

## STRONG BONDS

# PM: UPHOLD NATION'S UNITY AND SOLIDARITY

Cabinet ministers highlight shared values in Malaysia Day messages

## KUALA LUMPUR

**M**ALAYSIA Day is not only about commemorating the union of diverse regions and cultures, but also symbolises the nation's resolve to remain united in diversity, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the celebration honours past generations who resisted colonial rule, upheld dignity and laid the foundation of an independent and sovereign nation.

"This country was built on the blood, sweat and tears of generations who lit the torch of freedom."

"The duty we bear today is to ensure that this torch continues to shine brightly as our guide in navigating the challenges of a new era," he said on Facebook yesterday.

Malaysia's strength, he said, lies in its people who uphold values of humanity, justice and sol-

idarity, reinforced by robust institutions and good governance.

"Let us commemorate Malaysia Day by reaffirming our ideals and commitment to a framework that upholds human dignity, rejects moral decay, avoids division and positions this country as an example of credible leadership in the region and on the global stage."

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Malaysia's diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicity was what made it unique.

"With the theme 'Malaysia Madani: Rakyat Disantuni', we are reminded that this nation's strength lies not only in development and progress, but also in the compassion and care we show one another," he said on social media.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said unity has been the backbone of Malaysia's strength for more than six decades and the peace enjoyed today was the fruit of people's sacrifices.

Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul

Ghani said Malaysia Day was not only about celebrating the country's formation but also the bonds of unity that make it a strong, harmonious and resilient nation.

"Let us continue to strengthen the spirit of solidarity, mutual respect and cooperation in building a more prosperous Malaysia for the generations to come."

Communication Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil said Malaysia Day was an opportunity to keep the spirit of patriotism alive throughout the year.

"Do not take pride in flying the Jalur Gemilang only during National Month. That spirit

must live in our hearts throughout the year," he said.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said universal healthcare formed the real foundation of unity, while Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek said the amendment to make secondary education compulsory was Malaysia's gift to its children on this occasion.

**“This country was built on the blood, sweat and tears of generations who lit the torch of freedom.”**

**DATUK SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM**  
Prime minister





**Spirit of patriotism:** (From left) Ahmad Zahid, Fahmi, Nga, Tiong, Sim and Azalina were among several ministers reminding Malaysians of the meaning of Malaysia Day.

# Ministers: Unite for stronger future

## Remember what makes our country unique, Malaysians urged

**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia's diversity in cultures, religions and ethnicities is a priceless heritage that makes it unique in the eyes of the world, says Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

"With the theme 'Malaysia Madani: Rakyat Disantuni', we are reminded that this nation's strength lies not only in development and progress, but also in the compassion and care we show one another," the Deputy Prime Minister said in a Facebook post yesterday.

Other national leaders also shared their messages for the 2025 Malaysia Day.

Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil said the spirit of defending the nation's sovereignty and identity must live in every citizen, reminding them that being Malaysian carries a great responsibility.

"Do not only take pride in flying the Jalur Gemilang during National Month. That spirit must

live in our hearts throughout the year.

"We must defend our country's sovereignty, our identity, our nation. That is the message I want to convey," he said in Penang yesterday.

Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming described Malaysia Day as a monumental event for the country, which must always be cherished as part of nation building.

"It signifies the importance of Sabah, Sarawak and the peninsula working together as a big and caring family.

"We must have unwavering determination to promote unity and harmony in our diversity," he added.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Tiong King Sing said the spirit of Malaysia Day should inspire unity as the nation prepares to welcome the world for Visit Malaysia 2026.

The Bintulu MP said Malaysia's strength lies in its diversity, with

heritage, arts and culture forming the backbone of its identity and global appeal.

Tiong said the occasion is not just about commemorating history but also about showcasing the nation's unity and harmony to the world.

Human Resources Minister Steven Sim said the passing of the Gig Workers Bill this year marked a historic step in protecting 1.2 million gig workers nationwide, including in Sabah and Sarawak.

"This ensured that 2.06 million workers in Sabah and 1.46 million workers in Sarawak now enjoy the same benefits as those in Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

Sim added that Malaysia Day is a reminder of the unity in diversity that defines the country, as well as the importance of fairness for all Malaysians, particularly workers who drive the nation's progress.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reforms) Datuk Seri

Azalina Othman Said stressed that Malaysia Day is an opportunity for all to renew their pledge to build a Malaysia that is fair, inclusive and prosperous for all.

