had also established partnerships with over 700 local subcontractors, suppliers and consultants.

"Ever since the suspension of work, losses are incurred every day."

"As contractors, this is upsetting and impacts us negatively," Sun said.

He explained that 50% of its workforce for the ECRL were locals and could reach up to 70%.

Except for some special technicians who were from China, all other employees were local.

"We have also launched the industrial training programme and plan to train and develop 3,600 railway experts. So far, we have hired and trained 447 local graduates," he said.

The group also experienced similar situation for its Colombo Port City Project in Sri Lanka.

The Colombo Port City Project that CCCC invested in Sri Lanka was also suspended for one year due to a change in the political environment, but it has now resumed and is progressing well.

He said the company still has confidence in the ECRL project and Malaysia has always been CCCC's preferred market in terms of its

> TURN TO PAGE 2

## Explain 96% drop in consolidated account, Guan Eng urges Najib

**PUTRAJAYA:** Former Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak should explain why the consolidated revenue account had dropped by 96% or RM11.41bil between Dec 31, 2017 and April 30, 2018, says Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng.

In a statement, Lim said Najib left the new Pakatan Harapan government only RM450mil

on April 30, 2018.

"The total of RM11.86bil in the consolidated account as at Dec 31, 2017 had dropped to RM450mil as at April 30 due to overspending in the four-month period from January 2018 to April 2018. Clearly, this was 'general election expenses' to help Barisan Nasional win the 14th General Election," he said.

Lim noted that government regulations permit only the consolidated account to be used for management expenditure.

"Imagine only RM450mil was available for paying emoluments and pensions, when in fact the government needs over RM8bil a month for this expenditure alone," he said.

Lim also questioned why Najib was at a loss

to understand what constitutes a consolidated revenue account despite having held the post of Finance Minister for 10 years.

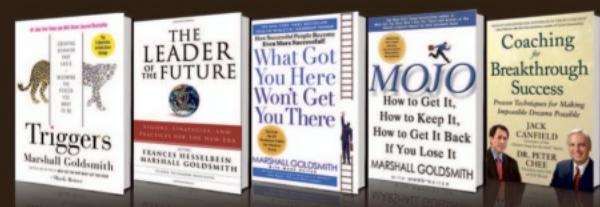
Lim said Najib should not lie about the actual fiscal position by saying that Barisan had left the new administration tens of billions of ringgit when in reality only RM450mil was left. — Bernama



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# Are Apex shareholders getting a good deal?

Brokerage poised for another change in major shareholder

By GURMEET KAUR  
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**PETALING JAYA:** A year after seeing a change in shareholding, Apex Equity Holdings Bhd is poised for another change in its major shareholder with the proposed merger with Mercury Securities Sdn Bhd.

While the proposed merger is aimed at bringing about synergies, it also seems to address a thorny shareholding issue that had been hanging over Apex.

In a nutshell, here's the proposed deal announced last Friday: Apex is looking to acquire Mercury Securities' stockbroking, corporate advisory and other related businesses for RM140mil.

Of this, RM48mil will be settled in cash and RM92mil through the issue of new Apex shares.

The price tag of RM140mil values Mercury at 14.89 times its FY2018 earnings of RM9.4mil.

In its filings, Apex said the valuation of Mercury is in line with listed companies in the same business.

Still, some reckon it appears an expensive price to pay considering the highly competitive nature of the industry, especially for standalone brokerages versus bank-backed ones. TA Enterprise Bhd, which also owns a non bank-backed broking firm TA Securities Sdn Bhd, trades at a paltry value of 3.8 times its earnings.

Banking institutions like CIMB Group Holdings Bhd, RHB Bank Bhd and AMMB Holdings Bhd trade at a PE of around 10 times, while Malayan Banking Bhd is at 13.93 times. Kenanga Investment Bank Bhd, meanwhile trades at a PE of 14.65 times, according to Bloomberg data.

Furthermore, the industry is seeing thinning margins partly due to the entry of technologically advanced players like Rakuten into the scene.

The other issue to note is that Apex is issuing

its new equity to Mercury at a price tag of 92 sen per Apex share, which is the five-day volume weighted average market price of the stock.

However, that price is at a 36% discount to Apex Equity's net tangible asset (NTA) value of RM1.45 per share.

So are Apex shareholders, especially the minorities, getting a good deal?

Business synergy-wise, the deal will allow Apex, which owns JF Apex Securities Sdn Bhd, to dive into the corporate side of the equities business, which is a strength of Mercury Securities.

It will also give Apex scale and size in the stockbroking industry.

The proposed merger comes a year after the entry of an entity called ACE Investment Bank into Apex. The entity emerged with a 23% stake in Apex at about the time when a similar sized block was traded off market by the late Chan Guan Seng, Apex's former executive chairman and parties close to him. The share price of Apex then was around RM2 a piece.

ACE Investment is an offshore financial institution incorporated in Labuan.

However, an issue that cropped up from his disposal of shares was whether the new shareholders had got the nod from the regulators to become a major shareholder of Apex.

Financial institutions such as stock brokers also need to have major shareholders who fulfil the "fit and proper test" of the Securities Commission (SC).

According to people familiar with capital market rules, the SC's licensing handbook before it was updated in April this year, required approval for change in shareholding in the licensed entity, but was silent on a change in shareholding in the holding company.

"However, out of good form generally all parties will go to the SC to seek its approval prior to the purchase of stockbroking firms," says a banker.

The SC licensing handbook has since been

updated to provide clarity where the regulator's prior approval is required for any proposed change in both direct and indirect shareholding, which will result in the change of controller.

Even so, bankers said that ACE Investment would still need to fulfil the fit and proper criteria.

This is similar to Bank Negara's requirements of key responsible persons in financial institutions, where the objective of this guideline is to ensure that the financial institution is led by persons of credibility and competency.

Besides this, the new owners also ought to display a clear business plan on how he or she is going to bring value to the business, bankers say.

It is unclear if ACE Investment has fulfilled these.

The SC, when contacted, said "as a matter of policy, it does not comment on the status of any corporate application."

An ACE Investment official declined to elaborate, saying "the full facts are not at his disposal."

Worth noting is that if the proposed deal materialises, Mercury Securities will emerge as the single largest shareholder in the merged entity with a 31% stake.

The deal with Mercury is dilutive. Besides the 100 million new shares being issued to Mercury, Apex is proposing the issuance of another 20 million new shares, about 10% of its existing issued share capital, at an issue price to be determined later to raise fresh cash to finance the merger.

Apex's other major shareholder now is Fun Sheung Development Ltd with 15.78%.

The family of Chan, who passed away early this year, still hold a direct 8.79% stake.

Hence the question remains if this deal with Mercury is the best deal on the cards for Apex shareholders? Should the company consider other options?

## Sun says negotiations are ongoing

> FROM PAGE 1

overseas business.

Sun explained that the cost of the ECRL would depend on the quantity of work.

The price would be different if the scope of work in the contract fluctuated.

For example, whether it is single track or double track, the complexity of the track alignment, and geological conditions along the route will all make a difference in terms of costing.

"The phase one of our EPCC contract with MRL totals RM46bil and the double-track and extension line contracts total RM20.78bil. So the total contract value is RM66.78bil," Sun said.

He said the railway would extend to the border with Thailand in the north and from Gombak to Port Klang.

From a technical perspective, over 30% of the ECRL alignment are bridges and it goes through many mountains, and also cuts across many rivers and highways.

"The geological analysis shows that ECRL goes through swamps in the east coast so we need to mitigate the soft foundation to prevent sinking of the base," Sun said.

In the flooded area of the east coast, Sun said CCCC needed to build many discharge channels and culverts to prevent floods.

ECRL will also go through the Titiwangsa Ranges and the tunnel will be the longest in South-East Asia.

Sun also noted that the contract was signed between two parties based on bilateral agreement with fair and equitable principles.

"We still have confidence and negotiations are still ongoing.

"But if the project is cancelled, we will protect our legal rights and interests according to law," he said.

Despite previous financial crises and trade uncertainties, CCCC's commitment to develop Malaysia in partnership with Malaysians remained unchanged.

"We set up our South-Eastern Asia regional management centre in KL, which oversees CCCC marketing and project management work for South-East Asia.

"So far, we have over 20 ongoing projects in Malaysia and they are proceeding well as per our contractual obligations," he said.

Sun also explained that ECRL is a project financed by preferential loans, and it is not an investment project.

"It is essentially a project financed by a low-interest loan from the Chinese government and the government will subsidise the bank to do that.

"Since the Malaysian government needs to provide sovereign guarantee for such loan, its national debt will increase.

"The fact that the project is financed by a preferential loan demonstrates the friendship between the two countries and bears great long-term significance for the economy and society of the host country," Sun pointed out.

To a question if CCCC would consider being an equity partner in ECRL, Sun said: "We are open for discussion. We can adopt the transit-oriented development (TOD) concept in the railway project."

He said in the Mombasa-Nairobi SGR Project, CCCC has successfully switched roles from a contractor to railway operator.

Going forward, Sun said CCCC is transforming itself from being an EPCC contractor to an investor, developer, as well as an operation service provider.

"We are actively seeking investment opportunities to help develop Malaysia. For example, we are exploring TOD along the ECRL.

"We plan to invest in targeted industries along the ECRL, and lead investments from China and other countries as well."

"Besides infrastructure development, we also hope to participate in other fields, such as property development and urban development," Sun added.

On dealing with the negative perception of Chinese company, Sun said companies in China and Malaysia were different in their own ways, and CCCC should not be tarred with the same brush.

## IHH venture faces unexpected variable with lira crisis

By DANIEL KHOO  
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**PETALING JAYA:** The surprising weakness in IHH Healthcare Bhd's share price over the previous week has once again highlighted some of the variables it has to juggle with in its growth strategy.

Apart from having to cope with startup costs from the new hospitals it had opened recently, the company is also now needing to contend with another unanticipated variable - the severely weakened Turkish lira.

This will reduce the amount that is repatriated back to Malaysia when it reports its quarterly earnings.

Turkey is also a country where the company operates in as one of its home markets and the lira continues to hover at very weak levels of 6.2783 to the US dollar, close to when the lira currency crisis crescendoed a month ago in August.

The company declined to comment for this article, and analysts remained cautious about Turkey.

A report in the beginning of the previous week by Affin Hwang Capital Research highlighted IHH's outlook in Turkey that might see it experiencing sustained losses in ringgit terms due to the sharp depreciation of the lira.

"This is due to the mismatch between the funding currency of its debt in euro, US dollar and operational currency of lira," it said.

Despite Affin Hwang having maintained its "buy" rating on the stock, IHH tumbled to the lowest levels in almost four years after the

**This is due to the mismatch between the funding currency of its debt in euro, US dollar and operational currency of lira.**

Affin Hwang Capital Research

report was circulated to its investors and associates.

Technical analysts said this might be the final leg of the downward trend being experienced, and the relative strength index had dipped into the oversold territory following the drop.

Fluctuations in its share price also do not change IHH's position as one of the main healthcare players in the industry, they noted.

The concerns in Turkey also added to other factors namely the startup costs it has to contend with before being able to break even and before these new hospital additions eventually contribute to its bottom line meaningfully.

Hong Leong Investment Bank (HLIB) Research's healthcare analyst Sheikh Abdullah told StarBiz that the startup costs pertained to IHH's new hospitals in Hong Kong: Gleneagles Hong Kong and Chengdu.

"Breakeven periods differ, but the general assumption we are taking into account is any-

where between three and five years.

"This would depend on factors such as the location, people demographics and income levels. Greenfields take three to five years to break even, but brownfield acquisitions are normally quicker," Sheikh said.

"The general rule of thumb is that startup costs for hospitals are around RM1mil a bed. For a 400-500 bed, the hospital would need 2,000 to 2,500 employees and half of this would need to have already been trained. The RM1mil would go towards wages, inventory, consumables, drugs and suppliers," he pointed out.

In HLIB Research's report on Aug 29, it said that IHH's first-half results for the financial year 2018 with core earnings of RM403.9mil made up 44.5% of HLIB's and 45.8% of consensus expectations.

The research house said this was below expectation and was due to higher finance and start-up costs that were associated with the newly opened hospitals.

On IHH's Turkey operations, HLIB Research said the company had indicated that it would accelerate its plans to reduce its foreign debt burden by converting its euro and US dollar debt into lira, and reduce the absolute amount outstanding through the disposal of non-core assets.

It pointed out that IHH faced borrowing costs of around 20%-25%, but on the flip side, the weakened lira had seen the hospital group also experiencing an influx of medical tourists, with around 30% of medical tourist volumes coming from private insurance patients.

# A game-changer model for Proton

X70 sport-utility vehicle gets good response from public, with about 5,000 bookings

By EUGENE MAHALINGAM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Proton Holdings Bhd's X70 sport-utility vehicle (SUV), which is set to be launched later this year, could just be the game-changer model that the struggling national car company has been waiting for to help turn it around.

Response to the model has been promising, having received some 5,000 bookings within a week of being made available to the public – a good sign for a company that has, for years now, been striving hard to rebuild its brand loyalty and regain consumer confidence in its products.

"The emergence of China's Zhejiang Geely Holding Group Co Ltd as a foreign strategic partner was a milestone for Proton and will help provide the national carmaker with the turnaround opportunities it has been needing all these years," said an industry observer.

Geely completed its acquisition of a 49.9% stake in Proton in September 2017. Vehicles engineered with Volvo technology, such as its GC9 sedan and the Boyue SUV (the platform on which the X70 is based on) have been a hit in China, the world's biggest auto market.

Geely reported a 54% jump in net income for the six months through June this year, surpassing its top-three Japanese rivals Nissan, Honda and Toyota to become the third-largest



**Latest offering:** The X70 Proton sports-utility vehicle could pave the way for future Proton models.

est carmaker in China.

China-based vehicles have, for a long time, been getting a "bad rap" from customers and industry observers due to their quality. However, in recent years, the demand for Chinese makes has been on the rise.

"Having models with Volvo-engineered technology has helped Geely grow by leaps and bounds," said an analyst.

"With proven technology and

European-like features, their models have been a hit in China; and it's no surprise why the model will be a hit here as well," he said, adding that the X70 could also pave the way for future Proton models.

Another analyst said having a rebadged vehicle would also bode well for Proton, especially for parent company DRB-Hicom Bhd, which has a 50.1% stake in the national carmaker.

"By having a rebadged vehicle,

Proton will no longer have to incur huge development costs in developing new models, as the cost will be incurred mostly by Geely. This will definitely help boost the national carmaker's bottom line.

"Building a model from the ground up is more expensive and if it doesn't do well, you will struggle to recoup your development cost."

Building a brand new model could cost north of RM700mil for Proton – but less than half of that

when collaborating with a partner, he said.

Reducing costs will certainly benefit DRB-Hicom, which is eager to turn around Proton.

Last month, DRB-Hicom announced that it is expected to make a gain of RM735.4mil from its proposed sale of Alam Flora Sdn Bhd to Malakoff Corp Bhd's unit.

DRB-Hicom said part of the proceeds from the proposed disposal would be used to repay its borrowings, as well as help turn around Proton.

For its first quarter ended June 30, 2018, DRB-Hicom suffered a net loss of RM66.60mil compared with a net loss of RM182.79mil in the previous corresponding period. Revenue dipped to RM2.65bil from RM3.13bil a year earlier.

The company said its earnings were affected largely due to lower sales of vehicles by Proton and certain other automotive companies.

In its notes accompanying its first-quarter results, DRB-Hicom, nevertheless, said it is optimistic about the prospects for its current financial year.

"The group's automotive sector is expected to pick up momentum with the impending Proton SUV to be launched by the end of 2018.

New product launches from other marques, as well as promotional activities, will act as catalysts to drive the sales volume further," it said.

## Opec, Russia rebuff Trump's call for immediate boost to oil output

**ALGIERS:** Opec's leader Saudi Arabia and its biggest oil-producer ally outside the group, Russia, ruled out any immediate, additional increase in crude output, effectively rebuffing US President Donald Trump's calls for action to cool the market.

"I do not influence prices," Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih told reporters as the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec) and non-Opec energy ministers gathered in Algiers for a meeting that ended with no formal recommendation for any additional supply boost.

Benchmark Brent oil reached US\$80 a barrel this month, prompting Trump to reiterate on Thursday his demand that Opec lower prices.

The price rally mainly stemmed from a decline in oil exports from Opec member Iran due to fresh US sanctions.

"We protect the countries of the Middle East, they would not be safe for very long without us, and yet they continue to push for higher and higher oil prices! We will remember. The Opec monopoly must get prices down now!" Trump wrote on Twitter.

Falih said Saudi Arabia had spare capacity to increase oil output but no such move was needed at the moment.

"My information is that the markets are adequately supplied. I don't know of any refiner in the world who is looking for oil and is not able to get it," Falih said.

Russian Energy Minister Alexander Novak said no immediate output increase was necessary, although he believed a trade war between China and the United States as well as US sanctions on Iran were creating new challenges for oil markets.



**Extra capacity:** Al-Falih speaks to journalists during Opec's 10th meeting of the Joint Ministerial Committee to monitor the oil production reduction agreement of Opec and non-Opec members, in Algiers, Algeria. He says Saudi Arabia has spare capacity to increase oil output but no such move is needed at the moment. — AP

Oman's Oil Minister Mohammed bin Hamad Al-Rumhy and Kuwaiti counterpart Bakht al-Rashidi told reporters after yesterday's talks that producers had agreed they needed to focus on reaching 100% compliance with production cuts agreed in June.

That effectively means compensating for falling Iranian production. Al-Rumhy said the exact mech-

anism for doing so had not been discussed.

The statement from Trump, meanwhile, was not his first criticism of Opec.

Higher gasoline prices for US consumers could create a political headache for Republican Trump before mid-term congressional elections in November.

Iran, Opec's third-largest produc-

er, has accused Trump of orchestrating the oil price rally by imposing sanctions on Tehran and accused its regional arch-rival Saudi Arabia of bowing to US pressure.

Yesterday, Iranian Oil Minister Bijan Zanganeh said Trump's tweet "was the biggest insult to Washington's allies in the Middle East".

Seeking to reverse a downturn

in oil prices that began in 2014, Opec, Russia and other allies decided in late 2016 to reduce supply by some 1.8 million barrels per day (bpd).

In June this year, however, after months of cutting by more than their pact had called for, largely due to involuntary reductions from Venezuela and other producers, they agreed to boost output by returning to 100% compliance.

That equates to an increase of about 1 million bpd, but the latest figures show they are some way from achieving that target.

In August, Opec and its allies cut production by 600,000 bpd more than their pact required, mainly as a result of falling output in Iran as customers in Europe and Asia reduced purchases ahead of the US sanctions deadline.

Iran told Opec its production had been steady in August at 3.8 million bpd. Opec's own estimates, according to its secondary sources such as researchers and ship-trackers, put Iranian output at 3.58 million bpd.

Falih said returning to 100% compliance was the main objective and should be achieved in the next two to three months.

Although he refrained from specifying how that could be done, Saudi Arabia is the only oil producer with significant spare capacity.

"We have the consensus that we need to offset reductions and achieve 100% compliance, which means we can produce significantly more than we are producing today if there is demand," Falih said.

"The biggest issue is not with the producing countries, it's with the refiners, it's with the demand. We in Saudi Arabia have not seen demand for any additional barrel that we did not produce." — Reuters

By DALJIT DHESI  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Despite the escalation in the US-China trade war which may dent exports of emerging markets, Malaysia is poised to maintain a trade surplus for this year and 2019, albeit slightly lower than in 2017.

Towards this end, some economists told *StarBiz* that they are projecting a current account surplus of between 2% and 2.5% of gross domestic product (GDP) for 2018 and 2019. Last year, current account surplus-to-GDP stood at 3%.

As an export-reliant nation, the country's exports accounted for close to 73% of its GDP last year, of which China and the US were the two biggest trading partners.

AmBank Group chief economist Anthony Dass told *StarBiz* that Malaysia's exports are expected to grow around 7% in 2018 and 5% in 2019, based on the bank's global export volume growth projected at 4% and 3.5%, respectively, for this year and next.

He said the escalation in trade conflict between China and the US would result in some "knock-on" effect on Malaysia's trade, both directly and indirectly, as the US and China are the nation's two biggest trading partners with an exposure of 9.5% and 13.5%, respectively, bringing the cumulative exposure to 23% of trade.

The trade war with the imposition of higher import duties to the US would inflict secondary effects on Malaysia because of its integrated supply chains most notably through China, as well as through a shift in demand/supply and price dynamics of key inputs, including commodities, he said.

Business activities in the areas like electronic components such as telecommunications equipment and electrical apparatus and parts – which are inputs for final products – account for 21% of Malaysia's total exports.

“However, the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership among the 11 remaining members of the original Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), minus the US, could offer some new opportunities like access into new markets that would benefit palm oil, rubber and other electronics exporters.

The weak ringgit will provide

# Malaysia to maintain trade surplus despite trade war

Exports expected to grow around 7% in 2018 and 5% in 2019



**Major partners:** Container ships seen at Port of Tanjung Pelepas. As an export-reliant nation, Malaysia's exports accounted for close to 73% of its GDP last year, of which China and the US were the two biggest trading partners.

some competitive edge. So, we foresee the economy to maintain trade surplus as imports is also expected to soften.

“That means, the current account surplus is expected to hover around 2%-2.5% of GDP in 2018 and 2019, slightly lower than the 3% of GDP in 2017,” Dass added.

OCBC Bank (M) Bhd head of global treasury Stanley Tan said although trade tension escalation may adversely affect demand for Malaysian intermediate goods, this would potentially be mitigated by substitution effects as businesses searched for alternative supply chains.

“Electrical and electronic (E&E) exports, which constitute an increasing portion of total exports, could also find support in the US' willingness to grant certain exemptions (for example, Apple product inputs being a case in point), which may set a precedent for other E&E-

**For 2019, we foresee the growth momentum to moderate further, with headline GDP growth of 4.3% to 4.8%.**

Nor Zahidi Alias

tion and investment.

“Specifically, growth will be adversely affected by government expenditure cuts while the reinstatement of sales and service tax will likely drag private consumption growth down in the coming quarters.

“External trade will also act as a drag to headline growth as export performance is affected by global uncertainties due to the escalating trade war.

“The high base factor in the second half of 2017 also contributes to our lower growth projection for the second half of 2018. As for 2019, we foresee the growth momentum to moderate further, with headline GDP growth of 4.3% to 4.8%,” he noted.

On the likelihood of more capital outflows from Malaysia due to the geopolitical risks, Zahidi said if the negative sentiment towards emerging market economies persists in the near term, Malaysia could record additional outflows from its financial market as foreign capital rushed back to safe-haven financial assets.

Net foreign capital outflows in Malaysia's bond and equity markets totalled about RM28bil between January-August 2018.

On the currency outlook, Tan said OCBC Bank has revised the US dol-



**Tan:** Looking ahead, we see little reason for the ringgit to strengthen at this time while the Pakatan Harapan government sorts out the delicate fiscal balancing act.

lar-ringgit projection upwards to 4.1689 by year-end and 4.1922 for June 2019.

“Looking ahead, we see little reason for the ringgit to strengthen at this time while the Pakatan Harapan government sorts out the delicate fiscal balancing act, stemming from the discovery of higher government indebtedness and financial obligations,” he said.

Zahidi said on a real-effective exchange-rate basis (exchange rate against major trading partners and adjusted to inflation), the ringgit looked relatively low and attractive by historical standard.

However, he said the risk of a slight weakness against the greenback in the near term could not be ruled out, especially if the strength of the US dollar continued in the near term.

Dass said currency market volatility is still on the rise, led primarily by the emergence of severe exchange-rate adjustments in the developing market.

“At the same time, Malaysia's domestic scenario should be presenting a more clearer picture. Hence, in the near term, we foresee ringgit to exhibit a volatility of 2%-3% from the current levels, with the trend moving into a strengthening note as we get into 2019,” he said.

## CIMB in Thomson Reuters' diversity index

**KUALA LUMPUR:** CIMB Group Holdings Bhd has been ranked top 100 most diverse and inclusive organisations globally by Thomson Reuters' Diversity & Inclusion (D&I) Index 2018.

The ranking is based on the media company's environmental, social, and governance (ESG) data, designed to objectively measure the relative performance of more than 7,000 companies globally.

Thomson Reuters D&I Index highlights companies leading the way in incorporating diversity and inclusion into their company strategy.

The index provides an additional lens to investment professionals and investors alike to evaluate companies for their ESG strategies, which have a bearing on long-term



opportunities and investment risks, as more and more investors value the societal and business benefits of investing in diverse and inclusive organisations.

CIMB Group chief executive

officer Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz (pic) said the recognition in Thomson Reuters D&I Index affirmed the banking group's efforts to create a positive impact not only economically, but also socially and environmentally.

“CIMB takes its commitment to all our stakeholders seriously,” he said in a statement.