"Malaysia Day is a sacred reminder of the day our federation was born – a promise forged on Sept 16, 1963, when Sabah, Sarawak, and Malaya united as one nation. It is not merely a historical milestone but a living covenant of trust, respect and shared destiny," she said.

Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi described Malaysia Day as a symbol of unity, federalism and togetherness across the nation.

"Let us preserve the peace and unity we enjoy for the well-being of Malaysia as a whole. Happy Malaysia Day to all Malaysians! May this nation always be blessed, progressive and prosperous for future generations," he said.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said that access

to universal healthcare services forms the real foundation of unity.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail reminded that Malaysia was born out of a pledge to remain united in diversity.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang underlined that harmony and solidarity are the country's greatest strengths in facing global challenges.

Deputy Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Datuk Seri R. Ramanan said that Sept 16 was more than just a date on the calendar, but a day to reflect on the nation's journey of courage, diversity and unity.

"Malaysia Day is a reflection of our spirit that never gives up, our determination that always believes in hope, and our unity that remains strong despite trials and attempts to divide us," said Ramanan.





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# Unity, diversity key to national strength, says PM

➤ **Anwar calls on Malaysians to honour past sacrifices, carry forward good governance, justice and resilience as nation marks Malaysia Day**

BY **AZURA ABAS**  
 news@thesundaily.com

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has urged Malaysians to carry forward the spirit of solidarity, justice and resilience as the nation marks Malaysia Day, saying unity remains the country's greatest strength.

In a message posted on his Facebook page, Anwar reminded Malaysians that the nation's foundation was built on the sacrifices of earlier generations that "shed blood, sweat and tears"

to light the torch of independence.

He said that flame must continue to guide the country as it faces the demands of a fast-changing era.

"Malaysia's strength does not rest only on its institutions but also in its people who champion humanity, fairness and solidarity."

"The torch of freedom must burn brightly, reminding us of the struggles of the past and pointing us towards the challenges of the future."

Anwar stressed that Malaysia Day is more than just a historical marker.

He added that it is a reminder of how regions with different cultures and backgrounds came together in 1963 to build a common nationhood.

"That legacy is a blessing that strengthens the bonds of fraternity. Our duty today is to honour that legacy by rejecting corruption, resisting division and protecting the dignity of every citizen."

"Unity is not a slogan. It is the lifeblood of this nation."

Anwar urged Malaysians to view diversity not as a weakness but as a unique strength.

He said in a world fractured by conflict and polarisation, Malaysia's ability to forge harmony out of difference sets it apart as an example in the region and beyond.

"Let us show the world that Malaysia can be a nation both just and prosperous, a Madani nation we can proudly pass down to our children and grandchildren."

Anwar's remarks come at a time when national leaders have been reminding Malaysians to safeguard social cohesion amid economic pressures and global uncertainties.

His call was both a tribute to the nation's founding spirit and a rallying cry for Malaysians to renew their commitment to justice, good governance and mutual respect.

As the country commemorates Malaysia Day, Anwar urged citizens to celebrate the nation's pluralism as a blessing and to remain steadfast in building a Malaysia that stands tall with dignity.

"Malaysia must remain a land of justice, prosperity and integrity - a nation that endures, inspires and shines as a beacon of hope in the region."

## National leaders urge people to safeguard solidarity, harmony

**KUALA LUMPUR:** National leaders urged Malaysians to safeguard harmony and unity as the country marked its 62nd Malaysia Day yesterday, reminding that unity remains the nation's most precious legacy for future generations.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said Malaysia's diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicities is a priceless heritage that makes the nation unique.

"With this year's theme *Malaysia Madani: Rakyat Disantuni* we are reminded that strength lies not only in development but also in the compassion and care we show to one another," he said in a post on his Facebook page.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said unity has been the backbone of Malaysia's stability for over six decades.

"Unity enables us to move forward *sejajar* (together) in overcoming challenges, driving progress and elevating Malaysia's place on the global stage. On this Malaysia Day, let us renew our resolve to preserve unity, reject divisive politics and safeguard stability."

Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil invited the public to join the official celebration in Butterworth and enliven it.

"Let us celebrate the spirit of unity, freedom and love for our homeland."

Works Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi described Malaysia Day as a symbol of unity and federalism.

"Let us preserve the peace and togetherness we enjoy for the well-being of all. Happy Malaysia Day. May our nation always be blessed, progressive and prosperous."

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said universal access to healthcare forms a true foundation of unity, while Education Minister Fadhlina Sidek highlighted the move to make secondary education compulsory as Malaysia's "gift to its children" this year.

Home Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail reminded Malaysians that the federation itself was born out of a pledge to remain united in diversity.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Chang Lih Kang said solidarity is Malaysia's greatest strength in facing global challenges.

Also extending greetings were Youth and Sports Minister Hannah Yeoh, Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zaliha Mustafa and Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo, who reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that Malaysia remains inclusive, competitive and forward-looking. - Bernama

## Memorial park for Pak Lah to be built in Kepala Batas

**KEPALA BATAS:** The Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi Memorial will be built in the Vision Park area here, as a tribute to the late fifth prime minister for his character, leadership, contributions and service to the nation, said National Unity Minister Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang.

"The Madani government, through the ministry, will provide full support and cooperation to the National Archives of Malaysia to realise the construction of this memorial, which will stand as a symbol of Tun Abdullah's legacy for future generations."

"The land has already been provided, and we are thankful to the Penang government for making it available in the Vision Park area in Kepala Batas."

"The next step will involve planning, design and applying for the necessary allocation for construction. This process will take some time before the memorial can be built."

He was speaking after opening a commemorative event, *Mengenang Negerawan Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: Bapa Pembangunan Model Insan* yesterday.

Earlier, media reports quoted Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow as saying that the state government had allocated a 0.8ha plot of land in Vision Park for the memorial.

Aaron said Abdullah's wide-ranging contributions in politics, administration, human development and national unity had left a lasting impact on the well-being of the people.

He said among the late prime minister's notable initiatives were the establishment of the Malaysian Integrity Institute, the National Cancer



Aaron, accompanied by National Unity Deputy Minister Sarawathy Kandasami, at the commemorative event in Kepala Batas yesterday. - **MASRY CHE ANI/THESUN**

Institute, the strengthening of the Anti-Corruption Agency (now known as the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission) as well as the introduction of Islam Hadhari, which emphasised a balance between physical development and human capital.

"In his efforts to strengthen national unity, he also placed great importance on inter-racial and inter-religious harmony. He consistently urged Malaysians to appreciate cultural diversity and

embrace it as a source of national strength."

The event was organised by the National Archives of Malaysia in conjunction with Malaysia Day, Bernama reported.

It featured talks by Bertam Assemblyman Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican and Malaysian Islamic Understanding Institute deputy chairman Prof Emeritus Datuk Dr Mohd Yusof Othman, and a "My Father's Story" session delivered by Abdullah's daughter, Nori Abdullah.



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# Skim Beli Sekarang, Bayar Kemudian dikawal selia

**Kemudahan buka akaun BNPL dedah risiko pengumpulan hutang tak terkawal**

Oleh Mahamud Abdul Aziz  
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**Kuala Lumpur:** Era perkhidmatan Beli Sekarang, Bayar Kemudian (BNPL) yang beroperasi tanpa kawal selia khusus di Malaysia bakal berakir tidak lama lagi.

Mengikut Akta Kredit Pengguna yang telah dikuatkuasakan, perkhidmatan kewangan yang semakin popular ini akan secara rasmi dilisensikan sebagai satu bentuk kredit, memerlukan di bawah pengawasan pihak berkuasa buat kali pertama.

Kemudahan BNPL, mengubah cara rakyat Malaysia berbelanja, terutama dalam kategori gerans, untuk dan pengguna adagang.

Dengan kawalan pengedaran asuhan tanpa had dan proses kelulusan pantas, ia menjadi pilihan utama bagi pembeli barangan, daripada gajet elektronik hingga kepada pakaian. Oleh itu, sekali gus memacu pertumbuhan ekonomi digital negara.

Namun, di samping kemudahannya, pertambahan pesat sektor ini menimbulkan kekhawatiran

mendalam dalam kalangan pegawai selia dan pakar kewangan.

Kemudahan membuka beberapa akaun BNPL, dengan penyedia berbeza membolehkan pengguna kepada risiko pengumpulan hutang yang tidak terkawal dan perbelanjaan berlebihan tanpa mempunyai aplikasi kewangan sebagai penjarang.