“In terms of our people, we have consciously transformed CIMB into a workplace that attracts and retains a team of talents, currently comprising 34 nationalities spread across 15 countries.

“As for ESG-related efforts, our corporate social responsibility arm, CIMB Foundation, has expended over RM120mil to benefit about 700,000 lives since its inception in 2007,” he added.

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Plain speaking  
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THE trade fights seem to be getting out of hand, and increasingly chaotic, uprooting consumers and producers.

Those that may benefit from relocations out of the US and China may likely lose out in the end, as global growth and trade get impacted.

A big question is how sustainable would these plans be in this frothy situation?

China's latest strategies to boost domestic consumption may provide some offsetting measures to its slowdown but the way ahead is still uncertain.

Irked by China's retaliatory stance and continuous record US trade deficits with China, President Donald Trump has ratcheted up US tariffs of 10% initially to cover an additional US\$200bil of Chinese imports.

There are threats of 25% tariffs next year, possible tariffs on an additional US\$267bil of Chinese goods, and "great and fast retaliation" if China targets US farmers, ranchers and/or industrial workers.

China, said to have cancelled trade talks for this week, retaliated with just 5% to 10% tariffs on US\$60bil on US imports but this does not mean they have lost their bullets.

To further increase imports, China plans to lower the average tariff rate on goods from most of its trading partners, for a second time since July.

# Destructive trade fights put all at risk



**Tariff cut:** College students stand at a viewing platform overlooking the Yangshan Deep Water Port in Shanghai. To further increase imports, China plans to lower the average tariff rate on goods from most of its trading partners, for a second time since July. — Bloomberg

China's holdings of US Treasuries dropped to their lowest level since January, a modest change, but still a closely tracked development.

Although devaluation is currently not a trade weapon, the level of the yuan will be closely monitored; there are predictions for the yuan to go past 7.0 per dollar.

The yuan's daily reference rate was fixed at a three-week low at 6.8554 per dollar, a day after fresh US tariffs were announced but has remained stable.

China markets, which are already down by US\$5 trillion, had gushed down further on the latest US salvo, but improved on reports of shoring up by their Plunge Protection Team.

Global markets may have turned sanguine on the lower-than-expected tariffs on both sides, and even blasé on their impact on global growth.

Still providing confidence is the trend of the purchasing managers index, an indicator of the health of

the manufacturing sector, for developed and regional countries for the past three months.

"Without any clear sign of weakness due to trade disputes, this still looks like a short-term sentiment-driven condition," said Danny Wong, CEO, Areca Capital.

Long term, things can go either way; resolution of the tariff dispute (there may be fresh talks after the US mid-terms) or escalation into something else, as levels beyond tariffs are hit.

It may even turn out to be a personality clash between a temperamental US leader and an unbudging Chinese one for whom this issue is also a matter of pride.

Both countries have sensitive technologies; the US has some that cannot be found elsewhere.

The US may think China has more to lose; Chinese markets are collapsing while US markets are holding up.

China's economy is slowing, while huge tax cuts are boosting the US economy.

China, which has endured tougher times, may think the US has more to lose; in the case of a hard landing, could China have more ammunition in its huge reserves, array of fiscal and monetary tools and domestic retail spending?

"Do not underestimate China," said Nor Zahidi Alias, chief economist, Malaysian Rating Corporation. "Minor belt-tightening measures are nothing to the Chinese compared to what they have experienced in the past few decades."

The Chinese can play the waiting

game; Eastern culture teaches them to be patient and willing to sacrifice to safeguard their pride.

Dire warnings should not be overlooked amidst upheavals of US consumers being hit with higher prices, manufacturers scrambling for alternative supply chains and production bases, and US companies operating in China being forced to accept potentially lower earnings.

"Destructive," "deepening and escalating with elevated risks to world growth," are warnings from Vincent Khoo, head of research, UOB Kayhian, and Lee Heng Guie, executive director, Socio Economic Research Centre.

Within the US\$20 trillion and US\$14 trillion economies of the US and China respectively, these tariffs may not seem very large but the effects can spiral.

A "significant jump in fears" over the impact of the trade war was revealed in the CNBC Global CFO survey; 75% of respondents expect some negative impact and 38% have incurred higher input costs.

Without roadmaps and negotiations on the next plan of action, this trade fiasco gets onto slippery slopes, as announcements are suddenly thrown out and companies have to hastily draw out "strategies for survival."

Overall, "it is unclear where we're going to get to," said Jamie Dimon, chairman and CEO of JP Morgan Chase.

Columnist Yap Leng Kuen notes the possible use of wrong strategies.

# Score gets RM1.47b financial boost

Big allocation is to finance infrastructure projects like roads, electricity and water

By JACK WONG  
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**KUCHING:** Sarawak Corridor of Renewable Energy's (Score) newly created Upper Rajang development area has received a major financial boost with a state funding of RM1.47bil for its various projects.

The big allocation is mainly to finance infrastructure projects like roads, electricity and water, to be fast tracked in the next two years, according to Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister and Minister for Infrastructure Development and Transportation Tan Sri Dr James Masing.

Masing chairs the Upper Rajang Development Agency (Urda), which is one of the three agencies set up following the extension of Score boundary by 30% to about 100,000 sq km from 77,000 sq km early this year.

The other two are the Highland Development Agency and Northern Regional Development Agency.

Urda oversees the development of 41,186 sq km, which covers eight state constituencies and three parliamentary seats in several districts.

Upper Rajang, which lacks good infrastructure and is largely inaccessible by a road network (other than logging tracks), is endowed with abundant natural resources, such as hydro power and coal.

It is already the home to the 2,400MW Bakun hydroelectric dam and 944MW Murum dam. Under construction there is the RM9.5bil Baleh dam (1,285MW), scheduled to come on stream by 2025.



**Mega project:** Murum dam in operation. Sarawak Energy Bhd, which built the Murum dam and is now undertaking the Baleh dam project, has a long-term plan to construct a 300MW coal-fired power plant in Merit Pila, about 75km from Kapit in the Upper Rajang.

The Bakun and Murum dams are now powering energy-intensive industries – such as aluminium, ferro alloys and manganese smelters – in Samalaju Industrial Park, Bintulu.

Sarawak Energy Bhd, which built the Murum dam and is now undertaking the Baleh dam project, has a long-term plan to construct a 300MW coal-fired power plant in Merit Pila, about 75km from Kapit

in the Upper Rajang. Merit Pila has an estimated coal reserves of 15 million tonnes.

Masing, the long-serving Baleh assemblyman, said the RM1.47bil allocation approved by Chief Minister Datuk Patinggi Abang Johari Tun Openg was based on proposed projects recommended by Urda's special lab.

Baleh constituency will get the bulk (RM307.5mil) of the allocation

and the rest will be shared by the other constituencies – Pelagus (RM212mil), Katibas (RM210mil), Murum (RM183.5mil), Belaga (RM180mil), Bukit Goram (RM158mil), Machan (RM120mil) and Ngemah (RM101mil).

"These (proposed) projects must take off over the next two years. So, Urda has to act fast (to see their timely smooth implementation)," said Masing at a briefing given by

The success of Score (which initially covers only central Sarawak) in attracting mega manufacturing industries has prompted the state government to extend its boundary to bring the next phase of development and economic growth to the interiors.

Last month, Ismawi said Score had attracted about RM79.3bil investments from both the public and private sectors. Approved total private investments in 22 projects totalled RM33.6bil, and 10 of these projects, mostly energy-intensive, are in operation.

# End of HK's easy money era affecting home prices

Market has underestimated the pace of interest rate increases

**HONG KONG:** A shock jump in Hong Kong's currency is signalling a decade-long liquidity party is finally coming to an end. That may be bad news for the city's housing market.

The Hong Kong dollar surged as much as 0.6% last Friday, its biggest gain in 15 years. While traders gave differing reasons for the move, the common theme was concern that the city's borrowing costs will catch up with those in the US as the Federal Reserve continues to hike rates.

A currency peg with the US, open financial borders and a booming economy meant Hong Kong property was one of the greatest beneficiaries of ultra-low lending costs in the wake of the global financial crisis.

Home prices rose more than 170% in the past decade making the city the world's least affordable. Citigroup Inc and CLSA Ltd are among those warning of a reversal on expectations that mortgage servicing costs will rise.

"The market has underestimated the pace of interest rate increases in Hong Kong," said Kevin Lai, chief economist for Asia ex-Japan at Daiwa Capital Markets Hong Kong Ltd. This "will bring pressure to the property market and leveraged home buyers."

After trading at the weak end of the band for months, prompting repeated interven-

**The short-Hong Kong dollar carry trade has come to an end.**

Ken Peng

tions by the city's de facto central bank, the Hong Kong dollar rocketed into the stronger half of the spectrum last Friday.

The three-month interbank rate, known as Hibor, was last at 2.125%, its highest level in almost a decade. A narrowing spread with US Libor is making a previously profitable trade of selling Hong Kong dollars to buy higher yielding US assets less appealing.

"The short-Hong Kong dollar carry trade has come to an end," said Ken Peng, an investment strategist at Citi Private Bank in Hong Kong. "Friday's move suggests borrowing costs in Hong Kong have tightened a lot and will tighten further."

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority said in e-mailed comments that while it didn't want to comment on last Friday's movement in the currency, "market participants generally view the elevated interbank interest rates as

a contributing factor."

While residential prices in Hong Kong's secondary market have climbed 16% over the past 12 months, according to Centraline Property Agency, developers have begun to offer perks such as free rail tickets to accelerate sales.

Some are selling apartments at discounts, and others aren't providing mortgages due to concern that rising borrowing costs may increase defaults. Financial Secretary Paul Chan said this month he saw signs the market is cooling.

Predicting declines in Hong Kong's property market hasn't been a profitable exercise in the past, with a home-price slump in 2015-2016 quickly followed by new record-highs.

But expectations are growing that banks will increase the so-called prime rate, which caps the costs of mortgage repayments for many homeowners, for the first time since 2006.

"We expect banks to hike prime rate twice this year by a total of 50 basis points, as Hibor rises with a shrinking liquidity pool and Fed hikes," said Frank Lee, acting chief investment officer for North Asia at DBS Bank (HK) Ltd.

"It will hurt property market sentiment." — Bloomberg

## Indonesia contends with aggressive Chinese online lenders

**JAKARTA:** Indonesian authorities have generally opened their arms to fintech companies offering online loans in South-East Asia's biggest economy, viewing them as a way of getting credit to tens of millions of people often unable to access bank lending.

However, the arrival of a wave of predominantly Chinese fintech lenders, who often do not register and employ aggressive debt collection practices, is now alarming regulators.

For Chinese platforms, Indonesia's youthful market of over 260 million people is an attractive target, particularly after a crackdown on the loosely regulated micro-credit sector at home.

Four people in Indonesia who failed to repay loans on time told *Reuters* that Chinese fintech lenders took control of their phone contacts — permission is granted when the app is installed — and harassed their colleagues and friends.

One of them, Nesika Yustines, a 26-year-old secretary in the Tangerang area near Jakarta, said she was stunned when debt collectors repeatedly called her boss to say she had a week to pay back her loan and 20% interest.

"They asked for payment from my boss and my boyfriend," she said. "It's embarrassing, it's as if they had become collateral in this."

Hendrikus Passagi, who oversees fintech for Indonesia's financial regulator OJK, said some borrowers had lost their jobs because of such calls.

"Those practices go against God. We are a religious country. In Indonesia, if I lend the money to you and you don't pay, I will not come to your house and humiliate you," he said.

In China, financial regulators issued tough new rules on online micro-lenders last December, after a barrage of criticism over their tactics.

Looking to set up in new markets, Chinese online lenders have come in groups to Indonesia since 2017 to meet officials, bankers, and executives in order to set up operations, according to two Chinese-based businessmen organising such tours.

Chinese lenders would often set up shell companies in Hong Kong and Singapore to bypass Beijing's strict controls over cross-border money flows and hire proxy agents as local partners, said Jin Xiang, who runs BlueBoat Global, a company based in Beijing dedicated to helping companies explore new markets.

His company has been organising tours to Indonesia since late 2017, and the latest tour was conducted last month.

Indonesian regulator OJK produced a blacklist of 226 banned fintech lenders in July and updated it in early September to 407 banned platforms.

The regulator told *Reuters* more than half were Chinese, but they also included a handful of Eastern European lenders as well as a US lender.

Fintech lenders, who run platforms designed to disburse relatively small loans to individuals and small businesses, are viewed by Indonesian authorities as part of the solution to a US\$73bil yearly shortfall between the country's estimated financing needs and the amount banks provide.

The sector is still growing quickly. Indonesia's 64 registered fintech lenders disbursed US\$534mil between January and the end of July while earlier this month, Go-Jek, the country's biggest online platform, partnered with three local peer-to-peer lenders as part of its move deeper into fintech.

But despite the efforts of Indonesian officials, with help from Google, to block the apps and websites offered by illegal lenders, borrowers say many continue to operate and demand repayment even after being banned. — Reuters

## NYSE volume spikes on sector reshuffle



**Active stocks:** Traders work on the floor at the New York Stock Exchange in New York. Among the most active stocks on the New York Stock Exchange and Nasdaq last Friday were AT&T, Verizon Communications and Facebook, all of which will be in the new communication services sector. — AFP

"The assets associated with the information technology ETF (exchange-traded fund) are greater, so this is actually a net positive for eBay in that fund managers will have to buy more shares than they will have to sell," said Ivan Cajic, head of index research at ITG in New York.

"It will be a net positive demand for eBay."

Apple will remain in the tech sector but will see its share float fall about 5% due to Berkshire Hathaway's growing position in the iPhone maker. ITG expects fund managers will need to sell more than 39 million shares due to the smaller float.

Some strategists expect the sector changes to cause little disruption to the market because money managers have had a long time to prepare. S&P Dow Jones Indices announced the overhaul in November 2017.

"It has been well, well publicised that they were doing this, so it should not create all

kinds of drama," said Ken Polcari, director of the NYSE floor division at O'Neil Securities in New York.

Others said reshuffling by ETFs that are actively managed may result in higher volatility in the short term as managers rotate money to new areas.

Those in charge of actively managed funds could be adjusting positions for weeks following the sector changes, said Steven DeSanctis, equity strategist at Jefferies in New York.

"At the end of the day, large-cap growth managers are going to be really overweight communication services," he said.

"That has some potential to cause some interesting swings over the next several weeks," DeSanctis said.

"A lot of investment managers try to keep their sector weights within a certain boundary plus or minus a couple of hundred basis points." — Reuters

# STAR SMEBIZ

For Smart Malaysian Entrepreneurs



**New revenue stream:** GGS has obtained four licences for biomass-to-energy and biogas-to-energy projects.

## A brilliant rebound

Biomass products manufacturer came out of the pit and onto the world stage

By C.H. GOH  
starsmebiz@thestar.com.my

AROUND 12 years ago, Datuk Joseph Lim Heng Ee had the biggest setback in his career as an entrepreneur. Due to a lack of trust over how the company's funds were managed, Lim was forced out from a biomass business he co-founded with two other partners.

"Our first venture into the biomass industry, converting palm oil waste into long dry fibre, was doing well. We exported around 30 container loads every month. All was well until greed took a toll on the partnership," said Lim of those bitter lessons from his earlier days in business.

Depressed with the treatment he had received, Lim became reclusive and withdrew from the business world. But an advice from his wife prompted him to bounce back with new determination.

Leveraging on his network and experience, he muscled his way back into the business he lost.

He forged a new alliance with his business partner Ngan Teng Ye from Ngan & Ngan Holdings – an investment holdings company with interest in oil palm plantation and mills – and together, they formed Global Green Synergy (GGS) in 2008. The company took up an investment of RM3mil.

Ngan is the eldest son of the late oil palm plantation tycoon Tan Sri Ngan Ching Wen.

Initially, GGS only traded biomass products. But it soon expanded and took to processing and producing its own products.

As GGS' managing director, Lim has become a well-known figure in the green business scene, having built up his reputation as a pioneering biomass company which focuses on turning palm waste into revenue-generating bio-products.

The company mainly converts palm oil waste (biomass) into palm fibre, palm pellet and other palm-related products. It also makes the machines that produce these products.

Meanwhile, Ngan & Ngan Holdings provides a steady supply of raw materials for GGS' biomass business, says Lim.

GGS exports up to 100 containers of dry fibre per month.

Around 99% of GGS' products are exported to China.

North Asia, particularly Hong Kong and China, is also a market where Lim has established strong network and partnerships that play a key role in the company's growth story.

Lim is an admirer of the creativity and dynamism of small but vibrant economies such as Hong Kong.

With his established contacts in these markets, Lim managed to ride on the growing appetite for environmental technology ventures in the largest Asian economy. One example is its partnership with China's Elion Resources Group which secured the RMB1bil project to green the Kubuqi Desert in Inner Mongolia. GGS also tied-up with Chinalight (Guangzhou) Import & Export Corp in 2013 to supply biomass pellets.

Back in 2013, the company also set up a joint venture with the Malaysia Palm Oil



**Resourceful:** After a period of absence, Lim muscled his way back into the business through his network.

Board to produce palm bio-briquette that can be used as biofuel.

Now the company prides itself as the first in the country to manufacture bio-charcoal, through a carbonisation technology it invented. Having built a track record in the biomass business, GGS was chosen to partner Japan's Sumitomo Corp and Nippon Steel Engineering in the production of biofuel products in Perak.

### Eyeing lucrative biomass products

Lim's exposure to the business world started young. He had joined his father's plastic factory after graduating from Chung Hwa Chinese Independent High School in Kuala Lumpur. That seemed a likely path for him to

continue on.

However, a visit to a palm oil mill changed his outlook and career path.

Upon seeing the massive environmental devastation brought about by indiscriminate dumping of palm waste, the young Lim was determined to enter the green business.

Lim never quite forgot his purpose for being in the industry.

In GGS, he looked into the development of many new technologies to help the global palm oil processing industry reduce CO2 emissions and create renewable energy from its waste.

The company has carried out numerous research efforts to come up with suitable solutions. Over the last 10 year, the company has invested around RM20mil to research

# Vast potential in renewables

> FROM PAGE 7

and develop new product lines.

But Lim has set his sight on the ultimate prize when it comes to biomass business. There are plans to diversify into higher value downstream products by turning fresh fruit bunch waste into paper pulps.

There are not many companies that have been successful on this front, mainly due to the lack of technology or scale.

But given the sheer size of the market and growing demand for sustainably sourced papers, Lim sees this as one of the most lucrative biomass products.

"We have invested extensively in R&D, with a six person research team dedicated to complete all the necessary research and technologies to make this product. The business feasibility study is the last step, and it will be completed before the end of this year," says Lim.

## Renewable energy

With the successes that it has achieved, GGS has now caught the attention of major corporations and investors. But the partners are not interested to sell any portion of their stakes.

Rather, they are thinking of listing the company in one or two years' time after registering a solid track record in profitability. GGS

only became profitable in 2012.

However, GGS has received approaches from investors interested to invest in its biomass renewable energy (RE) projects, the company's latest foray in the biomass industry. Lim welcomes any queries from interested parties for this segment.

He notes that most investors prefer to have a majority control in projects such as these, but there is a restriction under Malaysia's regulation which requires local players to hold at least 51% stake in the company to qualify for the feed-in-tariff (FiT) system.

The FiT system obliges Distribution Licensees to buy electricity produced by Feed-in Approval Holders from renewable resources. Distribution Licensees will also pay for renewable energy supplied to the electricity grid for a specific duration.

According to the Sustainable Energy Development Authority (SEDA), by guaranteeing access to the grid and setting a favourable price per unit of renewable energy, the FiT mechanism would ensure that renewable energy becomes a viable and sound long-term investment.

GGS has obtained four licences for biomass-to-energy and biogas-to-energy projects, with total production capacity of up to 12MW. The first one, with capacity for three MegaWatt is expected to come onstream by the end of this year.



**Generating wealth from waste:** The company converts palm oil waste (biomass) into palm fibre, palm pellet and other palm-related products.

It has signed a 16-year power purchase agreement with SEDA.

Lim says the company's revenue for 2018 is expected to reach RM35mil, while next year's revenue is projected to surge to RM50mil with additional contribution coming in from the RE division.

Finding the right formula to be profitable in the biomass and eco-friendly business is

never easy, as most of the technologies are at the early stage of adoption, making costs uncompetitive. Additionally, the market size is relatively small.

Lim, however, believe the company is beginning to get traction in an industry that is widely viewed as the business of the future and he hopes to inspire others to adopt green practices in their businesses too.

# Green energy source going to waste

BEING a major agricultural commodity producer in the region, Malaysia produces at least 168 million tonnes of biomass, including timber and oil palm waste, rice husks, coconut trunk fibres, municipal waste and sugarcane waste annually.

This puts the country in a good position to promote the use of biomass as a renewable energy source.

Among the various agricultural waste we produce, oil palm has always been seen as the core agro-based biomass that can provide the scale needed to make it a viable business. With more than five million hectares of land under oil palm plantation, oil palm waste, by far, constitutes the largest share of agro waste. Over 75% of total planted area are located in just four states – Sabah, Sarawak, Johor and Pahang.

This is certainly a good opportunity to exploit for Global Green Synergy managing director Datuk Joseph Lim Heng Ee.

Lim and his partner set their sight on the "clean and green" renewable energy (RE) initiative after noticing the millions of tonnes of biomass palm residues – empty fruit bunches and fibres – that are left to rot at the plantations, which harm the environment as they release the greenhouse gas methane.

"We have an abundant supply of biomass. Biogas, or biomass from wastes, is a major part of solid waste from many sources which is biodegradable. When there is biodegradation, the major portion of it is biogas," says Lim. For Lim, building biomass and biogas boilers seemed a logical next step, particularly to complement the oil palm plantation arm of its partner, Ngan & Ngan Holdings.

However, not as many players are actively tapping this source of renewable energy. A large amount of these wastes go unutilised. It was once said that "millions of ringgit are going down the drain due to the wastage of biomass and biogas potential resulting from palm oil mill effluent".

The government plays an important role in promoting biomass as part of the alternative energy mix. It has identified the biomass industry as a crucial driver in catalysing Malaysia's shift towards sustainable development and a low-carbon economy.

In the National Biomass Strategy 2020 blueprint launched in 2011, Malaysia is projected to produce up to 80 million tonnes of biomass annually by 2020, creating business opportunities worth billions. Palm biomass is seen as contributing RM30bil to the gross national income (GNI) by 2020.

The Department of Environment and the



Untapped opportunity: With more than five million hectares of land under oil palm plantation, oil palm waste constitutes the largest share of agro waste in the country. — Bloomberg

Malaysian Palm Oil Board have set stringent environmental targets, a push factor for the industry to move towards stricter waste management. However, the industry notes that execution of policy lacks coherence.

Additionally, support from the industry is not forthcoming.

Palm oil mills do not see biogas as a worthwhile investment as most mills prefer to harness biomass as a cheaper alternative for bioenergy. Additionally, mills tend to lack grid access while those that have access find the feed-in-tariff (FiT) rates unattractive given the heavy initial investments required.

It seems more economical for mills to export them as biomass fibre.

There needs to be better enforcement and,

perhaps, a review of some of the related policies to promote more biogas or biomass energy development.

To see how far Malaysia can go with its renewable energy industry, observers point to Thailand as an example.

Thailand produces around 2,200MW or almost 7% of its total national electricity generation from biomass sources. This compares with Malaysia's less than 100MW, or 0.6% of its electricity generation in 2013.

If done right, Malaysia can have the capacity to catch up to Thailand as the leading producer of renewable energy in the region by harnessing the abundant by-products from the country's palm oil industry. — C. H. GOH

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By JOY LEE  
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LOCAL ticketing app Stubapp is optimistic that it can grow in tandem with the local football industry following ongoing plans to privatise the Malaysian football league system.

But unlike other startups, chief executive officer Faisal Karim says it will be a slow and steady growth.

"It's a very slow transition for the industry. It's still an ongoing process. The full transition would probably take up till 2020. But we will do our best in the meantime," he says.

Stubapp started off in early 2015 as a ticketing platform focused on football matches. It has also expanded into entertainment and outdoor events.

Faisal, a mechanical engineer and self-professed football fan, along with his partner chief technology officer Ridwan Rahman, founded the company to provide local football fans with the convenience of e-ticketing.

"In Malaysia, tickets for football are usually only sold on match day. So you get people queueing for hours and there will be huge traffic jams at the stadium. So we thought of doing e-ticketing for the fans, like how you can buy movie tickets online," he explains.

While the idea seemed good, their target audience was a little hard to reach.

Faisal notes that the majority of its customer demographic are from the sub-urban areas and are usually of the middle-low educated group. They preferred paying in cash and were more comfortable handling physical tickets.

This meant that it would take more money and effort to educate them to buy tickets through mobile or online channels.

When Stubapp launched its mobile app after obtaining a commercialisation grant from Cradle in 2016, they found that 20% to 30% of its customers were from the suburbs.

"So we try to encourage them to use the app by making it very user friendly. And to make it easier, we also allow them to make cash payments at 7-Eleven stores after pre-booking their tickets on the app. So we provide them with various platforms to make payment," he says.

About 51% of its transactions are carried out in cash, while 40% are done through online banking and only 9% through credit cards.

Another challenge that Stubapp had was to convince football clubs to sell their tickets online.

"Tickets are only released on match day

# Growing on the potential of domestic football

E-ticketing startup hopes to add more value to football fans and clubs

because they worry about the duplication of tickets. But we can help them with security features which is our QR code," Faisal says.

He points out that in the first two years of operations, Stubapp only managed to get two football clubs on board its app. It was only this year that the team managed to convince more clubs to allocate them a portion of seats to be sold through the app.

"They'll give us 20% to 30% of seats. There are about 15 to 20 matches a year. On average, we are selling more than 50% of our quota. If we hit about 80%, they'll give us more," he adds.

He notes that most football clubs are state-funded, hence, they are not profit-driven entities.

But as the industry moves to privatisation, Faisal foresees more initiative to boost revenue, including raising ticket sales. This will be a boost for Stubapp.

"We can expand into other things as well like selling merchandise and f&b. We can add on more revenue stream for the clubs," he says.

At the moment, the company makes a commission from the clubs for every ticket that it sells.

Stubapp hopes to build on its base in the football field. It is expanding into ticketing for music and entertainment events that cater to the same customer base.

Eventually, Faisal hope to take the startup to the region.

Last June, it raised a little over RM500,000 through an equity crowdfunding (ECF) campaign. Faisal's team parted with 23% stake for the amount, which will be used to beef up its technology and for marketing activities.

Among the investors that took part in the ECF round was an engineering company, which produces kiosks and self-operated machines. The investor took up the bulk of the stake on offer.



**A good kick:** Faisal and his team are trying to help the local football industry.

"This investor see a potential for us to grow into physical ticketing. In Japan, for example, you can go to any 7-Eleven and there will be a machine there for you to buy tickets for any event. That is a model that we can study. They have the hardware expertise."

"Based on our data, only 10% of our customers will buy online. So if we do physical ticketing, the customer conversion cost and technology can be lower," he says.

At the moment, Stubapp has some 45,000 registered users, half of them are active buyers.

Meanwhile, business development V. Prashant notes the potential for local football.

"Football is a growing industry. If you look at China, they are picking up players. So it is a growing industry. The quality of matches

here is not on par with the big leagues. That's why Malaysians don't really watch it.

"But if the domestic industry can privatise, the sports will grow in terms of marketing. A lot more sponsors will come in and the clubs will look for more quality players. And this will get more locals to be interested in the leagues," says Prashant.

"Stadiums have sitting capacity for 30,000. For hot matches, it will be a full house. Otherwise, on average, it is only 30% to 50% filled. So there is also a lot of potential for us to tackle the other 50%. We can't control the quality of matches but we can do our part with technology, by adding more value so that more people will want to go to the stadiums."

"If we manage to do this, I think other events will not be a problem for us," adds Faisal.

## SMEs need to ride digital wave to progress



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**Going further:** (from left) Koh, Nadhir, Leow and Seah will look at how SMEs can take their business digital.

organising SMEBiz Think Tank on October 2 at New World Petaling Jaya Hotel.

This is part of The Star's effort to support small enterprises under The Star Outstanding Business Awards (SOBA) initiative.

The event is aimed at helping SMEs thrive in the era of change and provide them with a platform to learn from the experiences of other companies that have succeeded in this area.

Some of the panel discussions that will be carried out at SMEBiz Think Tank will focus on helping small businesses manoeuvre through the disruption faced in this digital age and how they can thrive by going digital.

In "Disruption in the SME Market", Photobook Worldwide chief executive officer Leow Wee Jonn and Heng Hiap Industries managing director Seah Kian Hoe will be sharing their experiences on how they've managed to ensure their businesses remain relevant amid changes in the market.

Meanwhile, in "From Traditional to Digital", participants will be able to draw learnings from panellists Golden Screen Cinemas chief executive officer Koh Mei Lee and TheLorry.com co-founder and executive director Nadhir Ashiq on changing business models that incorporate digital elements. The use of technology can indeed help future-proof a business as competition increases.

Participants of SMEBiz Think Tank will also have the opportunity to network with various industry experts and with companies and executives across the board.

The fee for the full-day event is RM300 per person and is HRDF claimable.

SMEBiz Think Tank is organised by Star Media Group with Digi, PKT Logistics Group Sdn Bhd and RHB Bank Bhd as main sponsors, Credit Guarantee Corporation as co-sponsor, Matrade as official trade promotion partner and New World Petaling Jaya Hotel as official venue.

For more information, call Star Media Group Events Business Unit at 03-7967 1388 ext 1233 / 1857 or email [events@thestar.com](mailto:events@thestar.com).

DISRUPTION is becoming a common term in business. Rapid development in technology and fast-changing consumer trends are pushing companies to look at different ways to reach out to their customers and lower cost to ensure that their business are not losing out.

While this makes the landscape all the more challenging, it also presents SMEs with a huge opportunity. The use of digital tools can help them expand their customer base and create new platforms to develop themselves.

Given their size, experts say small businesses are poised to take advantage of such opportunities because they are more agile and are able to change quickly.

To help SMEs gain an upper-hand in their growth journey, Star Media Group will be

# KoneSi looks to lift Myanmar's logistic sector

Startup expects bigger opportunities once it establishes a stronger network

RETAILERS will no longer need to bother about logistics and fleet operators or worry about empty runs in Myanmar thanks to an innovative technical solution launched earlier this year, according to Soe Pyae Aung, co-founder and chief operating officer of KoneSi Freight Co.

"Logistics costs in Myanmar are among the highest in South-East Asia, accounting for nearly 25% of our GDP. So, if we are able to reduce logistics costs to a large extent, our products will be cheaper than ever, which will benefit end users," he said in an interview.

"Unlike big transport companies, it is really hard for individual fleet owners and small freight forwarders to find customers. In the low season, they often have no customers at all. We want to get them connected with the supply chain so they always have a job at all times."

The company has partnered more than 300 fleet operators to regularly serve some 30 businesses for their logistics convenience. Most of its regular customers are up and coming brands including Genius coffee, Maw Shan green tea, and Organic Farm pickled tea leaves, said Soe Pyae Aung.

The company usually handles nearly 400 transactions every

month, with the main focus on logistics services in the Yangon region. It also provides city-to-city delivery services to serve customer demand. It now has seven team members and aims to open another office in Mandalay to cater to customers in Upper Myanmar.

"We are now enjoying a gradual growth of 30% every month. But it is well below our target. We foresee a much bigger growth after we build a stronger network in Yangon soon," he said.

Established in September last year, KoneSi optimises logistics by implementing a load-shared concept, connecting small and medium enterprises with individual truck drivers and owners if they need a whole truck or want to deliver their goods on carton-size basis. Its service includes picking up goods at clients' places.

"We charge the client depending on volume and weight of goods and pick-up location. We also provide express pick-up service, which we can deliver within 24 hours. The price will vary, depending on how fast they want us to deliver," said Soe Pyae Aung.

He said KoneSi also offers cash collection for its clients. The collected cash can be transferred to client's preferred channels such as cash handover, mobile money,

mobile banking and so on. Its service includes management of returned goods from retailers to the businesses upon request.

"We have an impressive 100% delivery fulfilment capability since we started load-shared logistics. We managed to deliver all the orders on time. For express service, we can deliver within 24 hours to where the clients want us to deliver," he said.

"If the client wants to hire the whole vehicle to transport outside Yangon, we can connect any truck from the light duty trucks to 22 wheelers through our diversified network of truck drivers in Myanmar's major economic corridors."

The company has handled goods worth more than 1.1 billion kyats (RM2.8mil) so far. The executive believes they have handled a much higher value of cargo from city-to-city transportation, though the value is not usually expressed in the clients' packing list.

Soe Pyae Aung was explicit

about the challenges they are facing.

"Firstly, funding is our biggest challenge. We need more working capital because it usually takes a few days to get payment (for logistics services) from some businesses while fleet operators need to be paid once we hire their vehicle. Secondly, we need to educate the drivers and businesses so they can effectively use our technology platform."

"Thirdly, limited use of digital payments poses challenges to us, because Myanmar is still a cash-dominated society. Last, but not least, finding skilled personnel with a start-up mindset is really challenging. As a start-up, we are less attractive to skilled personnel than big companies," he explained.

He said it took a couple of months for the company to study about the supply chain and customers' behaviour before they started delivery services to supermarkets, hypermarkets, restaurants and hotels. Now, it mainly

focuses on delivering goods to warehouses, events, retail points and restaurants.

"We will ensure cost effectiveness and timely delivery. Businesses will not need to invest a lot in buying vehicles and hiring more staff for delivering their goods to buyers, while for fleet owners, there will be no empty runs by working together with us," he said.

Soe Pyae Aung takes pride in the company's achievement so far, though he is fully aware that they have a long way to go.

Kone Si clinched the Judges' Choice at Top100 Myanmar Qualifiers held in April this year, and represented Myanmar at Echelon Asia Summit 2018 held in Singapore in late June. Co-founder Zar Phyu Tint Lwin was among the finalists of WISE Women Innovation Challenge 2018, which recently kicked off in the Mekong region with the final round to be held in Vietnam next month. — The Nation/Asia News Network



**Providing a way:** Soe Pyae Aung (third from left) and his team connect fleet operators and small businesses to meet logistic needs. — The Nation

## E-commerce hits shopping centres in Vietnam

ONLINE purchases are making it hard for commercial centres to stay in business.

The rapid growth of online business has slowed the shopping centre real estate market; however, experts say it has also provided a boost for the office rental market.

Despite heavy advertising to attract tenants, many commercial centres have still found it hard to attract brick-and-mortar stores. As a result, some shopping centres are being used for office space rather than retail establishments.

Some real estate specialists say the shopping centre slowdown is due to the e-commerce boom.

Pham Hung Thang, a lecturer at the Ho Chi Minh City University of Finance and Marketing, told Dau tu chung khoan (Securities Investment) newspaper that Vietnam had room for more e-commerce development thanks to the high level of Internet use among its population.

The number of Internet users in the country is expected to reach nearly 60 million in the next four years, and e-commerce is expected to grow at an annual rate of 30%

.50%. The development of smart phones and e-wallet technologies has contributed to this growth.

Experts worry that online purchases will supplant in-person transactions and make it hard for commercial centres to stay in business.

For example, the Pearl Plaza Commercial Centre in Ho Chi Minh (HCM) City has seen its number of vacancies rise, while none of the fifth floor of Van Hanh Mall is leased.

The office space real estate segment, meanwhile, has benefited from the rise of e-commerce.

According to a report by CBRE Vietnam, rental prices in HCM City office buildings have continuously increased. Third-quarter prices across the board were higher than in the previous quarter.

A-grade office rent posted a third quarter increase of 7%, representing a 17% annual rise. New buildings are being fully leased very quickly, causing a shortage and driving up prices. B-grade office rent also increased, rising 7.3% over the previous year.

Monthly rent for A-grade office

space was US\$43 per square metre, while B-grade office space went for US\$23 per square metre. Office vacancy rates remained below 5%.

Another study by commercial real estate development firm JLL Vietnam showed most of the new renters are IT companies. The study predicts technology groups will occupy 15% to 25% of total rentable office space within the next decade, representing a huge increase over the 5% to 10% they occupied over the past three years.

Five years ago, HCM City had the third most technology companies of any city in the region, trailing only Manila and Singapore.

Things have changed over the past three years. HCM City has surpassed Bangkok, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila and Singapore to attract the most technology firms of any city in the region.

"Nowhere is the technology sector's increasing demand for office space more evident than in Vietnam," said Stephen Wyatt, general manager of JLL Vietnam. "The country is catching up with the rapid development of other regional markets thanks to its young,

dynamic, tech-savvy business people."

"We have seen a significant increase in demand from technology and co-working companies over the past three years and expect this trend to continue over the next five years," he said.

JLL recently began advertising a 10,000 sqm e-commerce office space in HCM City, the largest office leasing transaction the city has seen in a decade.

A representative of JLL said the selection criteria for office space were influenced by factors such as potential government support and convenience for clients.

These elements constitute an ecosystem that is conducive to the development of start-up businesses. In big cities, tech companies are focused on finding office space in prominent buildings, close to public transport and integrated with the city. They want employees to live, work and play nearby.

These companies are often the first to lease the latest buildings.

Technology companies have become an important group of tenants, and investors and developers

need to build new office space to keep pace with demand.

Technology companies are always looking for high quality office space to attract talent. Director of market research for JLL South-East Asia Regina Lim says developers need to consider the needs of their customers.

Integrating flexible co-working space can boost demand for an office building.

Flexible work space has increased by 40% annually over the past three years and currently accounts for 2% of the area's office space, up from 0.5% in 2015.

Lim says this is because technology groups are always looking for a sustainable business environment and are supported by strong economic and social perspectives.

Over the next decade, e-commerce and flexible co-working space will continue to dominate the market. As e-commerce companies expand, online gaming and e-sports companies could be the next group of tenants to fill offices in Jakarta, Bangkok, Manila and HCM City. — Viet Nam News/Asia News Network

COMING to a stop outside yet another front door on Utrecht's narrow streets, 25-year-old Susann Huber gets out of her electric minivan, pulls out a crate of groceries and hands them over to a waiting customer.

Huber works for Picnic, an online supermarket which targets middle-income shoppers and is the first to offer free delivery in the Netherlands, where online grocery shopping is booming.

Statistics Netherlands last Wednesday said that 29% of Dutch households ordered groceries at least once online in 2017, the most in the European Union, passing Britain at 28%.

Multinational Ahold Delhaize was the first to offer online groceries in the Netherlands in 2010, but the practice has kicked into high gear recently due to what ABN Amro analyst Henk Hofstede dubbed the "Picnic Effect." "It has acted like a cattle prod to the other major players," he said.

Hofstede estimates Ahold's market share at 50%, followed by privately-held Jumbo, which holds 30%. Picnic has taken 10% market share since its launch by four entrepreneurs three years ago.

Picnic snagged an eye-catching €100mil investment last year which it is using to fund a rapid expansion, including opening its first hub in Germany last month.

Chief executive Michiel Muller told Reuters that the company was saving on costs by delivering along regular routes, somewhat like a public bus – or the "Milkman 2.0".

The milkman of yore was "a very nice guy, very fresh products, always on time, once per day," Muller said.

"We kind of replicated that model, and added technology."

Customers can place their orders by smartphone app only, and pay upfront by 10p.m. for delivery in a 20-minute window the following day.

Muller said the company, which had 150,000 customers at mid-year, can only add 1,000 customers a week against a current waiting list of thousands. So it cherry-picks its launches along the most attractive routes. He forecasts the company will more than double sales this year, from €100mil in 2017.

Customer Marieke Dubbelman, a mother of four, said Picnic's selection is somewhat limited, but the quality was fine and prices comparable to that of a mid-range supermarket.



**Light operations:** Picnic employees packing the electric van with costumer's order at its distribution centre. — Reuters



**Delivered at the door:** Sam Spijkerman, the employee of the Dutch Picnic online store waits for the customer to open the door in Amsterdam. — Reuters

## Picnic's grocery delivery bus thrives in Netherlands

### Room for grocers to grow amid Dutch online shopping boom

I really use it for staples shopping: laundry detergent, bottles of milk, stuff you don't want to waste your time getting and dragging home," she said.

Muller acknowledged Picnic's model could not compete with "on demand" or same-day delivery services, such as those offered by Instacart in the US, and that it faces a long-term threat from highly automated competitors on the model of Amazon.com and Britain's Ocado.

But for now, there is room to grow in online grocery, and Picnic has advantages: it is free of the costs associated with brick-and-

mortar stores, including store staff and prime real estate locations.

The company prefers to invest in its software app and in its cheery electric vans, which contrast sharply with the diesel trucks used by competitors.

Customer Dubbelman said she wasn't necessarily sold on the company's green credentials, but she could see the "Milkman 2.0" model might cut down on overall city traffic. "To me, the main thing is just having my groceries delivered to my door," she said. "If it's environmentally friendly, well, that's a plus." — Reuters

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## Indonesia contends with aggressive Chinese online lenders

INDONESIAN authorities have generally opened their arms to fintech companies offering online loans in South-East Asia's biggest economy, viewing them as a way of getting credit to tens of millions of people often unable to access bank lending.

But the arrival of a wave of predominantly Chinese fintech lenders, who often do not register and employ aggressive debt collection practices, is now alarming regulators.

For Chinese platforms, Indonesia's youthful market of over 260 million people is an attractive target, particularly after a crack-down on the loosely regulated micro-credit sector at home.

Four people in Indonesia who failed to repay loans on time told Reuters that Chinese fintech lenders took control of their phone contacts – permission is granted when the app is installed – and harassed their colleagues and friends.

One of them, Nesika Yustines, a 26-year secretary in the Tangerang area near Jakarta, said she was stunned when debt collectors repeatedly called her boss to say she had a week to pay back her loan and 20% interest. "They asked for payment from my boss and my boyfriend," she said. "It's embarrassing, it's as if they had become collateral in this."

Hendrikus Passagi, who oversees fintech for Indonesia's financial regulator OJK, said some borrowers had lost their jobs because of such calls.

"Those practices go against God. We are a religious country. In Indonesia, if I lend the money to you and you don't pay, I will not come to your house and humiliate you," he said.

In China, financial regulators issued tough new rules on online micro-lenders last December, after a barrage of criticism over

their tactics.

Looking to set up in new markets, Chinese online lenders have come in groups to Indonesia since 2017 to meet officials, bankers, and executives in order to set up operations, according to two Chinese-based businessmen organising such tours.

Chinese lenders will often set up shell companies in Hong Kong and Singapore to bypass Beijing's strict controls over cross-border money flows and hire proxy agents as local partners, said Jin Xiang, who runs BlueBoat Global, a company based in Beijing dedicated to helping companies explore new markets.

His company has been organising tours to Indonesia since late 2017, and the latest tour was conducted last month.

Indonesian regulator OJK produced a blacklist of 226 banned fintech lenders in July and updated it in early September to 407 banned platforms.

The regulator told Reuters more than half were Chinese, but they also included a handful of Eastern European lenders as well as a US lender.

Fintech lenders, who run platforms designed to disburse relatively small loans to individuals and small businesses, are viewed by Indonesian authorities as part of the solution to a US\$73bil yearly shortfall between the country's estimated financing needs and the amount banks provide.

The sector is still growing quickly. Indonesia's 64 registered fintech lenders disbursed US\$534mil between January and the end of July while earlier this month, Go-Jek, the country's biggest online platform, partnered with three local peer-to-peer lenders as part of its move deeper into fintech, or financial technology.

But despite the efforts of Indonesian officials, with help from Google, to block the apps and websites offered by illegal lenders, borrowers say many continue to operate and demand repayment even after being banned.

A 42-year-old office assistant, who asked not to be named, was desperate to renegotiate his loan after debt collectors for online lender Uang Express began calling his relatives and colleagues for repayment of his 2 million rupiah (US\$135) loan.

Uang Express is one of more than 200 Chinese consumer lending platforms banned for not registering or breaching laws.

Its platform was downloaded over 100,000 times in the Google Play Store before being deleted.

When the office assistant tried to visit the lender's Jakarta headquarters he found a locked warehouse.

Reuters later tracked down the office of Second Installment Financial Technology, which is listed by Uang Express as its parent and is not banned.

"How did you find us? You're not supposed to find us. That's the point of fintech," a spokeswoman said, confirming it was the office of Second Installment, but declining to comment further.

Second Installment Financial Technology runs advertisements on the same web address and email server as Shanghai-based P2P platform Miao Miao Technology, whose platform and logos aimed at Chinese clients are identical to Uang Express.

Uang Express did not respond to requests for comment.

Reuters was unable to reach Miao Miao Technology to confirm whether it had any links with Second Installment.

Indonesian regulators stress that com-

plaints do not apply to all Chinese fintech lenders, praising those that have obtained licences.

"There are good Chinese lenders. The ones that are listed on the stock market tend to be more transparent," said OJK's Passagi.

Beijing-based Hexindai Inc, which listed on Nasdaq in November, acquired a 20% equity stake in Indonesian online lender Musketeer in August with the aim of capitalising on Indonesia in its international expansion.

A spokesman for Hexindai said it disapproved of the "vicious debt collection methods" of some Chinese P2P companies and only contacted customers' chosen emergency contact regarding overdue loans and flagged borrowers to a national blacklist if the loan remains unpaid after 90 days.

But not all follow the rules including the requirement for foreign lenders to have an Indonesian partner to hold at least 15% of their local subsidiary as well as local board directors.

Two operators said some Chinese lenders were willing to pay between 500,000 yuan to 1 million yuan (US\$73,115-US\$146,430) for "one-stop services" agents to handle registration and local staff hiring.

"Local people probably don't know the Chinese are behind those loan companies," said Wang Lu, the marketing director for another business tour organiser, Xinliu Finance.

With greater scrutiny in Indonesia, he said lenders would be looking at other markets with large populations, underdeveloped financial systems and weak regulations.

BlueBoat's Jin Xiang said he was already beginning to organise tours to Vietnam, which he cited as a top destination for fintech micro-lenders. — Reuters

**LONDON:** Bank of England (BoE) policy makers have the chance this week to share their thoughts on interest rates now that governor Mark Carney (pic) has said he's sticking around for longer.

Four members of the Monetary Policy Committee are making public appearances – including the first speeches by Dave Ramsden and Gertjan Vlieghe since officials voted to hike interest rates in August.

While it's been anything but a quiet few weeks for the BoE – with Carney making headlines by both extending his term and giving the UK cabinet dire warnings about a no-deal Brexit – investors have heard little on the outlook for interest rates beyond policy makers repeating their “limited and gradual” mantra.

With Brexit talks still showing little signs of progress, most expect officials to stay on hold until after the UK's March deadline for leaving the European Union. Still, improving economic data, and a surprise pick-up in inflation last week, have led Mizuho International and Heteronomics to expect an earlier move, meaning investors will scour officials' statements this week for any signs of renewed hawkishness.

Vlieghe is due to speak on the yield curve and quantitative easing in London tomorrow, before Carney and chief economist Andy Haldane appear at events in Frankfurt and London on Thursday – although those sessions are not expected to include any prepared remarks. Ramsden rounds off the busy week with a speech on the issues and outlook for monetary policy on Friday.

“We're looking for signs of tightening speed,

# BoE officials step out in force after August hike

Carney indicates he will be sticking around for longer

notwithstanding the uncertainties around the Brexit discussions,” said George Buckley, chief UK economist at Nomura in London. Nomura expects a “hike in February, but that's based on the assumption that we get a free trade agreement deal done.”

Traders are currently assigning around a 40% chance of a hike before the UK's exit date, rising to more than 70% in May, although that may change quickly should the chances of the UK crashing out of the bloc without an agreement rise. That prospect moved a step closer last week after UK Prime Minister Theresa May's blueprint was bluntly rejected by European Union leaders at a bruising summit in Salzburg, Austria.

A deal is the difference between a 25-basis point rate cut or rate hike in May 2019, according to Bloomberg Economics analysis, based on the Overnight Index Swap curve. Carney warned that a no-deal outcome would mean rates could soar in comments to the UK Cabinet earlier this month. — Bloomberg



## Comcast digs deep to overcome Fox with US\$39bill bid for Sky

**LONDON:** Comcast Corp topped Rupert Murdoch's 21st Century Fox Inc with a knockout bid for Sky Plc, putting the US cable giant on track to acquire Europe's largest satellite broadcaster in a deal that would redraw battle lines of the global media industry.

In an unusual auction overseen by UK regulators, Comcast bid 10% more than Fox on Saturday, all but ensuring that it will win control of London-based Sky.

Should Comcast complete the transaction, chief executive officer Brian Roberts will have a chance to build a global television giant, helping stave off the threat from Netflix Inc.

The outcome marks a victory for the 59-year-old cable magnate after a string of M&A setbacks. Roberts, who spent Saturday in a London hotel orchestrating the auction, had previously tried to acquire the bulk of Fox – only to be outbid by Walt Disney Co.

“This is a great day for Comcast,” he said in a statement.

“Sky is a wonderful company with a great platform, tremendous brand and accomplished management team.”

Comcast's emergence as the winner helps put an end to months of uncertainty over the future ownership of the TV company Murdoch founded in 1989.

Independent directors at Sky have recommended accepting Comcast's offer, but investors have until Oct 11 to tender their shares.

The question now is whether Comcast paid

I still think it may look a bit cheap in a couple of years.

Crispin Odey

too much. Investors have already expressed concerns about its M&A ambitions this year, sending its shares down more than 5%. Comcast's final bid of £17.28 a share was well above the £15.67 offered by Fox.