Mengedari risiko itu, kerajaan mengambil langkah proaktif untuk mengawal selia operasi BNPL.

Kerana Pautan Petagas Lembaga Pemantauan Kredit Pengguna (PCKPP), Abu Hassan Alihari Yahya menegaskan bahawa pengesahan Akta Kredit Pengguna adalah maklum balas langsung kepada fenomena ini, memandakan satu amalan dasar yang penting.

"Kita nampak peningkatan yang tinggi dari segi penggunaan BNPL oleh masyarakat. Berikutan peningkatan yang tinggi ini, kita rasa sudah tiba masanya untuk mengawal selia sektor ini," kata Abu Hassan, menekankan langkah ini diambil sebagai sebahagian trend penggunaan yang semakin meluas.

Berlainan berkata demikian dalam satu temu bual eksklusif bersama RTH hari-hari ini.

Abu Hassan berkata, fokus utama di belakang peraturan ini untuk memastikan satu jaringan keselamatan, terutama bagi golongan remaja termasuk RTH dan pengguna remaja.

Berlainan berkata, kerajaan bimbang sekiranya tiada kawalan,

ramai yang mungkin terjatuh dalam kitaran hutang pada usia muda, yang boleh menjejaskan kestabilan kewangan mereka pada masa hadapan.

"Antara perubahan paling besar yang akan dialami pengguna ialah pengesanan keperluan mandatori bagi syarat BNPL, untuk membuat penilaian kemampuan pengguna mengambil hutang."

"Ini bermakna amalan kredit akan segera tanpa sebarang yang sewajarnya akan diberikan dan penyelia perkhidmatan perlu memastikan penjamin benar-benar mampu untuk membuat bayaran balik," katanya.

Selain itu, Abu Hassan berkata, skema ini memerlukan aspek ketahanan separuh dengan syarat BNPL akan disediakan untuk memaparkan dengan jelas semua caj dan yuran, terutamanya bagi kelayakan pembayaran.

Jelasnya, ia bagi memastikan pengguna faham sepenuhnya kos sebenar yang terlibat sebelum mereka membuat sebarang komitmen pembelian dan bertangung BNPL.

## SKP sebagai pemawal selia

Katanya, pengedaran peraturan ini akan dibekalkan di bawah tanggungjawab Suruhanjaya Kredit Pengguna (SKP), badan berkanun baharu yang akan bertindak sebagai pengawal selia tunggal untuk semua aktiviti kredit bukan bank nanti.

Menurutnya, pengguna yang mempunyai sejarah pertikaian akan akan terhad oleh penyedia BNPL, juga boleh merujuk terus kepada SKP.

"Bagi industri BNPL, ini sem-

diri, langkah ini memandakan faedah kemudahan di mana mereka kini dianggap sebagai sebahagian daripada ekosistem kewangan formal."

"Mereka perlu menerapkan standard lebih tinggi yang lebih tinggi dan beroperasi dengan prinsip pinjaman bertanggungjawab, sama seperti institusi kewangan lain," katanya.

Abu Hassan menjelaskan, langkah kerajaan ini bukan bertujuan untuk mengawal transaksi atau membatalkan perkhidmatan BNPL, sebaliknya, ia satu usaha untuk mencari keseimbangan antara menggalakan kemudahan teknologi kewangan dan me-

astikan perlindungan pengguna sentiasa menjadi keutamaan.

Ditanyakan bilangan transaksi BNPL meningkat daripada 0.3 juta pada separuh tahun kedua 2024 kepada 10.6 juta pada separuh tahun pertama 2025.

Tambahan Menteri Kewangan, Lim Hui Ying, berkata jumlah nilai transaksi BNPL juga meningkat 31 peratus daripada RM7.1 bilion pada separuh kedua tahun lalu kepada RM9.3 bilion pada separuh pertama tahun ini.

Katanya, jumlah akaun BNPL yang aktif juga meningkat daripada 5.1 juta akaun pada akhir tahun 2024 kepada 6.5 juta pada akhir bulan Jun tahun ini.