Another shadow over the deal: whether Fox will agree to sell its 39% stake in Sky to Comcast. People familiar with the matter said that Fox was mulling tendering the stake if Disney supports the move. But the company said in a statement on Saturday that it was still “considering its options and will make a further announcement in due course.”

Bloomberg Intelligence analyst Paul Sweeney said he expects that Fox will capitulate.

“I can't imagine they want to be a minority shareholder in this,” Sweeney said. “It's a very bold price.”

The sweetened bid from Comcast – 17% higher than the company's offer for Sky going into the auction – exceeded expectations. It was well above the £16.53 average estimate of a Bloomberg survey.

“I'm pretty excited – we've got a good price

for it,” said Sky investor Crispin Odey, founder of Odey Asset Management. The fund manager owns 0.6% of the shares, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

“I still think it may look a bit cheap in a couple of years.”

Buying Sky allows Roberts to expand the content and distribution model he has embraced since taking control of NBCUniversal seven years ago. With Sky, the Philadelphia-based company would deliver TV services to 52 million customers in the United States as well as European countries such as UK, Italy and Germany, and add sought-after programming such as the rights to Premier League English soccer.

Sky also has original TV productions, such as the 1920s sex-and-crime saga “Babylon Berlin” and “Britannia,” a period drama about the Roman conquest of Britain.

Netflix, meanwhile, has relied on other companies' broadband networks to distribute its lavish in-house productions and expand its global subscriber base to 130 million.

Crucially for Comcast, Sky has a growing video-streaming business.

Roberts has said he was “terribly impressed” with Sky's market-leading Q box platform, which is also a rich source of data on customer viewing behavior. Comcast estimates that owning Sky will create US\$500mil in synergies, partly through selling Sky content in the United States and NBC program-

ming in Europe.

Adding Sky would mean Comcast generates a fourth of its sales outside of the United States, up from 9% now. It would also represent a victory in Comcast's checkered history of dealmaking. While Comcast acquired NBCUniversal and DreamWorks Animation over the past decade, it failed in attempts to buy Disney in 2004, Time Warner Cable Inc. in 2015 and Fox in July.

If Fox had outbid Comcast, Sky would have fallen into Disney's hands next year as part of its US\$71bil Fox takeover deal struck in July.

That deal will bring Disney franchises such as the “X-Men” and hit shows like “The Simpsons.” The loss of Sky partly stymies Disney CEO Bob Iger's goal of establishing more direct ties to consumers and expanding his international business.

Murdoch, the 87-year-old billionaire behind Fox, had been working for years to acquire the portion of Sky that his company didn't already own. An earlier attempt was thwarted in 2011 by a phone-tapping scandal at his UK newspaper business.

Fox struck a philosophical tone in the wake of the auction Saturday, depicting its loss to Comcast as a victory of sorts.

“Sky is a remarkable story and we are proud to have played such a significant role in building the incredible value reflected today in Comcast's offer,” the company said. — Bloomberg

## Asian companies shuffle production around the region as China tariffs hit

**SEOUL:** A growing number of Asian manufacturers of products ranging from memory chips to machine tools are moving to shift production from China to other factories in the region in the wake of US President Donald Trump's tariffs on Chinese imports.

Companies including SK Hynix of South Korea and Mitsubishi Electric, Toshiba Machine Co and Komatsu of Japan began plotting production moves since July, when the first tariffs hit, and the shifts are now under way, company representatives and others with knowledge of the plans told Reuters.

Others, such as Taiwanese computer-maker Compal Electronics and South Korea's LG Electronics, are making contingency plans in case the trade war continues or deepens.

The company representatives and other sources spoke on condition of anonymity

because of the sensitivity of the issue.

The quick reactions to the US tariffs are possible because many large manufacturers have facilities in multiple countries and can move at least small amounts of production without building new factories.

Some governments, notably in Taiwan and Thailand, are actively encouraging companies to move work from China.

The United States imposed 25% duties covering US\$50bil of Chinese-made goods in July, and a second round of 10% tariffs covering another US\$200bil of Chinese exports will come into effect next week.

The latter rate will jump to 25% at the end of the year, and Trump has threatened a third round of tariffs on US\$267bil of goods, which would bring all of China's exports to the United States into the tariff regime.

The tariffs threaten China's status as a low-cost production base that, along with the appeal of the fast-growing China market, drew many companies to build factories and supply chains in the country over the past several decades.

At SK Hynix, which makes computer memory chips, work is under way to move production of certain chip modules back to South Korea from China.

Like its US rival Micron Technology, which is also moving some memory-chip work from China to other Asian locations, SK Hynix does some of its packaging and testing of chips in China, with the chips themselves mostly made elsewhere.

“There are a few Dram module products made in China that are exported to the United States,” said a source with direct knowledge

of the situation, referring to widely used dynamic random-access memory chips.

“SK Hynix is planning on bringing those Dram module products to South Korea to avoid the tariff hit.”

Most of SK Hynix's production won't be affected, the source added, since China's dominance in computer and smartphone manufacturing makes it by far the largest market for Dram chips.

Toshiba Machine Co says it plans to shift production of US-bound plastic moulding machines from China to Japan or Thailand in October.

The machines are used for making plastic components such as automotive bumpers. “We've decided to shift part of our production from China because the impact of the tariffs is significant,” a spokesman said. — Reuters

## COMMODITIES ROUNDUP

### CPO

**KUALA LUMPUR**  
THE crude palm oil (CPO) futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives will likely remain in range-bound trading at between RM2,130 and RM2,170 this week, as traders may adopt a wait-and-see attitude, amid the ongoing trade tensions between the United States (US) and China, a dealer said.

For the holiday-shortened week, the local market was easier, tracking the decline in the soybean oil market on the Chicago Board of Trade amid Washington's tariff offensive against Beijing. — Bernama

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, new spot month October 2018 dropped RM94 to RM2,116 per tonne, November 2018 lost RM96 to RM2,126 per tonne, December 2018 was down RM104 to RM2,143 per tonne and January 2019 decreased RM112 to RM2,173 per tonne.

Weekly turnover increased to 228,370 lots from 123,174 lots previously, while open interest was higher at 310,474 contracts versus 305,584 contracts. On the physical market, September South was at RM2,130 per tonne, down RM90 from last week's RM2,220 per tonne. — Bernama

### RUBBER

**KUALA LUMPUR**  
THE Malaysian rubber market is expected to trade range bound this week, due to external factors including the uncertainties in the ongoing trade spat between the US and China, said an industry expert.

**Malaysian Rubber Glove**  
Manufacturers association president Denis Low Jau Foo said the buying and selling activities would likely to maintain.

For the holiday-shortened week, the local market was mostly in down-

trend, weighed by the weaker sentiment in the regional rubber markets and the trade conflict between the US and China.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the rubber market was mixed, with the Malaysian Rubber Board's tyre-grade SMR 20 mid-day price unchanged at 546.00 sen per kg while latex in bulk eased 3.5 sen to 411.50 sen per kg.

The 5 pm unofficial closing price for SMR 20 added 0.5 sen to 545.50 sen per kg, while latex in bulk fell five sen to 411.00 sen per kg. — Bernama

### TIN

**KUALA LUMPUR**  
THE Kuala Lumpur Tin Market (KLTM) is expected to trade higher this week on improved external sentiments, dealers said.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the KLTM price rose US\$30 to US\$19,000 a tonne and turnover for the week increased to 165 tonnes from 156 tonnes.

The KLTM was closed on Monday

in lieu of the Malaysia Day public holiday which fell on Sunday.

Meanwhile, the tin price on the LME inched up US\$5 to US\$19,025 a tonne.

The price differential between the KLTM and the LME for the week just ended stood at a discount of US\$25 a tonne from a discount of US\$50 a tonne in the previous week. — Bernama

## PUBLIC BANK MONEY MARKET REVIEW FOR THE WEEK ENDING SEPT 21 2018

>MGS yields closed mostly lower  
>Reopening of 10-year MGS issued at 4.097%  
>Forthcoming Tender: new issue of 3.5-year GII

**Yields of Malaysian Government Securities (MGS) closed mostly lower as trade war concerns receded, prompting a resurgence in global risk appetite for emerging market assets.**

Meanwhile, the reopening of MGS maturing June 15, 2028 was successfully auctioned off at 4.097% with bids exceeding the auction size of RM3bil by 2.67 times.

Bank Negara will be announcing the new issue of the 3.5-year GII maturing March 2022 with an expected auction size of RM4bil.

The closing yields of benchmark MGS are as follows:

Benchmark	Maturity	Sept 21 (Mid YTM)	Sept 14 (Mid YTM)	Chg (bps)
3-year	30/11/21	3.61	3.60	+1
5-year	20/04/23	3.74	3.80	-6
7-year	14/03/25	3.97	4.00	-3
10-year	15/06/28	4.08	4.11	-3

## MONEY MARKET

>**Klibor: Rates remained unchanged**  
>**Bank Negara remained steadfast in borrowing short-term money**

Bank Negara mopped up more liquidity from the market through its money tenders last week.

The central bank borrowed RM14.6bil against its term maturities of RM10.8bil and conducted repo and reverse repo tender amounting to RM200mil and RM310mil respectively with financial institutions.

The money and repo tenders were conducted as follows:

Tenure (days)	Amount (million)	Rates (%, p.a.)
Money tender	2 - 54 days	14,590 3.25 - 3.36
Repo tender	31 days	200 3.29
Reverse repo tender	32 days	310 3.35

Kuala Lumpur Interbank Offered Rate (Klibor) remained unchanged across all tenors.

In the deposit market, overnight money traded between 3.20% and 3.25%.

The 1-week to 1-month money last traded between 3.32% and 3.43%.

Meanwhile, 2 and 3-months

Negotiable Instruments of Deposits last transacted between 3.65% and 3.70% while 1-month Bankers Acceptances was

## DIVIDENDS

Company	Particulars	Announced	Date Ex-date	To those registered by	To be paid on	Total for year so far	Total for previous year
AHEALTH	Interim Single Tier 6.5¢	Aug 16	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	6.5¢	12¢
AIRPORT	Interim Single Tier 5¢	Aug 28	Sep 13	Sep 18	Sep 28	5¢	13¢
ALAQAR	2nd Distribution 0.57¢+1.38¢ Non-Taxable	Aug 29	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 19	3.7¢	7.7¢
ALSREIT	2nd Interim Distribution 1¢	Aug 29	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 19	2¢	6¢
AMPROP	Final Single Tier 4¢	Jul 27	Sep 4	Sep 6	Sep 24	4¢	3¢
ANNJOO	Interim Single Tier 6¢	Aug 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 27	6¢	19¢
APM	Interim Single Tier 5¢	Aug 29	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 8	5¢	13¢
APOLLO	First & Final Single Tier 20¢	Jun 28	Dec 10	Dec 12	Jan 9	20¢	25¢
ARREIT	2nd Distribution 1.8949¢+0.0445¢ CTE	Aug 30	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 12	3.2939¢	5.5027¢
ASIAFLE	Final Single Tier 8¢	Jul 30	Oct 5	Oct 9	Nov 1	15¢	16¢
AZRB	Interim Single Tier 1¢	Aug 30	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 26	1¢	1.5¢
BAUTO	1st Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Sep 13	Oct 8	Oct 10	Oct 26	2.5¢	10.4¢
BHIC	1st Interim Single Tier 1.5¢	Aug 21	Oct 26	Oct 30	Nov 15	1.5¢	5¢
BIOHLDG	1st Interim Single Tier 0.11¢	Aug 27	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 18	0.11¢	0.1¢
BIPORT	2nd Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 28	Sep 19	Sep 21	Sep 12	6¢	25¢
BINACOM	2nd Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 8	1¢	-
BJFOOD	1st Interim Single Tier 1¢	Sep 18	Oct 8	Oct 10	Oct 26	1¢	4¢
BTOTO	1st Interim Single Tier 4¢	Sep 19	Oct 3	Oct 5	Oct 23	4¢	16¢
BPLANT	2nd Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Aug 23	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 25	5¢	19.5¢
BSTEAD	2nd Interim 1¢	Aug 29	Sep 19	Sep 21	Sep 5	3.5¢	11¢
BTech	1st Interim Single Tier 0.8¢	Aug 28	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 27	0.8¢	1.6¢
CAELY	Final 1¢	Jul 30	Oct 3	Oct 5	Oct 25	1¢	1¢
CARLSBG	2nd Interim Single Tier 15.7¢	Aug 16	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 17	35.7¢	87¢
CHINWEL	2nd Interim Single Tier 4.1¢	Aug 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 27	8¢	6.8¢
CIMB	1st Interim Single Tier 13¢	Sep 7	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 24	13¢	25¢
CJCEN	Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 24	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	0.5¢	1.5¢
COMFORT	Final Single Tier 1¢	May 30	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 26	1¢	-
CSCENIC	1st Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 23	Sep 11	Sep 15	Sep 29	2¢	10¢
DAIBOCI	Interim Single Tier 0.8¢	Aug 16	Sep 4	Sep 6	Sep 27	1.85¢	4.77¢
DANCO	Interim Single Tier 0.75¢	Aug 16	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 28	0.75¢	1.5¢
DELEUM	1st Interim Single Tier 1.25¢	Aug 21	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 25	1.25¢	4.25¢
DIGI	2nd Interim Single Tier 4.9¢ TE	Jul 13	Sep 29	Sep 3	Sep 28	9.8¢	18.8¢
DOMINAN	1st Interim Single Tier 1.5¢	Aug 27	Sep 27	Sep 1	Sep 25	1.5¢	7¢
DRBHC	First & Final Single Tier 3¢	Jul 30	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 1	3¢	1¢
DUFU	Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Aug 20	Sep 26	Sep 28	Sep 12	2.5¢	6.5¢
EDGENTA	Interim Single Tier 6¢	Aug 29	Sep 10	Sep 12	Sep 31	6¢	31¢
EFORCE	Interim Single Tier 0.75¢	Aug 28	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	0.75¢	2.5¢
EIG	Final Single Tier 1.75¢	Sep 6	Sep 24	Sep 26	Sep 19	3¢	3¢
EITA	1st Interim 2¢ + Special 2¢	Aug 20	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 28	4¢	5¢
ELKDESA	Final Single Tier 3.5¢	Jun 7	Sep 3	Sep 5	Sep 26	6.75¢	6.75¢
ELSOFT	2nd Interim Single Tier 3¢	Aug 17	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	5¢	8¢
ESAFE	Interim Single Tier 1.8¢	Aug 24	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 4	1.8¢	1.8¢
FAVCO	First & Final 13.5¢ TE	Apr 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 24	13.5¢	15¢
FREIGHT	2nd Interim Single Tier 3.5¢	Aug 21	Oct 29	Oct 31	Nov 14	5¢	5¢
GASMSIA	1st Interim Single Tier 4.5¢	Aug 8	Aug 28	Sep 30	Sep 26	4.5¢	13¢
GCB	1st Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 13	Aug 27	Sep 28	Sep 28	2¢	2.5¢

## OIL PALM OUTPUT (in metric tonnes)

COMPANY	FFB	JUN OIL	KERNEL	FFB	JUL OIL	KERNEL	FFB	AUG OIL	KERNEL
Astral Asia	3,069	601	153	3,584	703	179	3,154	618	158
BLD Plantation	—	8,972</							

## DIVIDENDS

Company	Particulars	Announced	Date Ex-date	To those registered by	To be paid on	Total for year so far	Total for previous year
GDB	1st Interim Single Tier 1¢	Aug 23	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 28	1¢	-
GENETEC	Interim 2.5¢ TE	Aug 21	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 28	2.5¢	-
GENM	Interim Single Tier 6¢	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 10	6¢	17¢
GENP	Interim Single Tier 4.75¢	Aug 28	Sep 13	Sep 18	Oct 8	4.75¢	26¢
GENTING	Interim Single Tier 8.5¢	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 12	8.5¢	21.5¢
GLOMAC	Final Single Tier 1.5¢	Sep 12	Dec 14	Dec 18	Dec 28	1.5¢	3¢
GMUTUAL	1st Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 30	Sep 21	Sep 25	Oct 18	0.5¢	1¢
HAIO	Final Single Tier 11¢	Aug 23	Nov 7	Nov 9	Nov 22	20¢	16¢
HARTA	Final Single Tier 2.2¢	Aug 24	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	11.7¢	8.5¢
HEIM	Interim 40¢	Aug 28	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 25	40¢	90¢
HEKTAR	2nd Interim 2.3¢	Aug 16	Aug 30	Sep 4	Sep 24	4.6¢	9.6¢
HEVEA	1st Interim Single Tier 1.2¢	Aug 24	Sep 12	Sep 14	Oct 1	1.2¢	6.8¢
HOMERIZ	1st Interim Single Tier 1¢ TE	Jul 26	Aug 28	Aug 30	Sep 28	1¢	4.2¢
HSL	1st Interim Single Tier 1¢ TE	Aug 16	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 10	1¢	2.4¢
HSPLANT	1st Interim Single Tier 1.5¢ TE	Aug 28	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	1.5¢	11¢
HUPSENG	Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 30	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 9	2¢	6¢
IGBB	Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 30	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 28	2¢	2¢
INARI	4th Interim 1.6¢+Sp 0.4¢ Single Tier	Aug 28	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 5	8.4¢	9.8¢
IOIPG	Interim Single Tier 5¢	Aug 27	Sep 13	Sep 18	Sep 28	5¢	6¢
IVORY	1st Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Aug 29	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 17	2.5¢	-
JHM	2nd Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 23	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 28	1¢	1.5¢
JOHOTIN	2nd Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 30	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 28	1.5¢	4¢
KAB	2nd Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 23	Sep 6	Sep 12	Oct 11	1¢	-
KEINHIN	First & Final Single Tier 1¢	Aug 28	Oct 29	Oct 31	Nov 21	1¢	1.5¢
KERJAYA	Interim Single Tier 1.5¢	Aug 30	Sep 28	Oct 2	Oct 30	1.5¢	6¢
KFIMA	Final Singl Tier 9¢	Jul 30	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 5	9¢	9¢
KLCCPROP	2nd Interim Single Tier 3.05¢ TE	Aug 15	Aug 29	Sep 3	Sep 28	6.03¢	15.2¢
KLCCREIT	2nd Interim 5.65¢	Aug 15	Aug 29	Sep 3	Sep 28	11.37¢	20.95¢
KPJ	Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 16	Sep 12	Sep 14	Oct 5	1.5¢	5.9¢
KSENG	Interim Single Tier 4¢	Aug 29	Oct 25	Oct 29	Nov 22	4¢	10¢
LAYHONG	Final Single Tier 0.5¢	Jul 12	Oct 18	Oct 22	Nov 15	0.5¢	0.5¢
LBS-PA	6.6¢ Per RCPS Non-Taxable	Aug 10	Oct 3	Oct 5	Oct 26	6.6¢	-
LBALUM	First & Final Single Tier 1¢	Aug 29	Oct 2	Oct 4	Oct 19	1¢	2.5¢
LIIHEN	2nd Interim Single Tier 3.5¢	Aug 23	Sep 6	Sep 12	Sep 27	6¢	23¢
LITRAK	Interim Single Tier 10¢	Aug 29	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 28	10¢	25¢
L&G	Final Single Tier 1.5¢	Jul 31	Oct 4	Oct 8	Oct 26	1.5¢	2¢
LTKM	Final Single Tier 1¢	Jul 26	Sep 12	Sep 14	Oct 5	2¢	3¢
LUXCHEM	Interim Single Tier 1¢	Jul 26	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	1¢	4¢
MAGNI	Final 3¢ + Sp 2¢ Single Tier	Aug 30	Oct 10	Oct 12	Oct 26	20¢	23¢
MAGNI	Interim Single Tier 5¢	Sep 12	Oct 10	Oct 12	Oct 26	5¢	20¢
MAGNUM	2nd Interim Single Tier 3¢	Aug 24	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 28	7¢	11¢
MAHSING	First & Final Single Tier 6.5¢	Apr 27	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 27	6.5¢	6.5¢
MALAKOF	Interim Single Tier 2.1¢	Aug 23	Sep 7	Sep 13	Oct 11	2.1¢	6.2¢
MALPAC	Interim Single Tier 10¢	Sep 6	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 18	10¢	-
MATRIX	1st Interim Single Tier 3.25¢	Aug 27	Sep 19	Sep 21	Oct 10	3.25¢	13.5¢
MAXIS	Interim Single Tier 5¢ TE	Jul 18	Aug 28	Aug 30	Sep 27	10¢	20¢
<b>MAYBANK</b>	<b>Interim Single Tier 25¢</b>	<b>Sep 18</b>	<b>Sep 28</b>	<b>Oct 2</b>	<b>Oct 30</b>	<b>25¢</b>	<b>55¢</b>
MBMR	1st Interim Single Tier 3¢ TE	Sep 4	Sep 19	Sep 21	Oct 5	3¢	3¢
MFCB	Interim 2¢ TE	Aug 28	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 12	2¢	4¢
MMSV	1st Interim Single Tier 1¢	Aug 28	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 18	1¢	4¢
MUHIBAH	First & Final 7¢ TE	Apr 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 24	7¢	5.5¢
NESTLE	Interim Single Tier 70¢ TE	Aug 14	Aug 30	Sep 4	Sep 27	70¢	275¢
NTPM	Final Singl Tier 0.8¢	Aug 21	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 10	2.4¢	2.4¢
OFI	1st Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 29	Sep 19	Sep 21	Oct 12	0.5¢	2.5¢
OIB	Interim Single Tier 7¢	Sep 6	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 5	7¢	7¢
OKA	Final Single Tier 3.5¢	Aug 27	Oct 12	Oct 16	Oct 31	5.5¢	5.5¢
OPENSYS	2nd Interim 0.5¢ TE	Aug 24	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 15	1¢	1¢
OSK	Interim Single Tier 2¢	Sep 6	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 10	2¢	6¢
PADINI	1st Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Aug 27	Sep 12	Sep 14	Sep 28	2.5¢	11.5¢
PANAMY	Final 133¢+Sp 100¢ Single Tier	Jul 26	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 25	248¢	117¢
PANSAR	First & Final Single Tier 1.5¢	Jun 20	Aug 24	Sep 26	Sep 26	1.5¢	1¢
PARAMON	Interim Single Tier 2.5¢	Aug 21	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	2.5¢	16¢
PPB	Interim Single Tier 8¢	Aug 29	Sep 13	Sep 18	Oct 4	8¢	30¢
PERSTIM	Final Single Tier 20¢	Jul 24	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	30¢	40¢
PICORP	Interim Single Tier 0.15¢	Aug 30	Sep 27	Oct 1	Oct 12	0.15¢	0.5¢
PLENITU	Final Single Tier 4.5¢	Sep 13	Nov 5	Nov 8	Nov 15	4.5¢	4.5¢
POS	Final Single Tier 8¢	Jul 30	Sep 12	Sep 14	Oct 12	8¢	10.7¢
PRESBHD	Interim Single Tier 0.2¢	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 17	0.7¢	2.75¢
PTRANS	3rd Interim Single Tier 0.35¢	Sep 13	Nov 26	Nov 28	Dec 12	0.95¢	0.7¢
PWF	1st Interim Single Tier 1.5¢	Aug 30	Sep 19	Sep 21	Oct 9	1.5¢	3.5¢
PWROOT	1st Interim Single Tier 1.7¢	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 2	1.7¢	9.5¢
RCECAP	Final Single Tier 4¢	Jul 30	Sep 13	Sep 18	Oct 4	7¢	3¢
RHBANK	Interim Single Tier 7.5¢	Aug 30	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 3	7.5¢	15¢
SAB	Final Single Tier 5¢	Jul 30	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	5¢	5¢
SALUTE	1st Interim Single Tier 0.6¢ TE	Aug 28	Sep 13	Sep 18	Sep 28	0.6¢	2.4¢
SAMCHEM	2nd Interim Single Tier 1¢	Sep 3	Oct 23	Oct 25	Nov 9	2¢	3¢
<b>SCGM</b>	<b>1st Interim Single Tier 0.5¢</b>	<b>Sep 20</b>	<b>Oct 8</b>	<b>Oct 10</b>	<b>Oct 25</b>	<b>0.5¢</b>	<b>6¢</b>
SCICOM	Interim 3¢ TE	Aug 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 28	9¢	9¢
<b>SCIENTX</b>	<b>Final Single Tier 10¢</b>	<b>Sep 20</b>	<b>Dec 26</b>	<b>Dec 28</b>	<b>Jan 18</b>	<b>20¢</b>	<b>16¢</b>
SERBADK	2nd Interim Single Tier 2.15¢ TE	Aug 29	Sep 14	Sep 19	Sep 28	4.05¢	6.8¢
SHANG	Interim Single Tier 3¢	Aug 29	Oct 31	Nov 2	Nov 23	3¢	15¢
SHL	Final 8¢	Jul 18	Sep 13	Sep 18	Oct 5	16¢	18¢
SIME	2nd Interim 4¢ + Special 2¢	Aug 30	Sep 27	Oct 1	Oct 31	8¢	23¢
SIMEPLT	Special Interim Single Tier 3¢	Aug 30	Sep 18	Sep 20	Oct 5	6.5¢	-
SIMEPROP	2nd Interim Single Tier 3¢	Aug 28	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 26	5¢	-
SKPRES	Final Single Tier 5.067¢	Jul 30	Oct 3	Oct 5	Oct 26	5.067¢	4.15¢
SLP	1st Interim Single Tier 1.5¢	Aug 3	Sep 5	Sep 7	Oct 5	1.5¢	4.5¢
SOLID	Final Single Tier 0.2¢	Aug 30	Oct 10	Oct 12	Oct 25	0.2¢	0.8¢
SUNCON	1st Interim Single Tier 3.5¢	Aug 16	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 27	3.5¢	7¢
SUNWAY	1st Interim Single Tier 3.5¢	Aug 21	Sep 24	Sep 26	Oct 18	3.5¢	6¢
TALIWRK	2nd Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 27	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 26	4¢	8¢
TCHONG	Interim Single Tier 2¢	Aug 14	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	2¢	2¢
TECFAST	Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Aug 28	Sep 14	Sep 19	Oct 4	0.5¢	1¢
TENAGA	Interim Single Tier 30.27¢	Sep 6	Sep 26	Sep 28	Oct 11	30.27¢	21.41¢
TEOSEN	Interim Single Tier 0.5¢	Sep 3	Sep 18	Sep 20	Sep 28	0.5¢	-
TOYOINK	Interim Single Tier 1¢	Sep 4	Sep 21	Sep 25	Oct 10	1¢	-
WARISAN	Interim Single Tier 1¢	Aug 16	Sep 5	Sep 7	Sep 28	1¢	4¢
WELLCAL	3rd Interim Single Tier 1.3¢	Aug 27	Sep 7	Sep 13	Sep 28	4.05¢	

## KUALA LUMPUR

# Market likely to trend higher

BURSA Malaysia is expected to trend higher this week, with the benchmark index likely to reach 1,830, mainly driven by subsiding uncertainties surrounding the US-China tariff conflict.

Hermana Capital Bhd chief executive officer/chief investment officer Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said sentiment towards emerging market assets had started to improve as investors viewed the latest trade tariffs imposed by the US and China as likely to inflict less economic damage than many had feared.

"We are seeing more foreign funds coming back into Malaysia, and last week, it amounted close to RM200mil," he told Bernama.

Furthermore, he said the country's economic fundamentals were strong with gross domestic product projected to grow at five per cent this year, and on top of that, the local stock market was outperforming its peers in Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

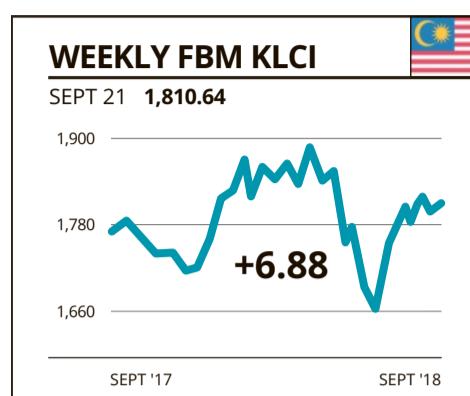
On the technical front, Bank Islam chief economist Dr Mohd Afzanizam Abdul Rashid said the benchmark FBM KLCI had surpassed its previous resistance level of 1,805 and the next resistance level is 1,839.

This week, he said the market would scrutinise the message from the Federal Reserve (Fed) following its upcoming Federal Open Market Committee meeting on Sept 25-26.

Mohd Afzanizam said the US economy is on solid footing with average hourly earnings growing 2.9% year-on-year in August, surpassing its 2.2% average since 2010.

"As such, wages are rising at a rapid pace. So we could see the Fed become more hawkish in their accompanying statement. If that happens, that could rattle the markets," he added.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the benchmark FBM KLCI settled 6.88 points better at 1,810.64. The FBM Emas Index was up 42.96



points to 12,607.96 and the FBMT100 Index gained 36.35 points to 12,423.33.

The FBM 70 added 2.39 points to 14,846.96, the FBM Emas Shariah Index increased 69.14 points to 12,735.94, while the FBM Ace improved 27.2 points to 5,204.44.

On a sectoral basis, the Finance Index climbed 45.22 points to 17,968.66, the Plantation Index was up 0.33 of-a-point to 7,552.19, while the Industrial Index rose 26.41 points to 3,230.77.

Weekly turnover increased to 7.8 billion units worth RM95.9bil from 7.29 billion units worth RM7.87bil.

Main market volume declined to 5.27 billion shares valued at RM8.89bil from 5.66 billion shares valued at RM8.99bil.

Warrants turnover shrank to 1.49 billion units worth RM383.58mil from 2.98 billion units worth RM872.93mil.

The ACE market volume decreased to 1.03 billion shares worth RM229.39mil from 1.73 billion shares worth RM238.88mil.

The market was closed last Monday in lieu of the Malaysia Day public holiday which fell on Sunday, Sept 16. — Bernama

## FBM KLCI FUTURES

## KUALA LUMPUR

The FTSE Bursa Malaysia KLCI (FBM KLCI) futures contract is expected to trend higher this week, tracking the anticipated better performance of the underlying cash market.

Hermana Capital Bhd chief executive officer/chief investment officer Datuk Dr Nazri Khan Adam Khan said sentiment towards emerging market assets had started to improve, driven by subsiding uncertainties surrounding the US-China tariff battle.

He said investors' view was that the latest trade tariffs imposed by the US and China would likely inflict less economic damage

than many had feared.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, September 2018 gained five points to 1,803, October 2018 added nine points to 1,803.5.

December 2018 rose 7.50 points to 1,797.50 and March 2019 climbed 7.50 points to 1,795.00

Turnover for the week declined to 28,706 lots from 29,384 lots recorded last week, while open interest widened to 31,722 contracts from 30,627 contracts.

The benchmark FBM KLCI settled 6.88 points better at 1,810.64 compared with 1,803.76 last Friday. — Bernama

which will also be affected by the developments in the US-Sino trade dispute," he told Bernama.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, September 2018, October 2018 and November 2018 each rose four ticks to RM161.40 a gramme respectively, while December 2018 improved one tick to RM161.45 a gramme.

Weekly turnover eased to four lots worth RM64,500 against five lots worth RM64,480, previously. Open interest rose to 28 contracts from 25 contracts. Bursa Malaysia and its derivatives were closed on Monday in lieu of the Malaysia Day public holiday which fell on Sunday, Sept 16. — Bernama

## GOLD FUTURES

## KUALA LUMPUR

The gold futures contract on Bursa Malaysia Derivatives is expected to trade in a cautious mode this week amid the ongoing US-China trade conflict, said a dealer.

Phillip Futures Sdn Bhd Derivative Dealer Tee Guy Eon said notable events would be the release of the US Federal Open Market Committee meeting minutes and Malaysia's Inflation Report this week that may set the market direction.

"In the week ahead, the local bullion will mainly track the sentiment of its US counterpart, the New York Commodity Exchange's overnight gold futures market performance,

tation for a new rounds of talks would provide the needed catalyst to inspire some risk appetite back into investor's portfolios, said Jameel.

"If positive headlines arise from these trade talks, it increases the probability that investors will be tempted back into emerging markets, meaning buying demand for the Malaysian ringgit and its regional peers would improve," he added.

On a Friday-to-Friday basis, the local note appreciated to 4.1280/1320 against the US dollar from 4.1370/1400.

The ringgit was mostly lower against other major currencies.

It increased against the Japanese yen to 3.6609/6654 from 3.6997/6037 previously, and was lower against the euro at 4.8607/8679 from 4.8390/8446.

It weakened against the Singapore dollar to 3.0271/0304 from 3.0208/0241 and declined against the British pound to 5.4428/4501 from 5.4282/4338. — Bernama

## BONUS / RIGHTS ISSUES

## AHMAD ZAKI RESOURCES BHD

**Announcement date:** August 30, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 79,840,322 new ordinary shares to be credited as fully paid-up on the basis of one bonus share for every eight existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## ANALABS RESOURCES BHD

**Announcement date:** July 30, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 60,024,000 new ordinary shares on the basis of one bonus share for every one existing share held on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.

## ANCOM BHD

**Announcement date:** July 26, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 21,895,634 new ordinary shares to be credited as fully paid-up on the basis of one bonus share for every 10 existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## ASIA BRANDS BHD

**Announcement date:** July 2, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 116,323,800 new ordinary shares at an issue price of RM0.35 per rights share on the basis of one rights share for every one existing share held on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.

## BORNEO AQUA HARVEST BHD

**Announcement date:** September 4, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 938,995,138 new ordinary shares on the basis of one bonus share for every one existing share held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## COUNTRY HEIGHTS HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** August 23, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 137,853,702 warrants on the basis of one warrant for every two existing ordinary shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## DAIMAN DEVELOPMENT BHD

**Announcement date:** August 27, 2018

Daiman Development Bhd receipt of an offer from Tay Kia Hong & Sons Sdn Bhd and Daiman Holdings Sdn Bhd by way of a selective capital reduction and repayment exercise of Daiman pursuant to Section 116 of the Companies Act 2016.

## DUFU TECHNOLOGY CORP BHD

**Announcement date:** September 20, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 87,735,185 new ordinary shares on the basis of one bonus share for every two existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.

## ELSOFT RESEARCH BHD

**Announcement date:** August 28, 2018

1) Proposed bonus issue of up to 56,405,700 new ordinary shares on the basis of one bonus share for every five existing shares held on the entitlement date to be determined later.  
2) Proposed share split involving the subdivision of every one share held after the proposed bonus issue into two shares.

## GABUNGAN AQRS BHD

**Announcement date:** September 5, 2018

**Ex-date:** September 21, 2018

**Lodgement date:** September 25, 2018  
Issuance of up to 123,648,501 new warrants (Warrants B) on the basis of one Warrant B for every four existing ordinary shares held.

## GLOBALTEC FORMATION BHD

**Announcement date:** September 5, 2018

1) Proposed consolidation of every 20 existing ordinary shares into one ordinary share held on an entitlement date to be determined later.  
2) Proposed issue of up to 67,271,723 free warrants (Warrants) on the basis of one Warrant for every four consolidated shares held on the entitlement date.

## GREEN PACKET BHD

**Announcement date:** June 22, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 150,202,583 rights shares on the basis of one rights share for every five existing shares held, together with up to 450,607,749 warrants on the basis of three warrants for every one rights share subscribed for, based on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## GREEN PACKET BHD

**Announcement date:** June 29, 2018

Proposed reduction of the issued share capital pursuant to Section 116 of the Companies Act, 2016.

## HUBLINE BHD

**Announcement date:** July 27, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 1,417,256,368 new ordinary shares on the basis of three rights shares for every five ordinary shares held, together with up to 944,837,579 free detachable new warrants (Warrant(s) C) on the basis of two Warrants C for every three rights shares subscribed, on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.

## JAKS RESOURCES BHD

**Announcement date:** June 6, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 278,164,186 warrants (Warrant(s)), at an indicative issue price of RM0.25 per Warrant, on the basis of one Warrant for every two existing ordinary shares held in the Company on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.

## K-ONE TECHNOLOGY BHD

**Announcement date:** August 27, 2018

1) Proposed bonus issue of up to 130,288,864 new ordinary shares on the basis of one bonus share for every five existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined and announced later.  
2) Proposed free warrants issue of up to 195,433,296 warrants (Warrants) on the basis of one Warrant for every four existing shares held on an entitlement date.

## MALAYAN FLOUR MILLS BHD

**Announcement date:** July 19, 2018

1) Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to RM165,085,617 in nominal value of 5-year redeemable convertible unsecured loan stocks (RCULS) at 100% of its nominal value of RM1.00 on the basis of three RCULS for every 10 existing ordinary shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later together with up to 82,542,808 new shares (Bonus Shares I) on the basis of one Bonus Share I for every two RCULS subscribed and up to 82,542,808 free detachable warrants (Free Warrants I) on the basis of one Free Warrants I for every two RCULS subscribed.

2) Proposed renounceable rights issue of new shares together with Bonus Shares II and free Warrants II to raise gross proceeds of up to RM110.06mil of which the entitlement basis will be determined later.

## MMS VENTURES BHD

**Announcement date:** August 28, 2018

Proposed issue of up to 40,750,000 new ordinary shares to be credited as fully paid-up on the basis of one bonus share for every four existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## MNRB HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** September 18, 2018

**Ex-date:** September 28, 2018  
**Lodgement date:** October 2, 2018  
Renounceable rights issue of 447,445,870 new shares on the basis of seven rights shares for every five existing shares held at an issue price of RM0.90 per rights share.

## MWE HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** September 6, 2018

**Ex-date:** September 24, 2018  
**Lodgement date:** September 26, 2018  
Selective capital reduction and repayment exercise pursuant to Section 116 of the Companies Act.

## NAIM HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** August 30, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 355,416,000 new ordinary shares at an issue price of RM0.45 per rights share, on the basis of three rights shares for every two existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## NICHE CAPITAL EMAS HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** June 21, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 1,665,189,250 rights shares on the basis of five rights shares for every one existing share held on the entitlement date, together with up to 999,113,550 warrants on the basis of three warrants for every five rights shares subscribed for at an issue price of RM0.045 per rights share.

## OKA CORPORATION BHD

**Announcement date:** July 13, 2018

Proposed bonus issue of up to 84,339,000 new ordinary shares to be credited as fully paid-up on the basis of one bonus share for every two existing shares held on an entitlement date to be determined later.

## ONLY WORLD GROUP HOLDINGS BHD

**Announcement date:** September 12, 2018

**Ex-date:** September 26, 2018  
**Lodgement date:** September 28, 2018  
Bonus issue of up to 133,550,000 free warrants (Warrant(s)) on the basis of one Warrant for every two existing ordinary shares held.

## SANICHI TECHNOLOGY BHD

**Announcement date:** July 27, 2018

Proposed renounceable rights issue of up to 1,012,285,042 rights shares together with up to 506,142,5

  
**Star**

# McDreamy's dreams come true

TV series *Grey's Anatomy* and the movie *Enchanted* made Patrick Dempsey a huge star, and earned him sex symbol status and a legion of fans. Then he gave it up to become a race car driver – and achieved his goals on the race track, too. >2



Photo: FLORIAN FATTON/TAG HEUER

# People

By BRIAN MARTIN  
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ACTOR, racing driver, husband, father, but most of all a gentleman. Patrick Dempsey is all of this and more.

Best known for his role as neurosurgeon Dr Derek "McDreamy" Shepherd in *Grey's Anatomy*, Dempsey, 52, is one of those lucky few who have had two successful careers. He starred in over a decade of TV, 252 episodes of the hit series, earning a reputed US\$10mil (RM41.36mil) per 24 episode season, making him one of the highest paid actors in Hollywood at the time.

And then he threw it all away to concentrate on becoming a racing driver and, amazingly, he became a success in that too. He reached the top step of the podium in his professional sports car racing career, winning the Fuji round of the FIA World Endurance Championship and placing second in class in the prestigious 24 Hours of Le Mans endurance classic.

There was a period from the mid Noughties when Dempsey was practically a fixture on *People* magazine's sexiest man in the world list. With his green eyes, good looks and immaculately coiffured hair, women swooned over him. *Grey's* and the movie *Enchanted* made him a huge star and earned him sex symbol status and a legion of female fans, not least in Malaysia.

"You have to ask him about the sequel to *Enchanted*. You just have to!" gushed my friend, when I told her I would be interviewing Dempsey in Monaco.

And ask him I did. The sequel will be called *Dis-enchanted* and will star Dempsey and Amy Adams once again. Disney flick *Enchanted* hit cinemas back in 2007, raked in US\$340mil (RM1.4bil) at the worldwide box office and was triple Oscar-nominated for its infectious songs, courtesy of Disney legend Alan Menken.

When you're a successful actor, it's never easy to give up fame and fortune to pursue an alternative career that could cause you serious injury or even death. But that is exactly what Dempsey did. He quit his lucrative *Grey's* contract to pursue his dream of becoming a race car driver.

"It's all-consuming in many ways. I couldn't imagine not racing right now. It really keeps me motivated. It's all I think about on a daily basis," he said at the time.

These days though, while not giving up racing entirely, the American is slowly working his way back to TV and movie roles.

Dempsey, who maintains a sports car and vintage car collection, was in Monaco a few days before the start of the highly anticipated 24 Hours of Le Mans. The Tag Heuer brand ambassador visited the private car collection of Prince Albert II of Monaco, joined distinguished guests for a cocktail party and then travelled to the Var track in Le Luc, France, in a vintage green Porsche 911 RS to get some practice in before the big race.

*Star2* interviewed McDreamy in Monaco and was given the honour of being driven around the Var track at insane speeds in a Porsche 911 GT3 RS by the man himself!

**How, and when, did you get involved in acting?**

Growing up in a small town in Maine (Lewiston), it was quite by accident that I got into acting. It was never my intention. I always wanted to be an Olympic ski racer. My hero was Ingemar Stenmark,



Dempsey, who is a Tag Heuer ambassador, in a vintage Porsche 911 RS.  
— Photos: PASCAL LE SEGRETAIN

## Coming full circle

These days Patrick Dempsey is slowly working his way back to TV and movie roles although he still races semi-competitively. Achieving his goals has made him a better father too, he says.



(From left) Marie Chevallier, Louis Ducruet, Camille Gotlieb, Pauline Ducruet, Princess Stephanie of Monaco, Jack Heuer, and Dempsey at the private car collection of Prince Albert II in Monaco.

possibly the greatest ski racer of all time, and that's who I wanted to be.

As a hobby, I had picked up riding the unicycle and, one day in shop class, our teacher asked, "Who wants to learn how to juggle?" It was almost destiny. I very quickly learnt the basic three-ball cascade. And because I could ride the unicycle, I combined the two. And my shop teacher said he knew a travelling vaudeville act that could use me.

I had a big crash around that time and lost my edge for skiing. One thing led to another and someone asked me to audition for a local play – *On Golden Pond* – and I got it!

Then I sort of got the bug; I was 17 then and I thought, "Gosh, wouldn't this be great if I could do this as a career" but never thinking that I could get out of Maine – it was rural farming community with not many people around.

I eventually tried for this talent competition in Portland, the big city in Maine, and I ended up winning that and the prize was I got to go to New York by myself for the national competition, and I won again. I got an agent and, two weeks later, they asked me to come to New York

to audition for a play – and I got into the play and that's how it all started.

**Essentially you've had two careers, and not a lot of people can say that.**

Yes, I've been very fortunate. I have the same passion for racing that I did for ski racing and, when I started getting into racing, I felt that I had come home, in many ways. I had a lot to learn but all in all, I felt a lot more comfortable in the racing community than I do with the Hollywood community.

I started in my late 30s. As a Christmas present, my wife bought me a racing school three-day certificate course. I highly recommend this for anyone that wants to go into racing, because you need to learn the fundamentals first, like karting. I was pretty fortunate that everything started happening at the same time – *Grey's Anatomy* had started and this allowed me the funds to continue racing. It was a parallel track. It complimented and allowed me the luxury to act and race at the same time.

**As a Tag Heuer ambassador, how**

**do you think racing relates to the watchmaker's 'Don't crack under pressure' motto?**

I think, for drivers, the mental aspect is what separates you from your opponents – it's how well you can handle pressure. You can get yourself into trouble if you're not prepared mentally or focused, especially when you have a lot of people watching you. I guess that's where my experience as an actor comes in – it has helped me to be comfortable, calm and maintain my focus in public situations.

**But you've stopped racing now.**

Not exactly. I've taken a back seat now and I manage Dempsey Racing. But I still race, semi-competitively. Dempsey Racing almost won Le Mans in 2015. I had a full season at the FIA World Endurance Championship with Porsche Racing; my goals were to compete and get on the podium and to win at a very high level, and I achieved those goals. So winning in Fuji led to an internal transformation. By then, I had left the show (*Grey's Anatomy*) and it was a big sacrifice in many ways because I knew I had a finite period of time, I was 49 at the time,

my vision at night was deteriorating. I knew I only had a certain window and I focused 100% on that goal and I achieved it. After Fuji, there was nothing left for me to do in racing, and I couldn't sacrifice my family to continue. I just could not justify it.

**You and your wife Jillian have three children. What does family mean to you?**

This is the next goal – how you raise your children. How do you keep them alive – their spirit and their individuality, and guide them, to find their inner voice and to be there for them, to be really sensitive to what they want and not what you want. Teach them to be respectful, loving people, and also inspired and follow their passion. And for me to achieve my goals made me a better father because I could then go back and be there for them.

***Grey's* was a monster hit, but so was *Enchanted*. What's the latest on the sequel, *Dis-enchanted*?**

I know that Amy (Adams) has confirmed that she's doing it. They are still working on the script. I haven't seen the script yet. But I know they very much want it to go into production in 2019 and if there is a good script, I will do it. I don't think anyone wants to move forward until the script is right. But we are getting close.

**Tell us about your new TV series.**

It's a mini-series, 10 episodes. I was attracted to this project *The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair* because of the director, Jean-Jacques Annaud. It piqued my interest because I've been a fan of his work and really wanted to work with him. And then I read the book and went to Paris to meet him and the producers. It's a romantic thriller, different, unexpected and challenging. I was looking for a thriller and this came along at the right time, so it became the right next step for me to take.

**Patrick Dempsey's new TV series, *The Truth About the Harry Quebert Affair* premiered in the US last week.**

Watch the video  
[thestarTV.com](http://thestarTV.com)



By JOAN MORRIS

FOR San Francisco Bay Area filmmakers Dana Nachman and Don Hardy, their latest collaboration *Pick Of The Litter* was a whisker or two different from past films.

For one thing, instead of retelling an event as most documentaries do, this film is told in real time, taking the viewer along on what Hardy called a "roller coaster" of emotions.

For another, Hardy and Nachman had to give their five stars a lot of hugs and belly rubs.

*Pick Of The Litter* follows five Labrador Retriever puppies – Potomac, Patriot, Primrose, Poppet, and Phil – from birth through their training to become guide dogs for the blind.

Spoiler alert: Not all of the puppies succeed with the special level of training necessary for guide dogs that must keep their owners out of dangerous situations, even when it means disobeying an order.

Of the 800 puppies born each year at the Guide Dogs' headquarters in San Rafael, California, only 300 graduate and are given to their new owners, chosen from more than 1,000 applicants each year.

Hardy and Nachman had worked with Guide Dogs for the Blind on a few occasions in their role as NBC Bay Area journalists, but the idea to make a documentary came from Nachman's mother.

"My mum is a journalist in New York and she did a series, following the dogs from birth," Nachman says. "So it's stolen from Mum. We're also fans of the competition genre, so it was the perfect opportunity to do both."

The competition is not among the dogs for spots in the programme, but in the dogs themselves. Their abilities and talents will determine whether they will eventually wear that special harness and be paired with a blind person. The audience watches as the dogs start their training, and then, as the suspense builds, the fate of each dog is revealed one by one, their names slowly dissolving from the list when they fail to advance through the training.

The film, a Sundance Selects release, begins with stories about how guide dogs have saved lives, including leading a man out of the burning World Trade Center before the collapse and stopping a man from tumbling down a steep stairwell.

We then meet the puppies as they emerge into the world. They are all given names that start with a P, the means by which to keep track of this litter. When the pup-

# From 'Batkid' to canines

Bay Area filmmakers enter emotional world of raising guide dogs.



Filmmakers Nachman (left) and Hardy, with Buddy the dog. The pair created the film *Batkid Begins* and now have partnered with Guide Dogs for the Blind to make another film, *Pick Of The Litter*, which has received outstanding early response from audiences, bringing on cheers and tears alike. — Photos: TNS

pies are old enough, they are turned over to puppy raisers for 14 months of basic training.

The dogs are evaluated throughout the process, and if the training falters, they are assigned to new puppy raisers.

All of the dogs get a happy ending, just not always the one expected. Some transfer to other service dog programmes, where their talents are better suited. Some become everyday pets. Others enter the organisation's breeding programme.

But even with those happy endings, disappointment is inevitable for the puppy trainers, whether experienced or novice, as they fall in love and then have to give back these pups.

Hardy and Nachman, working with a small crew, followed the dogs for about two years. They encountered plenty of obstacles along the way. Filming took place during one of the Bay Area's wettest winters. Nachman and Hardy had to keep track of five dogs with five different puppy trainers, some of whom changed during the two-year

**We're very hopeful this will help raise visibility about what Guide Dogs for the Blind is all about ... everything that goes into the training, the arduous process and how much these dogs mean to all the people that their lives touch.**

Chris Benninger

project. And the pace of filming increased during the dogs' final training, with daily shoots for several weeks.