**Kerajaan bimbang sekiranya tiada kawalan, ramai yang mungkin terjatuh dalam kitaran hutang pada usia muda, yang boleh menjejaskan kestabilan kewangan mereka pada masa hadapan**



Abu Hassan Alihary Yahya,  
Ketua Pautan Petagas Lembaga  
Pemantauan Kredit Pengguna

## Trend pesakit T20, VIP ke hospital kerajaan

# Tempoh menunggu, rawatan berpotensi lebih lama



Peningkatan pesakit T20 dan VIP di hospital kerajaan dijangka menjadikan tempoh menunggu rawatan lebih panjang. (Foto: Internet)

**Kuala Lumpur:** Peningkatan pesakit dalam golongan berpendapatan tinggi (T20) dan individu istimewa (VIP) ke hospital kerajaan, termasuk Hospital Kuala Lumpur (HKL), berpotensi menyebabkan tempoh menunggu rawatan menjadi lebih panjang.

Dekas Presiden Persatuan Perubatan Malaysia (MPM), Dr. Dr. Kalvinder Singh Khaira, berkata walaupun sistem kesihatan awam terbuka kepada semua rakyat tanpa mengira latar belakang, peningkatan jumlah pesakit akan memberi beban besar terhadap kapasiti sedia ada.

Beliau berkata, trend pesakit T20 dan VIP memilih hospital

kerajaan semakin banyak berbanding rawatan di sektor swasta yang terus meningkat serta beban premium insurans kesihatan yang tinggi.

"Semua individu tanpa mengira kumpulan pendapatan atau status, mempunyai hak untuk mendapatkan rawatan di fasiliti kesihatan awam dan semua pesakit diberikan pengajutan yang sama dalam sistem kesihatan awam."

"Oleh itu, peningkatan jumlah pesakit dalam sistem kesihatan awam, tanpa mengira kumpulan pendapatan, sememangnya akan meningkatkan permintaan terhadap perkhidmatan."

"Dengan peningkatan jumlah pesakit yang bukan semestinya daripada semua-kumpulan pendapatan tertentu, beban terhadap sistem kesihatan awam mungkin meningkat," katanya mengulas laporan RTH baru-baru ini mengenai fasiliti kesihatan awam seperti IDEL menjadi tempat T20 dan VIP.

Dr. Kalvinder menyarankan dua perkara untuk kerajaan beri perhatian untuk kawalan kos penjagaan kesihatan swasta dan peramalkan dalam belanjawan negeri bagi memastikan pembiayaan yang mencukupi dalam sektor kesihatan awam dan penyediaan fasiliti.





# Malayan tigers, orangutans, turtles under siege

► Climate change is compounding poaching fires and habitat loss, pushing iconic species closer to vanishing unless urgent action is taken: WWF-Malaysia

■ BY KIRTINEE RAMESH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Malaysia's most iconic wildlife – from the elusive Malayan tiger to the Bornean orangutan and marine turtles – are facing a climate-fuelled crisis that could wipe them out in the wild unless urgent action is taken, warned WWF-Malaysia.

"Climate change is compounding every existing threat – poaching, habitat loss, unsustainable development – pushing our wildlife closer to extinction," said its senior conservation director Dr Henry Chan.

"We are running out of time to protect the very ecosystems that keep these species alive."

The critically endangered Malayan tiger, already besieged by poaching and shrinking forests, now faces added pressures from droughts, forest fires and shifting rainfall patterns. These changes threaten prey populations and disrupt fruiting and flowering cycles, forcing tigers to stray closer to Orang Asli villages in search of food.

"Fragmented habitat corridors could further isolate small populations, making breeding and genetic diversity harder to sustain," Chan explained. WWF-Malaysia is working with community rangers in the Belum-Temengor forest complex to restore corridors and remove snares.

"Reconnecting forests and protecting prey species are critical if the Malayan tiger is to survive the next decade."

In Sarawak, orangutans in the low-lying peat swamps of Sebuyau, Sedilu and Gunung Lesong face rising seas that could drown feeding grounds and sever travel routes.

Drought adds another peril, that of peat fires. In August, fires scorched Mukah's peatlands, an area without orangutans but with similar soils.

"A single major fire could wipe out entire groups overnight. Erratic rainfall is also disrupting fruiting cycles, leaving food scarce."

"Unpredictable weather is making survival more uncertain each year. Without urgent action, Sarawak risks losing one of its most iconic species within our lifetime."

WWF data shows orangutan numbers in isolated forest patches within Sabah's palm oil estates plunged by up to 30% between 2002 and 2017, underscoring the urgency of wildlife corridors. Marine turtles are equally at risk.