Nachman and Hardy are not new to challenges such as these. The co-founders of KTF Films have a long resume of films. They have written, directed and produced *Witch Hunt* and *The Human Experiment* which were narrated and co-produced by actor Sean Penn; *Love Hate Love* and *Batkid Begins*, the story of a Bay Area boy with cancer, whose dream of being Batkid captured the hearts of a

community and nation.

The films, particularly *Batkid*, have won awards and acclaim, but Hardy and Nachman say early response to *Litter* is beyond anything they've ever had from audiences.

Chris Benninger, CEO for Guide Dogs for the Blind, has attended several screenings of the film. In each case, she says, the audience has cheered, shouted encouragement to the dogs and cried.

Critics also have been keen on the film, which has scored a 100% approval rating on Rotten

Tomatoes. Slate movie critic Marissa Martinelli called it "a movie about dogs that's not really about dogs" but instead about the cadre of volunteers and professionals who guide the puppies from womb to their final destinations.

"For a documentary in which some of the subjects regularly lick the camera," Martinelli wrote, "*Pick Of The Litter* is much more than a puppy parade, educating viewers about what it takes, practically and psychologically, to train a service animal. The wet noses and wagging tails are just a perk."

Bradley Gibson with Film Threat called it an "uncommon near-perfect documentary".

Hardy, who lives in Alameda, jokes that he and Nachman, of Los Altos, are trying to start a social media war for which dog is the most popular. Hardy's favourite is Phil; Nachman has a soft spot for Patriot.

It takes about 250 people, Nachman says, to raise just one dog, and for the most part, each participant doesn't know what happens beyond their role. Small groups handle different aspects. The veterinary technicians who are involved in the births don't know the puppy trainers, who in turn don't know the guide dog centre trainers. The film creates a link of all those people to show the complete process.

"They're excited," Hardy says. "They've been working for decades, and it's entrenched in who they are, and now they can point to the film and say 'This is who we are and why we do this.'"

Benninger says the organisation is thrilled with the film because it shows the discipline and rigors the dogs experience, while emphasising how some seemingly harsh decisions are necessary because the lives of their handlers are at stake. Guide Dogs, which receives no government funding, relies on donations and contributions, while providing all services – including dog and veterinary care for the animal's life – for free to the recipients.

"We're very hopeful this will help raise visibility about what Guide Dogs for the Blind is all about," Benninger says, "everything that goes into the training, the arduous process and how much these dogs mean to all the people that their lives touch." — The Mercury News/Tribune News Service

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# Technology

IN today's world, carrying out transactions has become a relatively straightforward process especially since the arrival of online banking.

However, the system is not perfect as it involves many intermediaries such as banks, credit card companies and the Swift network.

As many parties are involved, it can result in higher administrative and transaction costs, which are usually passed on to the payer and the payee.

Enter blockchain which doesn't require third parties so transactions are seamless with lower fees. Removing the middlemen also creates a self-governing, autonomous business model.

Even tech giants such as IBM, Microsoft, Google and Facebook have started experimenting with blockchain technology.

According to *Forbes*, all 10 of the largest public companies on the *Forbes Global 2000* list are exploring blockchain and at least 50 of the biggest names on it have made their own mark with the technology.

Although blockchain technology is still in its infancy, it is widely used worldwide, as it is the backbone of cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin and Ether (which is based on the Ethereum blockchain).

In Zimbabwe and Venezuela, for example, cryptocurrencies have been growing in popularity as alternatives to the countries' own currencies which have been badly

# The future of finance

Blockchain and cryptocurrencies could transform the financial system.



Qian will be speaking on The Future Of Value Transfer at Blocfest.

IBM, Microsoft, Google and Facebook are experimenting with blockchain technology.

affected by hyperinflation.

And Palestinians in the Gaza Strip have also been turning to cryptocurrency as they have no access to PayPal.

Cryptocurrency makes cross-border trade easy, allowing them to reconnect with the global economy.

Also, new blockchain protocols and Dapps – or decentralised apps – have entered the scene in the hopes of introducing a more transparent system for the mortgage sector.

As it doesn't require intermediaries, house buyers can also

look forward to lower fees.

For instance, Fusion is a blockchain that integrates smart contracts so house sellers, buyers and brokers can interact in a "trustless" fashion.

The lender has peace of mind knowing that if the borrower

cannot pay back the loan, the financial institute will immediately be granted custody of the property via the smart contract's self-executing legal agreements.

Beyond that, the Fusion protocol will also allow property owners to "tokenise" their houses, giving them full ownership of their property on a secure and tamper-free distributed ledger.

If you want to find out more, Dejan Qian, the founder of Fusion, will be presenting The Future Of Value Transfer on day one of Blocfest 2018, scheduled to take place at the Shangri-La Hotel, Kuala Lumpur, on Sept 26 and 27.

You'll also get to network with people who are developing technologies based on blockchain during the KL Blockchain Week, from Sept 24 and 27, which also includes a hackathon.

Those interested in attending can get 40% off VIP tickets priced at US\$450 (RM1,860) or normal tickets priced at US\$375 (RM1,550) by keying in the promo code BLOC40D during checkout but this offer is only available for a limited time. Visit [www.blocfest.asia](http://www.blocfest.asia) for more information.



Get ready to dive into the Internet with Mozilla's first VR web browser and it supports three VR headsets.

## Use virtual reality to browse the Web

By QISHIN TARIQ  
bytz@thestar.com.my

MOZILLA has rolled out a virtual reality browser – *Fox Reality* – for a more immersive web browsing experience.

Chief R&D officer Sean White announced that *Fox Reality* is now available on three app stores – Viveport (for HTC Vive headset), Oculus (for Oculus Rift headset) and Daydream (for Google Daydream headset).

"The mixed reality team at Mozilla set out to build a web browser that has been designed from the ground up to work on standalone virtual and augmented reality (or mixed reality) headsets," he said.

To make the experience more natural, users can use their voice to do a web search as VR headsets include a microphone.

The privacy and transparency standards are still based on *Fox Reality* but it uses a new Quantum engine for smoother and faster performance.

White says although *Fox Reality* 1.0 just came out, version 1.1 is just around the corner.

"We have an always growing list of ideas and features that we are working to add to make this the best browser for mixed reality. We will also be listening and reacting quickly when we need to provide bug fixes and other minor updates," he says, admitting that certain standard features like

bookmarks, 360° videos, and user accounts are not available yet.

Mozilla Mixed Reality Platform Strategy head Andre Vrignaud says the team had to rethink everything, including navigation, text input, environments, search and more to design the browser.

"This required years of research, and countless conversations with users, content creators, and hardware partners. The result is a browser that is built for the medium it serves," he said.

Based on research with VR headset owners, one main complaint was that users were having a hard time finding new games and experiences, so Mozilla built a content feed into the homescreen of *Fox Reality*.

## Humans preferred over robots

CAR INDUSTRY employees concerned that robots will put them out of work needn't worry – at least for now.

Of the 13 publicly traded automakers with at least 100,000 workers at the end of their most recent fiscal year, 11 had more staff compared with year-end 2013, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. Combined, they had 3.1 million employees, or 11% more than four years earlier, the data show.

Carmakers in China and other emerging markets, where growth is strongest, favour human labour because it requires less upfront investment, said Steve Man, an analyst at Bloomberg Intelligence in Hong Kong.

In developed markets, tasks that can be handled by robots have already been automated years ago and automakers are now boosting hiring in research and develop-

ment as the industry evolves.

"There's been a lot of growth in emerging markets, especially China, so that's one reason automakers are adding staff," Man said. "More staff is being added on the R&D side, with the push for autonomous, electric, connected vehicles."

A trio of Chinese automakers, SAIC Motor, Dongfeng Motor Group and BYD – in which Warren Buffett is a major investor – increased staff by at least 24%. Volkswagen AG accounted for more than one in five jobs among the group of 13, and increased its employee count by 12% in the period.

General Motors, which shrank its payroll 18% to 180,000, and Nissan Motor, which contracted by 2.8% to 139,000 workers, were the sole carmakers whose staffs got smaller, the data show. GM's numbers were affected by the sale of its European division to PSA Group last year.

About 40% of autoworkers were women in 2017, compared with 38% four years earlier, based on data from about 30 of the largest vehicle producers worldwide. The analysis didn't take into account wages or location of the workers.

Auto companies are hiring more for software positions than hardware roles to prepare for a future in which more vehicles are communicating with each other and their surroundings, Man said. The rising popularity of electric cars is also set to cause an upheaval at manufacturers that make parts for internal combustion engines.

Total vehicle production worldwide in 2017 rose 11% to 97 million units, compared with 2013. Chinese plants cranked out 30% of all vehicles last year, followed by 12% in the US, 10% in Japan, 6% in Germany and 5% in India.

Five of the top 12 producing nations – it took two million units



Carmakers in China and other emerging markets, where growth is strongest, favour human labour because it requires less upfront investment.

to qualify last year – were in Asia, three in North America, three in Europe and one in South America.

Global vehicle sales totalled 85 million units last year, an increase of 11% from 2013. Half of those

sales last year were in the Asia-Pacific region, a slight uptick because the proportion from Latin America fell from four years earlier with demand waning in Brazil. – Bloomberg



The Galaxy A7 has a 24-megapixel, 5-megapixel and 8-megapixel camera on the back.

# Power of three

Samsung focuses on the camera for its latest smartphone.

By ANGELIN YEOH  
bytz@thestar.com.my

MEET the new Samsung Galaxy A7 (2018), the electronics giant's first triple-camera smartphone.

One of the cameras is 8 megapixels and has a 120° ultra-wide lens (f/2.4), which Samsung claims is the same viewing angle as a human eye, for snapping unrestricted wide-angle shots.

The other two cameras – 24 megapixels (f/1.7) and 5 megapixels (f/2.2) – work together to produce the Bokeh effect which will let you adjust the depth of field for

more stunning photos.

The 24-megapixels sensor can also capture more light by combining four pixels into one so you can take clearer pictures in low-light condition.

The smartphone also has an intelligent Scene Optimiser that can identify scenes and subjects and tweak the colour, contrast and brightness for the best shot.

"Samsung is committed to delivering meaningful innovation to all consumers across the Galaxy family, no matter who

they are or where they are in the world," said DJ Koh, president and CEO of Samsung Electronics IT and mobile communications division.

For selfie enthusiasts, there is a 24-megapixel front camera (f/2.0) with an adjustable LED flash.

The Galaxy A7 has a 6in full HD+ display, 2.2GHz octa-core processor, 4GB RAM, 128GB storage and 3,300mAh battery. It runs on Android 8.1.

It will be available in three colours – blue, black and gold – with a premium glass design and a side fingerprint sensor.

The Galaxy A7 is expected to be launched at the Galaxy Unpacked event in Kuala Lumpur on Oct 11.

## Two tablets for work and play

By SHARMILA NAIR  
bytz@thestar.com.my

SAMSUNG Malaysia has launched two tablets – the Galaxy Tab S4 and Tab A 10.5 (2018) – each with its own key features and specialities.

The Tab S4 is the first Samsung tablet to feature built-in support for Dex which allows you to hook it up to a monitor using a HDMI adaptor so you can use it as a desktop. It also supports most Bluetooth keyboards and mouse.

Sporting a 10.5in display, the Tab S4 is just right for work, gaming and watching videos – it even has four speakers with Dolby Atmos sound technology and tuned by AKG for bringing audio to life.

It has a 7,300mAh battery that is claimed to support up to 15 hours of video playback.

The tablet comes with the multi-functional S Pen stylus which lets users write on the screen without unlocking the tablet. You can also use the stylus to send animated handwritten notes in your conversations, and translate words and phrases.

The Tab S4 runs on an octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 835 processor and has 4GB RAM and 64GB of storage. More memory can be added via the microSD card slot.

It also has a 13-megapixel rear camera and an 8-megapixel front camera.

The other tablet – the Galaxy Tab A 10.5 (2018) – is powered by an



octa-core Qualcomm Snapdragon 450 processor and has a 10.5in display, 3GB RAM and 32GB storage that can be expanded with a microSD card.

It also has a 8-megapixel rear camera and a 5-megapixel front camera, and a 7,300mAh battery.

Both tablets feature Kids Mode, a

child-friendly tablet interface designed to make learning and entertainment safe and fun.

This mode allows parents to manage content and usage time and also includes a Kids Browser, Galaxy Apps For Kids and eight free child-friendly apps.

Families can also use Multi User Mode to create multiple accounts – for example, one account for a child with separate accounts for the parents.

The tablets also come with the

The Tab S4 comes with the multifunctional S Pen stylus which lets users send animated handwritten notes in their conversations, and translate words and phrases easily.

*SmartThings* app which makes it easy to monitor and control smart home devices right from the tablet. And it has a Daily Board feature that allows users to view their favourite photos and daily information such as the weather and calendar in one place.

The Galaxy Tab S4 is priced at RM3,099 and the Tab A 10.5 at RM1,699. Both tablets come in Black and Grey and are available at Samsung Experience Stores and authorised dealers. For more information visit [samsung.com.my](http://samsung.com.my).

## Keeping the skies safe in the Drone Age

PILOTLESS aircraft that can drop a package at every doorstep or ferry you across town in a fraction of the time taken by the fastest subway train have been a staple of science fiction for decades.

But the Drone Age is now just around the corner, making it high time to prepare for the numerous safety challenges it will pose, according to Airbus SE.

The planemaker mapped out a vision for the future of flight, together with a blueprint for allowing exotic new craft to mingle with more traditional models without courting disaster.

### New breed

Airbus envisages a raft of new aircraft categories, some of them already beginning to enter service, others just around the corner:

• **Hobby drones:** Flown for fun by untrained users via remote control or according to a preset route. Supposed to stay below 400m in most areas but many don't.

• **Imaging craft:** Able to scan a location faster and more safely than people, with applications spanning construction and agriculture through insurance

and disaster relief.

• **Delivery bots:** Everything from retail purchases to prescription drugs will be dropped at your home or office. Just 1% of deliveries would create more than 14,000 flights across Europe every daylight hour.

• **Flying cars:** So-called air mobility craft will take off from "vertiports" across towns and cities, with numbers increasing hundreds of times over as the technology becomes more affordable.

• **Pseudo-satellites:** Self- or remotely-piloted models that operate far above normal commercial altitudes, staying aloft for weeks on end and acting much like satellites but at reduced expense. Applications include imaging, Internet access and spying.

### Staying safe

Airbus projects that in Paris alone drones will account for almost 20,000 flights per hour by 2035, while operations with commercial aircraft are set to double.

Traditional methods of air traffic management will no longer be able to cope, making it vital that

practices and systems are completely overhauled. Among the issues:

• **Computer control:** Overseeing the exponential increase in flights will be beyond the capabilities of humans. Their role will be taken over by a host of decentralised digital service providers responsible for coordinating with each other while observing safety, security and performance standards set by government regulators.

• **Shared skies:** Piloted airliners will use the same runways as unmanned cargo planes, flying taxis will dart across the paths of helicopters, and high-altitude drones will coexist with military jets. Restricting access will stifle advances and isn't an option, Airbus says.

• **Self-piloting a must:** The commercial viability of drones and air taxis requires economies of scale that would make human involvement in each flight unaffordable. Craft must therefore be able to react to changing circumstances and take evading action when necessary.

• **Self-management:** Operators must be allowed to undertake their own flight planning, vehicle



Airbus envisages a raft of new aircraft categories, some of them already beginning to enter service, others just around the corner.

assignment and coordination, allowing them to engage in activities such as formation flying and mass-hovering.

• **Avoiding collisions:** While some craft will be allowed to

determine their own paths or coordinate with traffic-management services, in busier areas they'll be confined to three-dimensional corridors or narrowly defined fixed routes. – Bloomberg

# Nintendo finally online, gets flak

By YUJI NAKAMURA

GOOD things come to those who wait. Except, maybe, for Nintendo gamers.

The company that created *Super Mario* and *Zelda* is finally embracing online gaming with the debut of its first online subscription service, charging US\$20 (RM80) a year for users of its Switch console to play each other across the Web.

The move comes more than a decade after rivals Sony and Microsoft started similar services that today generate billions of dollars in subscription fees.

But Nintendo's late arrival is being met with jeers, not cheers, by large swathes of the gaming community.

Users have had 18 months to trial the service for free and the response has been decidedly negative. Lacking must-have features for today's multiplayer titles, such as in-game chat, consumers are slamming the platform as frustrating to use, susceptible to cheating and prone to connectivity issues.

With the all-important holiday season riding on the success of online brawler *Super Smash Bros Ultimate*, analysts say improving the network is more critical than ever.

"Nintendo is at least five years behind, probably more", compared with Sony and Microsoft, said Piers Harding-Rolls, head of games research at IHS Markit. "It works, but it is the minimum you would expect from an online service."

The paid service officially kicked off on Sept 19. Nintendo declined to comment for this story or respond to criticisms of the Switch Online service. A company spokesman said it's monitoring the situation and referred questions to the Nintendo's previous statements.

In June, Nintendo's US chief Reggie Fils-Aime said the company is still "learning about the technical infrastructure" and gameplay design. He promised the issues would be ironed out before the official launch.

"You have to expect some challenges when you do that. When we launch the game, it's going to perform," Fils-Aime said at the time.

Nintendo has long ignored online gaming, for philosophical and financial reasons. The company became a powerhouse through titles designed to be played alone, such as *Zelda* and *Metroid*, or face-to-face with friends in *Mario Kart*.

There has also been concern that strangers could use the Internet to reach children playing its family-focused titles.

It took Nintendo a long time to get into online gaming but gamers are not impressed.



Nintendo has long ignored online gaming, for philosophical and financial reasons.

Another factor is the cost of building online networks for a company that has traditionally been financially conservative.

But with multiplayer gaming now a huge part of the US\$138bil (RM570.97bil) games industry, the Kyoto-based company had little choice but to embrace online.

To replicate the type of platform used by Sony requires investing in servers around the world and constantly upgrading the network to ensure speeds keep up with game development and user growth.

Sony's PlayStation network has evolved since it was launched in 2000 and in the past five years it has spent aggressively to build its network assets.

That includes investing in servers to enable Cloud-based gaming on its PlayStation Now service that was unveiled in 2014 as well as a web-based TV service.

In the last financial year, its network business generated more than US\$9bil (RM37.2bil) of revenue.

Nintendo eschewed the dedicated server approach, and instead embraced a cheaper design called peer-to-peer.

"With P2P, because players are essentially connected to each other, the speed of the game is restricted to the slowest player's connection.

"So if they have a bad Internet

connection the entire gameplay scenario will run slow," said Penny de Byl, founder of online games education provider Holistic3d. "If Nintendo wants to address the needs of its gamers, then it will have to consider providing dedicated servers or players will just go elsewhere."

A key advantage of using P2P is that it's cheaper to build and maintain, a key reason why Nintendo's online service is charging about one third the price of Sony and Microsoft's.

Users are also questioning other features, or the lack of them. Nintendo's system doesn't come with built-in voice and text chat, instead forcing users to access a smartphone app.

Its process for matching gamers to each other is rigid while players have also cited an archaic code system for adding friends. Gamers also don't get the ability to browse the Web or watch videos, a key attraction for those used to viewing contests on services such as Twitch.

Most recently, users have lashed out because in-game progress isn't automatically backed up to the Cloud for all titles, meaning if a player lost or damaged their Switch, all their hours of play could be lost.

"You can see online

isn't really in Nintendo's DNA," said Serkan Toto, founder of Tokyo-based game consultancy Kantan Games Inc.

Despite the criticism, gamers are using the online service. Digital sales through the platform jumped 68% from a year ago in the latest quarter, helping the company top earnings estimates.

Ending the free trial may upset gamers, but it is a necessary first step, according to IHS's Harding-Rolls.

The recurring revenue stream will let Nintendo fund further development and address concerns raised by players. "This is why Nintendo has to start charging," he said.

For a company that has traditionally been able to keep gamers on its side, Nintendo's challenge will be maintaining goodwill and appeasing critics.

Earlier this year, a player frustrated with rampant online cheating on the flagship *Splatoon 2* game hacked to the top of the game's

leaderboards in July and added the simple message "Please Add Anti Cheat".

Embarrassed by the incident, Nintendo banned the user and removed the message. Since then, multiple outlets have reported that the company has quietly implemented measures to try to solve the cheating issue. Nintendo declined to comment on any efforts to stamp out cheats.

After last week's start of paid subscriptions, the next big test will be on Dec 7 with the release of *Super Smash Bros Ultimate*, the latest instalment in the decades-old fighting series.

A botched launch wouldn't just hurt sales of this year's biggest game, but increase pressure from short-sellers who have raised scepticism over the Switch's long-term viability.

"I'll consider it when we see what *Smash* online is like but there's no way I'm purchasing it any time soon," said Bryce Knox, a gamer from North Carolina who spent about 10 hours a week playing online titles on the Switch.

Comparing Sony's online offering to Nintendo's, he said "It feels like an iPhone to a flip phone."

— Bloomberg



The PlayStation Classic will be preloaded with 20 classic titles.

## Get into retro gaming

By QISHIN TARIQ  
bytz@thestar.com.my

SONY is jumping aboard the nostalgia train – the company has announced it will be releasing the PlayStation Classic, a miniaturised version of its first console, the PlayStation.

PlayStation worldwide marketing senior vice president Eric Lempel says Sony is bringing back the original PlayStation experience with the PS Classic which will be 45% smaller than the original and come with matching controllers.

"Almost 25 years ago, the

original PlayStation was introduced to the world. Developed by Sony Computer Entertainment, it was the first home console in the videogame history to ship 100 million units worldwide, offering consumers a chance to play games with real-time 3D rendered graphics in their homes for the first time," he says, in a post on the PlayStation blog.

The PS Classic will come preloaded with 20 classic titles, including *Final Fantasy VII*, *Jumping Flash*, *Ridge Racer Type 4*, *Tekken 3* and *Wild Arms*.

All of the preloaded games will be playable in their original format

with more games to be announced soon.

The miniature console doesn't support cartridges but has on-board memory for saving your games.

"Long-time fans will appreciate the nostalgia that comes with rediscovering the games they know and love, while gamers who might be new to the platform can enjoy the groundbreaking PlayStation console experience that started it all," he says.

To console will be released in Malaysia on Dec 3 for RM429.

Each unit will also come with a HDMI cable to connect to a TV, USB cable for power, and two control-

lers, although the AC adaptor will be sold separately.

The release date is set to coincide with the anniversary of the original PlayStation console's release in Japan in 1994.

Nintendo released a similar console, the NES Classic Edition, at the end of 2016, which lets gamers play 30 Nintendo classics.

By MARK BUCHANAN

LAST Saturday, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration launched the Ice, Cloud and Land Elevation Satellite-2, which will monitor Earth's ice sheets, recording changes in ice thickness as small as half a centimeter.

The satellite will allow us to see one consequence of our collective pressure on the planet's environment. And yet it will, in a small way, also exacerbate another emerging global problem.

The US Air Force – more precisely, the US Strategic Command – is already actively tracking more than 20,000 satellites, rocket pieces and collision fragments bigger than a softball that are orbiting the earth, which together present a looming menace to satellite operations and everything that depends on them, including global positioning systems, telecommunications, weather forecasts and the Internet.

Over 50 years ago, when we first started putting satellites in orbit, we seemed small, and the earth very big. Now, with nearly 500 new satellites going up every year, our influence is no longer small.

Congested space is another reflection of our entry into the Anthropocene – a new era of history in which everything about the earth and its climate, even the space around it, is profoundly affected by human activity.

Nasa scientists began thinking about potential space overcrowding in the early 1970s, when the number of satellites in orbit was approaching 4,000.

In an influential paper, space scientists Donald Kessler and Burton Cour-Palais made a rough estimate that, as the number of satellites grew, the risk of collisions would become an issue by the 2000s. They weren't far off. In 2009, a US commercial satellite collided with an inactive Russian communications satellite at a speed of some 26,000 miles per hour, creating two clouds of debris that rapidly dispersed throughout low Earth orbits, at anywhere from 600km to 1600km above the earth.

By TOM AVRIL

WHEN Robert Shafran started community college in upstate New York in 1980, he was puzzled that some of his fellow students seemed unusually friendly, acting as though they already knew him.

That mystery is retold in the opening moments of the movie *Three Identical Strangers*, and it gets more bizarre from there.

Spoiler alert: Shafran learned he was one of a set of triplets who were separated soon after birth and placed with adoptive families – part of a study in which researchers explored the age-old question of how human beings are shaped by nature and nurture.

"I wouldn't believe the story if someone else were telling it," he says in the documentary, which was released in the United States this year.

The three were near-identical in appearance and seemed, at a glance, to share a number of behavioral traits. They had the same genes, after all. Yet in certain respects, their personalities were noticeably different. Should that be chalked up to the families who raised them, the filmmakers ask?

The film suggests that question remains somewhat unresolved, at least for these triplets and other participants in the study (which drew fire from ethicists – more on that later). But on a population level, scientists know a great deal about the relative roles of genetics and the environment in shaping

"You're going to read more, and

# Clear and present danger

Congested space is another reflection of our entry into the Anthropocene – a new era of history in which everything about the earth and its climate, even the space around it, is profoundly affected by human activity.



A conceptual artwork of the pollution around our planet. — 123rf.com

More important, Kessler and Cour-Palais also pointed to a serious risk that would arise if the number of objects in low or medium Earth orbits became too high: A higher density of objects, they argued, makes it more likely that the secondary fragments created in one collision will in turn strike other objects. A sufficient density

of debris could set the stage for a fragmentary chain reaction that could quickly render the entire space around Earth unusable.

Space scientist Carolin Frueh of Purdue University said that while this analysis depends on many assumptions, some of which are debatable, "It seems to be beyond doubt that an increased space pop-

ulation leads to this effect."

Incredibly, scientists now think we're getting close to this critical stage, and that we urgently need to clean it up. There are lots of ideas being pursued by researchers who think of themselves as "space environmentalists."

This past weekend, a satellite launched in June began testing a

technique to throw a net over pieces of space debris and pull them into trajectories that would lead to their burning up after atmospheric re-entry. That kind of approach might work on some of the largest objects, but researchers have other ideas for the smaller ones, such as employing the subtle periodic forcings of the sun and moon to gradually steer debris on easy pathways toward atmospheric re-entry.

Given the stakes, and human ingenuity, the chances are high that we'll avoid the fragmentary catastrophe, which space scientists call the Kessler syndrome. But it's certain that we've moved into a management era of near-Earth space. A space that even a few decades ago seemed unfathomably vast has become subject to perpetual monitoring and management, just so we can go on using it. The need for intense management will only grow if companies such as Boeing Co., OneWeb Satellites and SpaceX go on to deploy thousands of new satellites over the next decade or two.

The notion of the Anthropocene has generated some controversy, in part over the difficulty of deciding on when it began but also how it reflects a new geological phase of Earth history. But there's no question that we've entered a profoundly distinct phase, with people having modified over 50% of the earth's surface, generating geophysical flows of nitrogen and phosphorous larger than natural processes produce and dispersing plastic waste to every corner of the oceans.

Now add to that the very edge of space – already under perpetual human management. – Bloomberg

Mark Buchanan, a physicist and science writer, is the author of the book *Forecast: What Physics, Meteorology And The Natural Sciences Can Teach Us About Economics*.

## Real life experiment

all sorts of characteristics – both physical traits such as height and weight, and behavioral attributes such as personality and mental health.

For starters: Identical twins (and triplets) are not 100% identical, even though they originate from the same egg and sperm. Each time our cells divide and the DNA is copied, there is a chance for small, usually inconsequential, mistakes.

"It's not a perfect copy machine," said Gene Fisch, a behavioral genetics researcher and adjunct professor of statistics at Baruch College in New York.

Second point: instead of saying nature vs. nurture, call it genetics and the environment – the sum total of a person's experiences and exposures. And forget the word versus, as the two life-shaping forces interact with each other. For example, the environment can affect how a person's genes are expressed – a phenomenon known as epigenetics.

Imagine a person born with a combination of traits needed to be a good reader, said Rebecca Waller, an assistant professor in clinical psychology at the University of Pennsylvania. Those tendencies can be enhanced by environmental factors.

"You're going to read more, and

that's going to make you even better," she said. "And maybe because your parents see that, they buy you more books. Or maybe they drop you at the library on a Saturday."

Likewise, researchers have identified numerous genes that increase a person's risk for depression, but the outcome is far from certain, said Patrick Sullivan, a professor of genetics and psychiatry at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

"It depends what happens to you, what you're taught, whether you learn skills about resilience, and the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," Sullivan said.

For decades before the advent of modern gene-sequencing techniques, studying twins was a powerful tool for answering such questions.

By comparing identical twins with fraternal twins – those who share just half of their DNA, on average – scientists could tease out how much of the variation in a given trait was due to genetics.

Sullivan was part of a team that analysed the results from 50 years of such studies. Generally speaking, genetics have been found to play a strong role in shaping easy-to-measure physical characteristics such as height, but they have less influence on behavioral attributes.

No surprise there, said Baruch

College's Fisch.

"The brain is orders of magnitude more complicated than, pick an organ, whether it's bladder or heart or kidney," he said.

In most of these twin studies, adoptive and birth parents were told the goal of the research and agreed to take part. Not so for the children who were placed for adoption in the movie.

Renewed spoiler alert: Not only were the adoptive parents and children unaware of the study's aims, but the researchers had a hand in deciding where they were placed. In the case of the triplets, one was placed with a blue-collar family, another with a middle-class household, and the third in a wealthy home.

Other researchers have blasted this arrangement as a grotesque breach of ethics. It was all the more surprising because one of the study leaders, Peter Neubauer, was Jewish and had left his native Austria in the late 1930s under the growing shadow of Nazi Germany – a regime notorious for its experiments on concentration camp prisoners.

It remains unclear what he learned from the study, as the results were never published and Neubauer died in 2008. But when Shafran and his newfound brothers became celebrities in the

1980s, family, friends, and even talk-show hosts rushed to draw their own conclusions. As the film relates, much was made of superficial similarities such as the fact that all three liked Marlboro cigarettes, older women, and wrestling.

Likely a coincidence, said James Tabery, a University of Utah associate professor of philosophy and the author of *Beyond Versus: The Struggle To Understand The Interaction Of Nature And Nurture*.

"People look for similarities because it sort of feeds this narrative of, 'Oh, look, isn't that amazing? It's your genes that are driving this,' Tabery said. "They don't focus on the fact that one drinks Pepsi, or another drinks Sprite, and maybe another does not drink soda at all."

On a tragic note, one of the triplets, Eddy Galland, killed himself in 1995, and the filmmakers imply that his adoptive father's strict, unyielding demeanor played a role.

Fisch is sceptical.

"If that were the case, there would be a whole lot more suicides," the researcher said.

Shafran and the other surviving triplet, David Kellman, have been granted access to some of the findings in the study in which they unwittingly took part. But the public will have to wait. At Neubauer's direction, they were sealed in an archive at Yale University until 2066. – The Philadelphia Inquirer/Tribune News Service

FORMER meteorologist Lars Hattwig has achieved the “frugalist” dream that is gaining ground in ageing Germany: retiring in his 40s and living on the proceeds of a working life lived sparingly.

“It was four years ago that I realised I didn’t need my salary anymore. I didn’t have to work any more. So I quit my job,” says the Berliner, now 47.

Hattwig put himself through a sometimes punishing savings regime for 10 years and carefully invested the proceeds, giving himself the resources to make the leap.

“For one or two years, I was extremely tight-fisted” after the 2008 crisis, he admits, as his share holdings lost some of their value before later recovering.

“I avoided turning on the lights at home, I checked the meter regularly, I bought the cheapest food,” he recalled.

“But that phase is over now.”

A craze for frugal living is spreading on German-language blogs and Internet forums, stoked by those already living the dream or people imagining what might be if they could only scrape the cash together.

For example, each step of 29-year-old Oliver Noelting’s pilgrimage towards financial freedom is chronicled in detail online.

“I can totally imagine that when I’m 40, I’ll say to myself: I’ve been doing this for 10 or 12 years. Now I want to do something else,” the Hanover-based computer programmer says, pooh-poohing the official retirement age of 67.

“My goal is just to be happy.”

### Making do with less

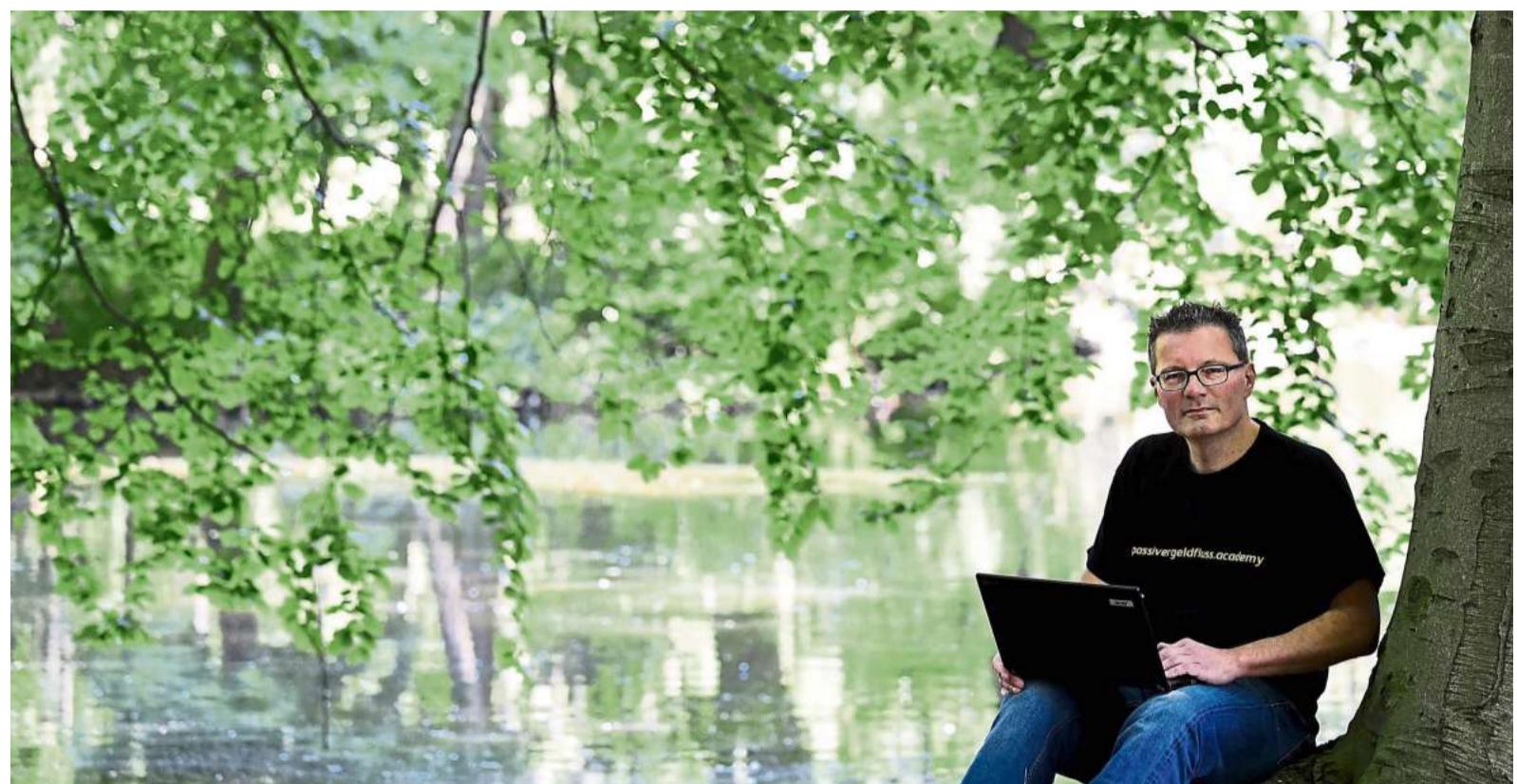
Known as FIRE (Financial Independence Retire Early) in the United States, where it originated, the motives of adherents to the frugalist movement range from the ecological to the political or just personal inclination.

Enthusiasts are often middle class and lead simple lives with a focus on health – and nary a cigarette to be seen.

For many, it’s about freedom

# Frugal route to freedom

Thrifty Germans look to escape the rat race early by saving all they can.



Frugalist Hattwig has achieved a dream more and more ‘frugalist’ Germans are pursuing: retiring in their 40s and living on the proceeds of a working life lived sparingly. — AFP

from “existential fear linked to money”, like anxiety over losing a job or unhealthy levels of stress that can lead to burnout, says Gisela Enders, author of a book titled *Financial Freedom*.

Few adherents have any interest in cars, large flats or designer clothes.

“Do I really need all these things the consumer society wants to convince me at all costs I can’t do without?” Enders asks.

Asking such questions is often a prelude to taking action.

“Frugalists live below their means for the long term, aiming to achieve financial independence and in the end realise a specific dream or wish,” Hattwig explains.

Resources to help seekers along the path are plentiful, meaning budding ascetics don’t have to be financial wizards to reach their goals, says Hattwig.

A top blogger in the US scene is known as “Mister Money Mustache” for his keen sense for a good investment.

Hattwig too offers coaching on how to invest in financial products and real estate – whenever he feels like it, and only for those who can pay for the privilege although he calls it a hobby.

Others gather at “Financial Independence Weeks” (FIWE), regular community meetings organised by a couple who used to live in Germany and moved with their two children to

Romania. Their gatherings draw up to 25 adherents, according to Noelting.

### Outside the system

No-one has compiled figures for the number of frugalists living in Germany.

“It’s a German thing: we don’t talk about money,” author Enders explains.

At a time when Europe’s top economy is desperately looking for solutions on how to pay for pensions after 2025 when the post-war baby boom generation heads into retirement, raising the possibility of upping the retirement age, the frugalists seem to have hit upon one solution to the demographic headache.

But it’s a choice that provokes criticism over how a society with a communal responsibility can continue to function if increasing

numbers, who have benefited from it by receiving an education for example, pay less, or nothing at all, into the public social security, pensions and health insurance pots.

Hattwig regularly receives messages on his blog complaining he is being selfish but dismisses them as an expression of “jealousy”.

“Sure, I may have paid less into the pension system, but I don’t want a state pension,” programmer Noelting says.

After escaping traditional working life, most frugalists look for new goals, and often find themselves most motivated by voluntary work, says Enders.

Rather than complain, “when 25-year-olds are saying to themselves ‘I want to stop working at 40’, we ought to be thinking about the quality of working life that our society offers,” she suggests. — AFP

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# A welcome respite in the city

By HELENA WILLIAMS

EXHAUSTED Londoners hoping to take a rest from their busy schedules are being offered an alternative to coffee breaks: a sleep pod where they can grab some shut-eye for £15 (RM82) an hour.

Inspired by Japanese capsule hotels, Pop & Rest in London’s trendy Shoreditch area boasts four “sleep pods” rooms with dark walls and a lavender aroma to aid relaxation, each supplied with ear plugs and an eye mask.

Mauricio Villamizar, 28, said he and his Pop & Rest co-founder Yoann Demont came up with the idea for their venture after observing Londoners’ hectic lifestyle and long working hours.

“You could see they were tired all the time and just with coffee and tea wasn’t enough, so we

thought we should set up something like a private space where they can relax in peace,” he said.

According to Villamizar, Pop & Rest currently averages between 30-35 customers a week, among them many freelancers and people working in the gig economy.

Graeme Daniel is a director of a fashion company and has visited Pop & Rest several times since it opened in June this year.

The 58-year-old says that the pods are helpful to catch up on sleep after a late night followed by a busy working day.

“If I go out late in the evening and I’ve got maybe meetings spread throughout the day, it’s just nice to have one hour catch up on the sleep that I’ve probably missed the night before,” he said.

“What can you get for £15 in Central London, you know, you have a lunch. So, £15 to have a

decent rest and clear mind for the afternoon or for a meeting late on in the day is perfect as far as I’m concerned,” he added.

Designer Dan Andrews, 30, works near Pop & Rest and says the pods offer him a chance to meditate.

“Even if you try and take that time to meditate or be mindful on a park bench or in the corner of the office or anywhere it’s just really hard to get that disconnection,” he said.

Andrews has visited the pods up to four times since June, and believes the cost to nap is “fair”.

“It’s good, if you think about the cost of your mental health and your sanity,” he said.

Villamizar says he aims to “flood” the city with sleep pods, eventually expanding to other UK cities and across Europe. — Reuters

# Vivid dramatisation

*Hotel Mumbai* recounts horrors, courage in 2008 attack.

A HARD-TO-WATCH telling of the 2008 attacks in Mumbai, India, in Anthony Maras's *Hotel Mumbai* provoked tears and cheers at its world premiere at the Toronto film festival recently.

It is an "anthem of resistance", the Australian director declared at a press conference.

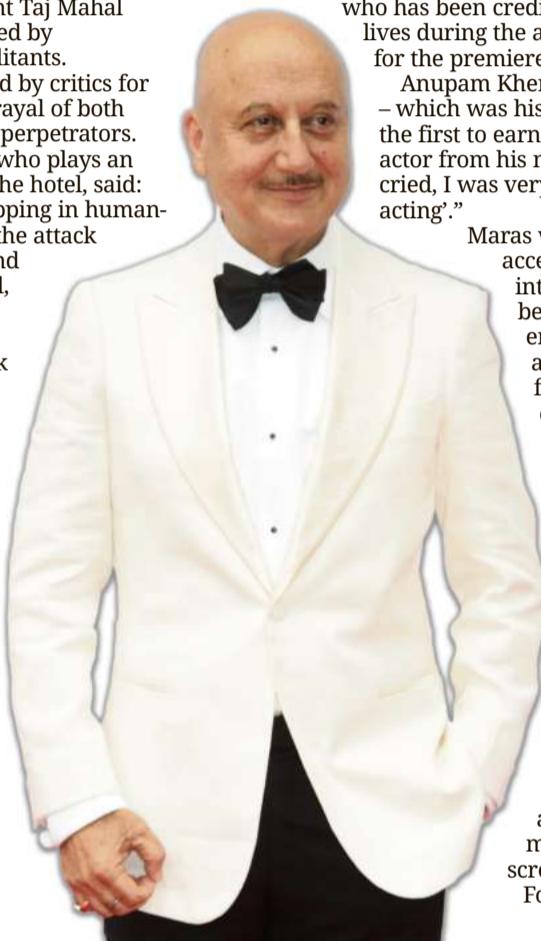
"You had a whole lot of people from every conceivable background, racial, ethnic, from different socioeconomic groups who came together in the face of real adversity to survive," Maras said.

The film received a standing ovation over for its searing, vivid dramatisation of the events at the opulent Taj Mahal Palace Hotel, targeted by Lashkar-e-Taiba militants.

It was also praised by critics for its empathetic portrayal of both the victims and the perpetrators.

Armie Hammer, who plays an American guest of the hotel, said: "The script was dripping in humanity. You see the toll the attack has on the guests and the staff of the hotel, but you also see it, really for the first time that I can think of, on the actual perpetrators."

Nazanin Boniadi, who plays his wife in the movie, had tears streaming down her face on



In *Hotel Mumbai*, Kher plays executive chef Hemant Oberoi who has been credited for saving many lives during the assault. — Reuters

stage during a post-premiere question-and-answer with the audience.

Jason Isaacs, cast as a Russian guest of the hotel, urged watching it with others in a cinema, saying it "connects you with other people and to recognise your common humanity".

The hotel siege was part of a coordinated series of attacks in India's most populous city which left more than 160 dead and hundreds wounded.

The film includes television footage of the attacks, as well as excerpts of interviews by the filmmaker of the survivors.

The hotel's executive chef Hemant Oberoi, who has been credited for saving many lives during the assault, was on hand for the premiere.

Anupam Kher plays him in the film – which was his 501st – said it was the first to earn him praise as an actor from his mother: "She said, 'I cried, I was very moved by your acting'."

Maras was also granted access to transcripts of intercepted calls between the 10 attackers and their handlers, as well as a video confession from the trial of the only surviving gunman. A lot of their dialogue in the film, he said, was "verbatim".

"We couldn't make up anything to the extent of what we heard on those chilling tapes," he said.

This included a handler telling one of the attackers to leave his phone on throughout the assault so that he might hear the victims' screams.

For days, the staff and



Isaacs and Patel star in *Hotel Mumbai*. — AFP

guests of the hotel were on their own as police were outgunned, using old rifles against automatic weapons and grenades.

Maras said the hotel staff stuffed baking trays and saucepans down their shirts to use as shielding, and armed themselves with rolling pins and kitchen knives to try to protect themselves and guests.

"At a time when people are becoming so divided over so many different lines, to have this story where all these people are coming together selflessly to help each other ... they were there for one another," he commented.

"What's remarkable is that despite the fact they must all have been out of their wits with terror, they continued to act for each other and help each other," echoed Isaacs.

Dev Patel had just finished acting in his

first feature film *Slumdog Millionaire* when the violence in Mumbai was splashed live across television news channels around the world.

"To come back off this amazing journey (to India) and enter my house in London and see my parents looking at the television screen, watching the city essentially burn, it was very difficult," he said. "It's horrible what happened there."

The hotel was completely restored by 2010, and a monument was erected in the lobby to commemorate the victims.

The attacks, Patel said, "are still very raw for a lot of people."

"But they really wanted to put that in the past and show that it didn't cripple them." — AFP

## Why do women have to take the blame for men's mistakes?

By LIBBY HILL

SINGER Ariana Grande has been blamed for the death of ex-boyfriend Mac Miller due to a suspected overdose.

Thanks in part to TMZ's early reporting that linked Miller's substance abuse issues to his breakup with Grande – ignoring years of the rapper's admitted struggles with addiction – the *No Tears Left To Cry* singer faced brutal online criticisms attacking her for Miller's death.

Grande was forced to disable comments on her Instagram account and has largely been absent from all her public social media accounts.

Another story unfolded recently in similar fashion. Longtime CBS executive Les Moonves resigned from the network after a dozen women levelled accusations of sexual misconduct and harassment at the CEO.

Moonves' #MeToo moment unfurled slower than most, with Ronan Farrow originally reporting on allegations in July, spurring CBS' investigation into Moonves.

Recently, Farrow published another story featuring new accusations that precipitated the executive's departure.

Throughout everything, Moonves' wife, popular CBS personality Julie Chen, has stood by him.

In July, Chen issued a statement calling her husband "a good man and a loving father, devoted husband and inspiring corporate leader".

And on Sept 13, after taking time off from her other job as co-host of *The Talk*, Chen showed up for work hosting *Big Brother* and



Grande disabled the comment section on her Instagram after she was attacked. — AFP

made no mention of her spouse's recent unemployment.

Still, Chen found a way to show her support, signing off from the episode with a name she had never used before: Julie Chen Moonves.

The Internet was furious. How dare Chen defend her husband and support a man accused of such despicable things? How could she betray other women like that?

So, both Ariana Grande and Julie Chen became victims of a society that forces women to be responsible for the men around them.

This phenomenon isn't new.

In fact, it's come up time and again throughout the revelations of #MeToo. Did Meryl Streep know about Harvey Weinstein? Did Hillary Clinton? (And, long before that, why did she put up with Bill's alleged misconduct?). Did Georgina Chapman know she

was married to a seeming monster? What had Robin Wright heard about Kevin Spacey? How could Cate Blanchett keep working with Woody Allen?

We have created a climate that holds women responsible for the sins of men. It's baked into the power structure of the patriarchy, this idea that women are jail-keepers and if a man in their life acts out, it reflects poorly on her for not sufficiently minding her ward.

I'll admit it: I'm upset about Chen's support for Moonves. And of Camille Cosby's defense of her husband, comedian Bill Cosby.

And of any person who takes up for someone accused of dastardly things without taking a long, hard look at the facts.

But that anger is ultimately misplaced, because what Chen says or does shouldn't be what's being scrutinised in this situation. The alleged actions of Moonves should be our sole focus of rage, not what his wife believes.

Chen isn't responsible for Moonves' actions any more than Grande is to blame for Miller's death.

We talk about wanting people to be held accountable for their actions, by

which we often mean: Women are responsible.

We spend so much more time teaching girls not to get raped than we do teaching boys about consent. We tell men and women that men cannot be held responsible for their actions, so their failures get outsourced to the women in their life, furthering an already extreme imbalance in power.

It's not Chen's fault, just like it's not Grande's fault, and it wasn't Hillary Clinton's fault, nor was it Khloe Kardashian's fault.

Men alone are responsible for their own actions. Let's act like it. — Los Angeles Times/Tribune News Service



Chen stands by her husband Moonves. — AP

**STARSCOPE**

**VIRGO (Aug 24 to Sept 23):** Being around unreliable or rowdy people will unsettle you. So try to surround yourself with individuals who know where they're going. And keep your adaptability muscles well-flexed.

**LIBRA (Sept 24 to Oct 23):** The Full Moon stirs up relationships whether of the romantic or platonic variety. So expect the unexpected! And do your best to find a slice of harmony somewhere pleasant and peaceful.

**SCORPIO (Oct 24 to Nov 22):** Imaginative ideas and hidden obsessions are likely to go into overdrive today and tonight, as the Full Moon fires up your unconscious mind. Do your best to keep things in perspective, Scorpio.

**SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 to Dec 21):** The fiery Full Moon falls in your drama zone so expect plenty of ups and downs today and tonight. Especially with children, teenagers or friends. Patience – not one of your virtues – is the key.

**CAPRICORN (Dec 22 to Jan 20):** Be prepared for a domestic drama or a family fiasco, as tonight's Full Moon highlights your home zone. Plus, strive to get the balance right between your personal and professional responsibilities.