"Warmer sand temperatures are skewing hatchling sex ratios heavily toward females, jeopardising future breeding. Stronger storms and rising seas are eroding nesting beaches, while coral bleaching has reduced sponges, the main food source for hawksbills."

"A disrupted food chain and vanishing nesting grounds could destabilise entire populations," he warned.

Chan stressed that much stronger action is needed to safeguard rainforests, mangroves and coral reefs – the country's natural defences against climate change.

He said WWF-Malaysia has identified key priorities that must be accelerated:

- ➊ reconnect fragmented habitats through ecological networks such as the Central Forest Spine;
- ➋ protect and restore peatlands and mangroves as carbon sinks and coastal shields;
- ➌ rehabilitate degraded river-basin forests to secure water supplies;



Wildlife such as the orangutans and tigers are under threat due to deforestation and unsustainable development, said WWF-Malaysia. – SYED AZAHAR SYED OSMAN/THESUN

- ➍ expand marine protected areas;
- ➎ strengthen sustainable fisheries and empower local communities;
- ➏ enhance enforcement with drones, camera traps and eDNA monitoring; and
- ➐ promote deforestation-free supply chains and incentivise conservation among landowners and indigenous groups.

One success story, Chan noted, is the "Reef Stars" project in Sabah's Tun Mustapha Park, where more than 22,500 coral fragments from over 30 species have been restored through 1,620 reef frames.

He said the result saw live coral cover increased by nearly 10% and fish biomass surged 20-fold within just six months.

## Halal exhibition Mihas 2025 opens today

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Malaysia International Halal Showcase (Mihas) returns for its 21st edition at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre beginning today until Saturday.

Organised by the Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade), Mihas 2025 will be officiated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Friday, Bernama reported. Recognised as a significant platform for the halal sector, Mihas 2025, themed "Pinnacle of Halal Excellence", will see the participation of 45,000 visitors, 2,400 booths, as well as exhibitors and buyers from 80 countries, according to Matrade in a statement yesterday.

The trade promotion agency said the four-day event will provide global businesses, policymakers and industry thought leaders opportunities for deals, dialogues and collaboration through its multiple components, including exhibition, incoming specialised buying mission (INSP), Knowledge Hub seminars and an awards ceremony.

Matrade said this year's Mihas invites trade visitors to a well-curated exhibition space highlighting halal food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, medical devices, Islamic finance, fashion and lifestyle products, personal care, cosmetics and Muslim-friendly tourism.

"Mihas 2025 serves as the trade component of the Global Halal Summit (GHS), underlining Malaysia's commitment to advancing standards, innovation and transnational partnerships as the halal sector develops further."

Following the success of Mihas 2024 in Dubai, the agency said this year's Mihas@Shanghai will be held in conjunction with China International Import Expo (CIIE) from Nov 5 to Nov 10. Matrade said Malaysian enterprises would benefit from a dedicated platform to present their products and services to the Chinese market, one of the world's largest and fastest-growing halal consumer bases.

"Mihas@Shanghai enables participating companies to strengthen their global competitiveness and build lasting business connections with buyers across East Asia and the wider region. Last year, Mihas set a new benchmark by recording sales of RM4.3 billion."



# AI set to drive Malaysia's next wave of digital progress

**T**HE country's digital journey marks the resilience and innovation that led to Merdeka and the formation of Malaysia. Malaysia has carved out its place as one of Southeast Asia's most connected economies. Today, QR codes and artificial intelligence (AI) are not only changing how Malaysians live, work and transact but also shaping the nation's future.

## FROM INDUSTRIAL TOOL TO EVERYDAY LIFE

Originally created for industrial tracking, QR codes have become central to the digital economy. With smartphones now indispensable, QR codes simplify payments, streamline travel, and even support immigration clearance.

In Malaysia, this reflects the country's wider digitalisation agenda, particularly the rise of cashless payments. The introduction of the national QR standard, DuitNow QR, by Bank Negara Malaysia has been

a significant milestone in this journey.

"DuitNow QR has given Malaysians a seamless and universal platform for digital payments, making cashless living more accessible than ever," said Manojalingam, regional vice-president for Asia-Pacific, Arun Kumar.

"It's a strong example of how innovation can be scaled nationally to benefit citizens."