**AQUARIUS (Jan 21 to Feb 19):** With Mars in your sign and a speedy Full Moon, you're feeling particularly restless and impulsive. So take extra care when driving and walking near traffic. Absolutely no distractions, Aquarius!

**PISCES (Feb 20 to March 20):** Money matters could come to a head today, as you realise your wish-list and your bank balance are worlds apart. So it's time to find ways to boost cash flow and re-design your dreams.

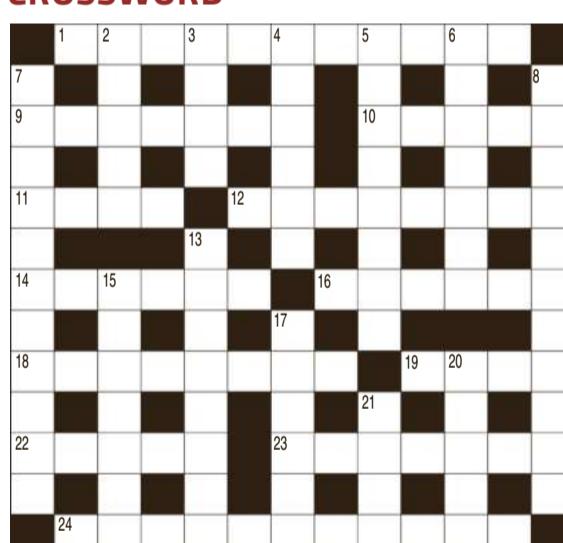
**ARIES (March 21 to April 19):** Expect the sparks to fly, as the Aries Full Moon fires up relationships and highlights your romantic and passionate side. But be careful you don't over-react and do something that you later regret!

**TAURUS (April 21 to May 21):** Strive to get the balance right between being assertive and being cooperative. It's also time to write, paint, play music or do other activities that draw on the richness of your imaginative world within.

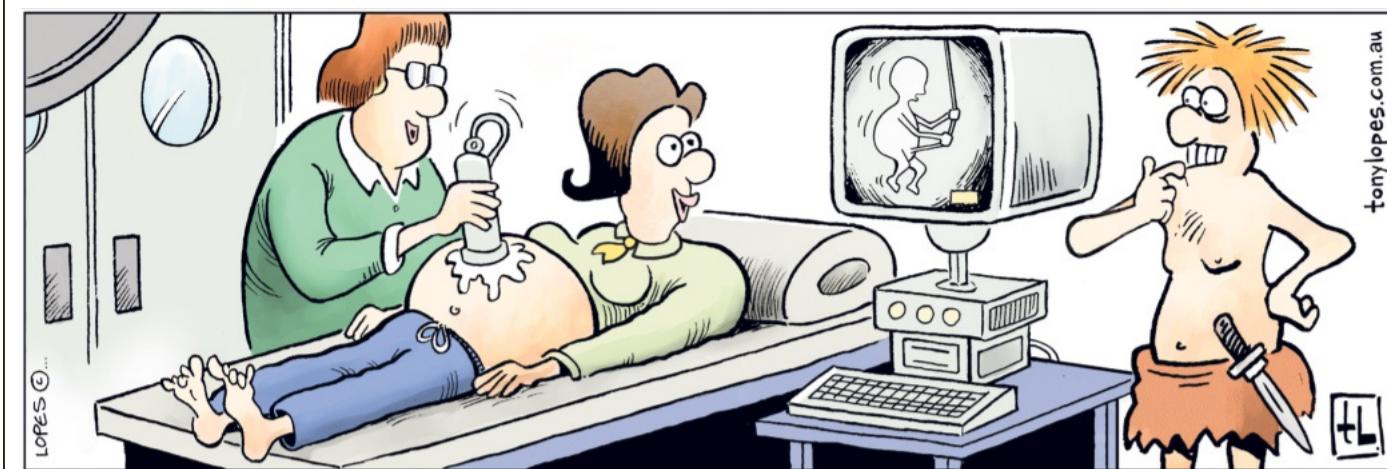
**GEMINI (May 22 to June 21):** When it comes to an adventurous friend or acquaintance you ain't seen nothing yet! The fiery Full Moon also gives you a welcome energy boost so you can manifest or complete a cherished dream.

**CANCER (June 22 to July 23):** Expect professional or personal dramas today, as the fiery Full Moon activates your work and home zones. You'll pick up energy like a sponge, so try to fraternise with positive and proactive people.

**LEO (July 24 to Aug 23):** Travel, communication and social media will be lively today Leo. The fiery Full Moon increases your impulsiveness, and your tendency to blurt things out. Both in person and online.

**CROSSWORD****Across**

- The offence of one coming to light (4-7)
- The more complicated mathematical proof (7)
- A sign that your car's not working? (2,3)
- Nail turned blue (4)
- Dollars stolen to obtain ammunition (8)
- Made up for having the date wrong on the inside (6)
- It gives one a seat on a Jumbo (6)
- Performs successfully (8)
- An overhead light (4)
- Inside accommodation (5)
- Hunter who gives the game away if he loses his head (7)
- A patchy lot of comics? (6,5)
- Ancient Britons appearing in pageants twice-nightly (5)
- A nobleman in a real mix-up (4)
- Protection for king caught in an intriguing situation (6)
- Keep a supply of drugs in the kitchen? (8)
- Made a score (7)
- Gain advantage with appropriate military music (5,1,5)
- There may be many calls on it to change the management (11)
- Defeat makes no difference to mum or dad (8)
- Shakespearean character gets too involved about the underworld (7)
- Having a disease lays me out (6)
- Request we turn awry (5)
- Just where you would expect some fun (4)

**Down****INSANITY STREAK** by Tony Lopes

tonylopes.com.au

TL

**ZITS** by Jerry Scott and Jim Borgman**HAGAR THE HORRIBLE** by Chris Browne

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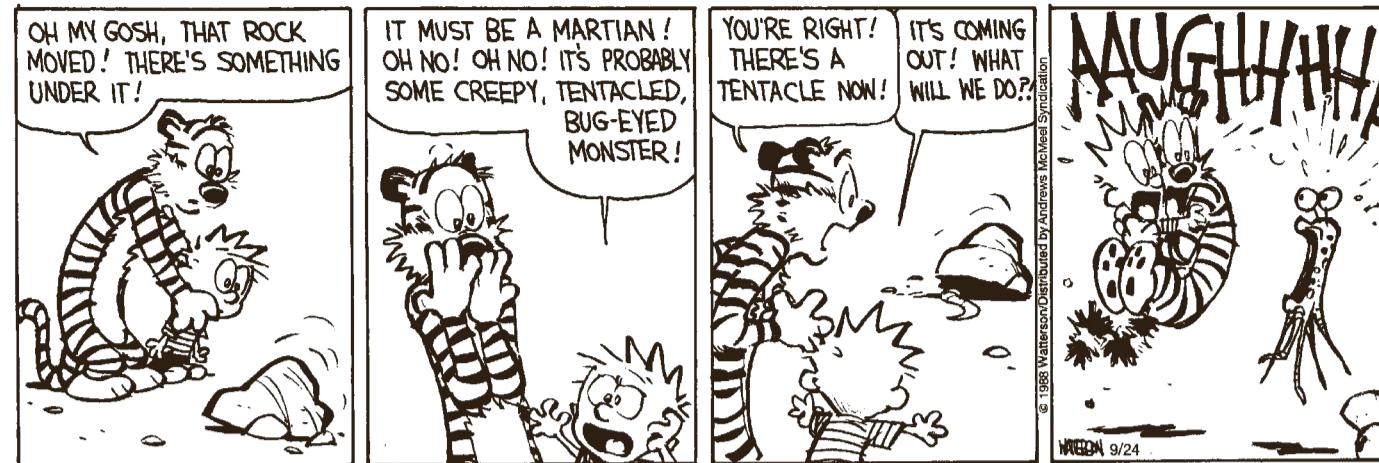
**PICKLES** by Brian Crane**GARFIELD** by Jim Davis

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JIM DAVIS 9-24

## **CALVIN AND HOBBS** by Bill Watterson



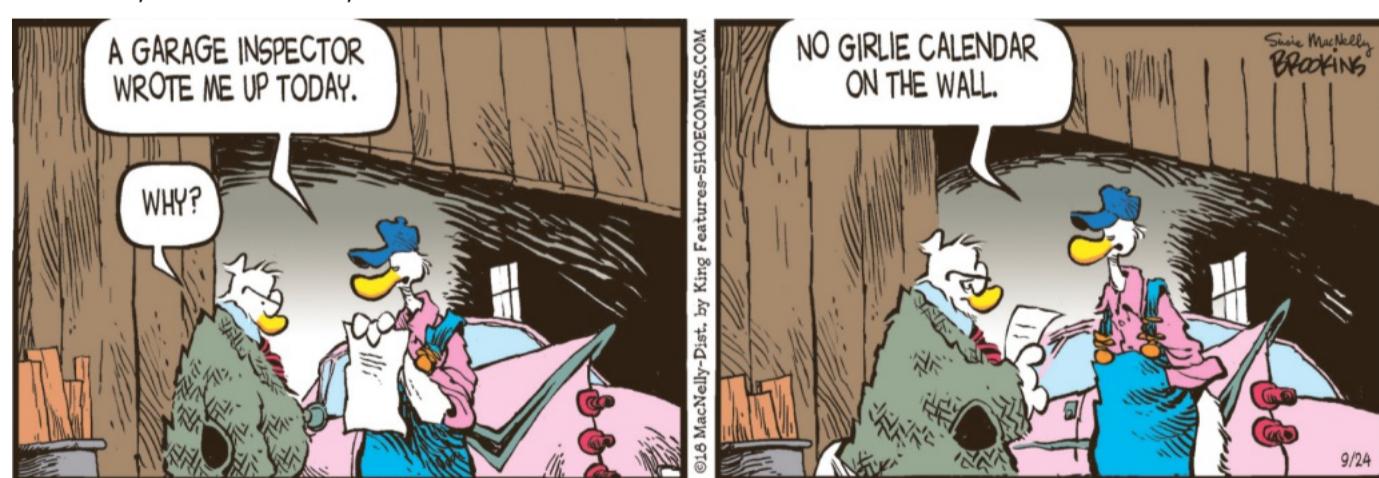
**KEE'S WORLD** by C.W. Kee



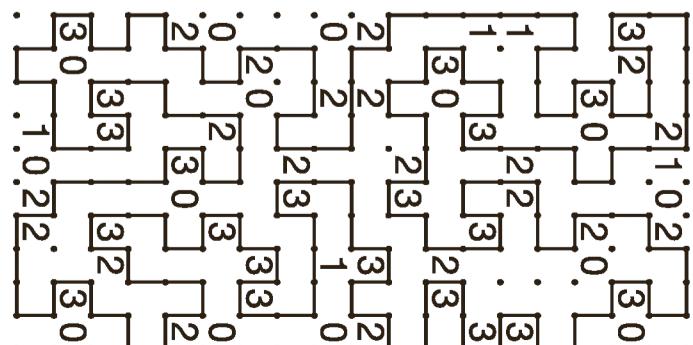
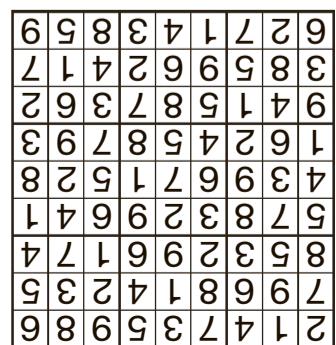
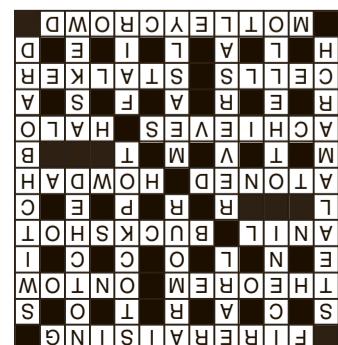
**WUMO** by Wulff & Morgenthaler



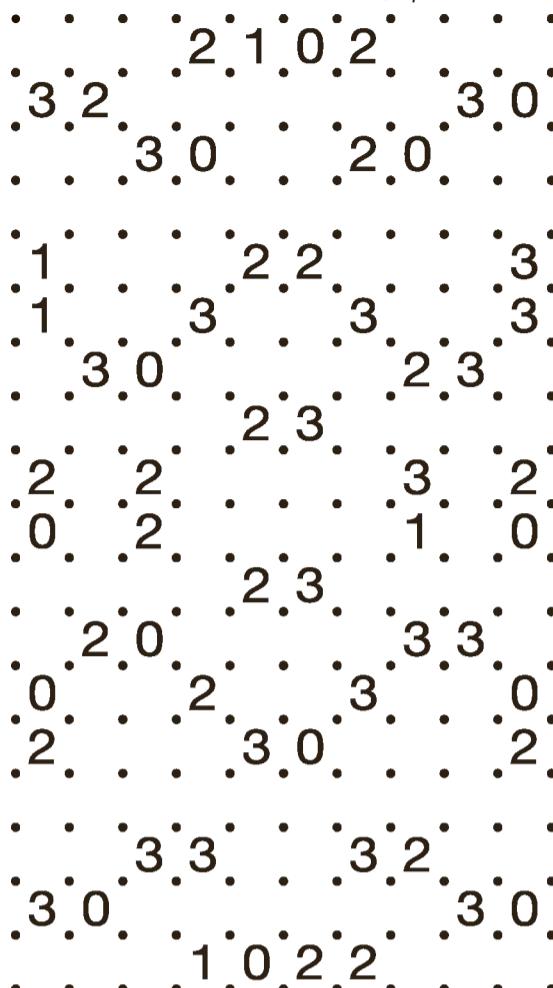
**SHOE** by Jeff Macnelly



SOLUTIONS

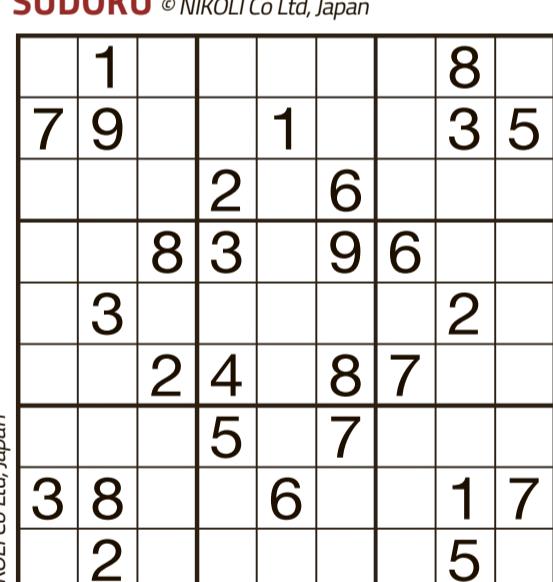


**SLITHERLINK** © NIKOLI Co Ltd, Japan



1. Connect adjacent dots with vertical or horizontal lines to make a single loop.
2. Each number indicates how many lines surround it. Empty cells may be surrounded by any number of lines.
3. The loop never crosses itself and never branches off. For a tutorial

**SUDOKU**



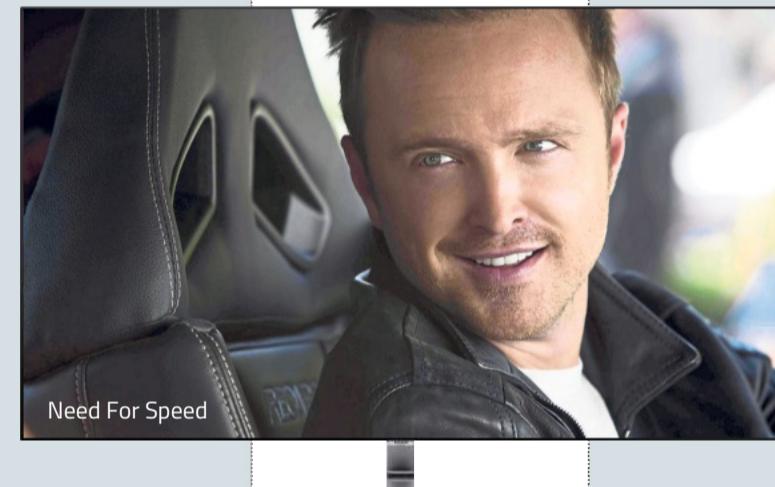
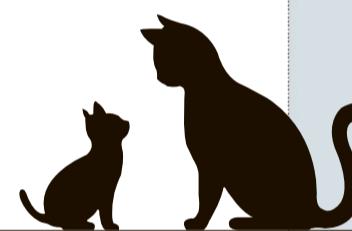
Fill up each 3x3 box, as well as each row and column, with all the numbers 1 to 9. For tips and techniques for solving Sudoku puzzles, go to [nikoli.co.jp/en/puzzles/sudoku.html](http://nikoli.co.jp/en/puzzles/sudoku.html)

**DOODLISM** by Sarah Salim



# TV Guide

TV1	TV2	TV3	ntv7	8TV	TV9
5.58am Negaraku & Al Quran	5.55am Negaraku	6.00am CJ Wow Shop	6.00am Woot Woot	6.00am CJ Wow Shop	6.00am Halaqah
6.00 Santai Bersama	6.00 Inbox Aura Srikandi	7.00 Malaysia Hari Ini	7.00 Fitness First Class	9.30 Hottest & Craziest	7.00 Tanyalah Ustaz
6.30 Ilmu Aqaaid	6.30 Body And Soul	9.00 Buletin Pagi	7.30 Dora, The Explorer	10.30 The Men In Black School	8.30 CJ Wow Shop
7.00 Nasional 7	7.00 Lojing Kak Ecah	9.30 Larva	8.00 Rabbids Invasion	11.30 Dragon Dance	1.00 Berita Tengahari
8.00 Selamat Pagi Malaysia	8.00 Ejen 123	10.02 #Daitv3	8.30 Robot & Monster	12.30pm Mandarin News	1.30pm CJ Wow Shop
10.05 Rantau Eksotika	8.30 Bila Bayan Bercerita	11.30 5 Renyah 5 Rasa	9.00 Feel Good Show	1.00 Dragon Dance	5.00 D'hijabers
11.05 3P	9.00 Raihan Rangers	12.02pm Wanita Hari Ini	10.33 CJ Wow Shop	2.00 Living Delight	6.00 Scoreboard Extra Time
11.30 Kembara Khatulistiwa	9.30 Nadim	1.00 CJ Wow Shop	2.30pm Edisi 7 (Regional)	3.00 Haru	7.00 Spongebob Squarepants
12.05pm Dia Segala-Galanya	10.00 Souka TV	1.30 Buletin 130	3.00 Cinta Koko Coklat	4.00 100% Wife	7.30 Upin & Ipin
12.30 Inomedik	11.00 Moonlight Saigon	2.00 Takdir Qismah	4.00 Because This Is My First Life	5.00 8 E-news	8.00 Berita TV9
1.00 Nasional 1	Noon Berita Mandarin	3.00 A Woman Scorned	5.00 Mandarin 7	5.30 Ho Chak! Season	8.30 Aku Bukan Hijabista
1.30 Engineering Disaster	12.20pm Galeri Nasional Mandarin	4.02 Main Naa Bhoolumgi	6.00 Power Rangers : Mega Force	6.00 When Duty Calls	10.30 Need For Speed
2.30 Mboo	12.30 Berita Inggeris	5.00 Boboiboy Galaxy	6.30 Brave And Beautiful	7.00 The Great Adventurer Wesley	1.00am Close
3.05 Cinta Agra	1.00 Silir Kasih	5.35 Kasih Iftitah	7.30 America's Funniest Home Videos	8.00 Mandarin News	
4.05 Kami Bah Ini (live)	2.00 Air Mata Di Bumi Matador	6.00 Romeo & Juliet	8.00 7 Edition	8.35 Martial Universe	
5.00 N5	3.00 Opera Sabun	6.30 Tak Beli Tak Cinta	8.30 Cinta Koko Coklat	9.30 Sweet Combat	
6.00 My Halal	3.30 Estate Boy	7.00 Vila Ghazara	9.30 Pop! Express	10.30 100 Days My Prince	
7.00 Do-It	4.00 Sathurangga Aattam	8.00 Buletin Utama	10.00 Salon	11.30 Global Watch	
7.30 Know It	4.30 Warisan Emas	9.02 Majalah 3	11.00 Blogger Boy	Midnight Tomorrow, With You	
8.00 Nasional 8	5.00 Young Sherlock	10.00 Bahagia Bukan Bidaan	12.30am CJ Wow Shop	2.00am Close	
9.00 Konsert Sayang Malaysia	6.00 En Guzel Hikayem	11.00 Muzik - Muzik			
11.00 BES Dunia	7.00 Berita Inggeris	Midnight Nightline			
11.30 Aksi	7.30 Berita Tamil	12.30am Cinta Bukan Kristal			
Midnight Nasional 12	8.00 Berita Mandarin	1.30 Wanita Hari Ini			
12.30am Do-It	8.31 Kristal - I Remember You	2.30 Nona			
1.00 Inomedik 2017	9.30 Semerah Padi	3.30 Suri			
1.30 Teksi Merah Jambu	11.30 Relaks Selebriti	4.30 Tanyalah Ustaz			
2.00 Kembara Khatulistiwa	1.00am Bukan Yang Pertama				
2.30 Dia Segala-Galanya	2.00 Moonlight Saigon				
3.00 Susur Leluhur	3.00 Persepsi				
3.30 Rantau Eksotika	4.00 Puisi Cinta Rubiah				
4.30 Cinta Agra	5.00 Seharum Kenanga				
5.30 3P					



## Twisty thriller

Blake Lively and Anna Kendrick star in murder mystery *A Simple Favor*.

By MALINA SAVAL

IN *A Simple Favor*, director Paul Feig weaves together a Hitchcockian murder mystery that's as big on twists and turns as it is on high style, with Anna Kendrick and Blake Lively as the most unlikely of friends.

In the darkly droll thriller, Kendrick plays Stephanie, a cheery mummy-cum-vlogger who sets out to solve the disappearance of Lively's Emily, an enigmatic working mother who's always at the ready with a stiff martini.

**What was your process in terms of turning your characters on the written page into fleshed-out characters for the big screen?**

**Kendrick:** I genuinely asked (Paul Feig) so many damn questions every day to the point where I was like, Paul Feig must hate me, he's never going to want to work with me again.

It's a really layered movie and my character, not only is she layered in terms of her path and her history and her personality, but just the tone of the film is so fluid.

There were a lot of choices that I was unsure about. So I just pestered him minute by minute.

**Lively:** We were always trying to find that balance between grounding the film in emotionality and

turning these characters up to 11 so they were incredibly heightened and fun and we could create more of a throwback sort of suspense film.

One day, toward the end of the movie, I'm cutting a lemon twist – and at this point, you know my character is just a complete psychopath – and I'm wearing a pink petticoat and I remember saying to Paul, "I just love when Baby Jane Hudson is spinning around and twirling on the beach at the end of (*What Ever Happened To Baby Jane?*). Can I do that?"

And he was like, "Yes, please." And then I went over to cut the lemon twist right after that and I went up to him and I said, "Paul, I know I was just twirling, but do you think it's too much if I cut the lemon twist with a butcher's knife?"

And he said, "It's definitely too much. We have to do it."

I love that he pushes actors to be so bold, that he encourages us to go too far.

**What do you think accounts for Feig's ability to understand female psyche so well?**

**Kendrick:** He's really sensitive but it's not like all women are sensitive, so it's not like you can point to one aspect of his



Kendrick (left) plays Stephanie, a vlogger who sets out to solve the disappearance of Lively's Emily. — Handout

personality and go, "Oh, that's why he gets the female experience."

That would be so reductive of what the female experience is.

I do think that as an artist, he's just really keyed into other people.

He's been very open about feeling like an outsider growing up and I think that might have informed his ability to see into other people's worlds.

**What is one of your most memorable moments on set shooting *A Simple Favor*?**

**Lively:** I was in my costume fitting one day and Paul came to see how it was going. And this was a complete accident, but I walk out

of my costume fitting in like a true blue suit with subtle white pinstripes based about a half an inch apart, and a high-collared crisp white shirt with a yellow pocket square and, I can't remember the colour of the tie, maybe a light blue tie.

And Mr Paul Feig shows up to the costume fitting in a true blue suit, with white pinstripes and a yellow pocket square and a light blue tie. We were dressed exactly the same!

It was just a really funny, surreal moment.

**Kendrick:** One of my favourite days was a day we were shooting in essentially a marsh.

Everybody was in galoshes, I was in special Wellington boots just to get to my mark.

As for Paul, it was the only day I've ever seen him in denim.

He was always wearing a suit. But like the lowest he was willing to go was a nice, polished black shoe and a crisp, dark denim short with a rolled cuff.

I was like, "Oh my God this is casual wear for Paul!"

And he was still wearing a linen blazer.

I felt like I was seeing behind the curtain. — Reuters

***A Simple Favor* opens at GSC cinemas nationwide on Oct 11.**