## RISING ADOPTION, RISING RISKS

However, as adoption increases, so do risks. Scams are on the rise. Fraudsters have resorted to replacing payment point QR codes with fake ones or circulating malicious links disguised as legitimate QR codes, leading unsuspecting users to fraudulent banking sites.

These developments highlight a shift in focus from digital adoption to digital trust, and AI is now the centre of strengthening that trust.

"As grows as the ability to monitor

and detect suspicious patterns in real time. In the context of QR payments, it can flag unusual activity, block malicious transactions and protect users from fraudulent codes," said Arun. "This is crucial if Malaysia wants to sustain momentum in its cashless payment journey."

Embedding AI into financial platforms, he added, boosts consumer confidence while aligning with Bank Negara's Financial Sector Blueprint 2022-2026, which prioritises resilience, trust and innovation in digital finance.

## AI IN NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Malaysia's adoption of QR codes is just one facet of a broader national digitalisation drive. Initiatives such as the Malaysia Digital Economy Blueprint and the National AI Roadmap 2021-2026 underpin the ambition to integrate AI across high-impact sectors:

1. Banking and Financial technology: personalised services and advanced fraud prevention.

2. Healthcare: faster and more accurate diagnostics.

3. Manufacturing: predictive analytics to reduce downtime and improve efficiency.

4. Smart cities: AI-enabled traffic management and smart mobility solutions.

"AI has the potential to touch every part of society," said Arun. "From helping doctors diagnose illnesses faster to reducing bottlenecks in factories and improving how people move around cities — AI can drive growth and enhance quality of life."

## STAYING VIGILANT

AI may power the backbone of Malaysia's digital trust, but experts caution that technology alone is not enough. Citizens must remain alert, safeguarded by verifying QR codes, avoiding suspicious links and using strong security measures.



Embedding artificial intelligence into financial platforms boosts consumer confidence. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES



Manojalingam, regional vice-president for Asia-Pacific, Arun Kumar.

details. "Awareness is just as important as technology," Arun said.

"Businesses must ensure the integrity of the QR codes they display while consumers must take simple precautions before scanning. When both sides play their part, the ecosystem becomes safer."

Malaysia's history has always been defined by bold steps towards progress.

Today, QR codes symbolise the nation's leap into cashless living, while AI marks the next frontier, one that promises resilience, inclusivity and global competitiveness.

"Malaysia has shown that it can adapt quickly to digital change," said Arun.

"By embracing AI responsibly, the country can protect its citizens, build trust in digital platforms and position itself as a leader in creating a secure, innovative and future-ready economy."

# Nutrition, the underutilised tool in diabetes management

CULTURAL backgrounds influence how people understand illness and respond to treatment, including dietary advice.

In regions like Asia, traditional diets (such as high intake of white rice) and social eating customs can make standard diabetes diets difficult to follow.

Diabetes remains one of the most prevalent concerns in Malaysia.

The IDF Diabetes Atlas, released at the World Diabetes Congress 2025, found that among Asian countries, Malaysia has the highest prevalence of diabetes for adults aged 20 to 79 at 19.9 per cent, which is higher than the global average of 11.1 per cent.

Also, a high proportion of Malaysian adults are unaware of their diabetic status. Currently, about 3.6 million Malaysian



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adults are living with diabetes. Asst Prof's nutrition medical director in Malaysia, Dr Ning Marwan Mohd Said, says those with type 2 diabetes are at increased risk of developing cardiovascular diseases due to various factors, including high blood sugar (hyperglycaemia), insulin resistance and other metabolic abnormalities.

"Type 2 diabetes is a chronic condition heavily influenced by lifestyle choices, and its prevalence is indicative of our sedentary habits and poor dietary adherence that are common today."

The Asian diet comprises high amounts of low-quality carbohydrates, which are associated with poor glycaemic control.

For optimal diabetes management, early intervention to incorporate individualised nutritional plans and lifestyle changes are essential, says Malaysian Dietitians' Association



Among Asian countries, Malaysia has the highest prevalence of diabetes for adults aged 20 to 79. PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

vice-president Professor Dr Winnie Chee Siew Swee.

Diabetes-specific medical nutrition therapy (DMNT) is an often-overlooked approach in diabetes management, she adds.

DMNT is a personalised nutrition plan to improve health and quality of life, the core principles comprising dietary quality and energy restriction.

Studies have shown that people with type 2 diabetes may benefit from structured low-calorie diets and achieve improved patient outcomes.

But the feasibility and sustainability over time in real-world situations

may be challenging.

One option is the integration of diabetes-specific formulas as partial or total meal replacements into daily routines.

This may present a more practical approach for individuals seeking sustainable and practical strategies, particularly those who are overweight or obese and with diabetes.

Incorporating meal replacements can provide individuals with the opportunity to include other nutritious foods in their diet, potentially lowering compliance with their dietary regimen.

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# Unicef raises alarm as obesity levels soar globally among the young

**O**BESITY has skyrocketed among children and adolescents bombarded by "unethical" marketing of junk food, outpacing undernourishment to become the leading form of malnutrition worldwide for the first time among those aged 5 to 19, the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) warned.

In a dire report, the UN children's agency projected that nearly one in 10 individuals within that age group will be living with the chronic disease this year, fuelled by the easy availability of ultra-processed foods "even in countries still grappling with child undernutrition".

Today "when we talk about malnutrition, we are no longer just talking about underweight children," Unicef chief Catherine Russell said in a statement on the report's release.

"Ultra-processed food is increasingly replacing fruits, vegetables and protein at a time when nutrition plays a critical role in children's growth, cognitive development and mental health."

The fight to reduce world hunger is bearing fruit in some areas, with prevalence of underweight youths on a downward trend, falling from 13 per cent to 10 per cent between 2000 and 2022 among 5-19 year olds, according to data collected in 190 countries.

But over the same period, overweight numbers in the age range have soared, doubling between 2000 and



The United Nations Children's Fund is urging governments to take binding measures, including advertising restrictions and taxes on sugary carbonated drinks and unhealthy foods. PICTURE CREDIT: FREEMK

2022 from 194 to 391 million.

The spike is even more pronounced for obesity, a more serious form of overweight associated with metabolic disorders such as diabetes, certain cancers, anxiety and depression.

In 2022, eight per cent of those 5-19 worldwide, or 163 million, were obese, compared with three per cent in 2000.

## 'FAILURE OF SOCIETY'

Given the distinct trends, Unicef believes "a historic turning point" was reached this year, with the global prevalence of obesity at 9.4 per cent of the

age group surpassing that of underweight, at 9.2 per cent. According to the projections, 188 million children and adolescents are obese.

Unicef bluntly described the primary culprit not as poor nutrition decisions by families, but unethical business practices designed to generate profits.

Children "are being bombarded by unhealthy marketing of junk foods", especially at school where they are exposed to sugary drinks and salty snacks, Katherine Shats, a Unicef legal expert in nutrition, told AFP.

Such products are often cheaper

than fresh foods like fruits, vegetables and proteins, which are being steadily replaced in families' diets.

Unicef stresses the fault lies neither with children nor their families, but "a failure of society to protect the environments that children grow up in".

It also criticised what it called the false narrative that participating in sports can offset unhealthy diets.

"It is impossible to 'outrun' the health consequences of a diet high in free sugars, refined starches, salt, trans-fats, harmful additives and excessive energy through physical

activity alone."

## URGENT MEASURES

Historically, levels of overweight have been higher in more developed nations. They remain high for example in Chile, at 27 per cent in the 5-19 age group, and the United States at 21 per cent.

But since 2000, the gap between rich and poor countries has narrowed, with obesity rates soaring in some Pacific islands where imports are replacing traditional products.

In tiny Nieu, the age group's obesity rate has reached 38 per cent, with the Cook Islands topping 37 per cent.

For some nations, it is a double curse as they grapple with both undernutrition and growing obesity.

Shats laments that in certain conflict zones or areas with humanitarian crises, large food and beverage companies are taking advantage of such situations and donating ultra-processed foods to promote their own image and their marketing tactics.

So, while children lack the availability of nutritional food, what they do gain access to is "this very unhealthy food because of these really predatory tactics from the industry," she said.

Unicef is urging governments to take binding measures, including advertising restrictions, taxes on sugary carbonated drinks and unhealthy foods, and policies that encourage production of fresh produce.



The number of overweight people has soared worldwide. PICTURE CREDIT: FREEMK





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Kanak-kanak masih dapat ditangani, dan pelbagai langkah boleh diambil. Ibu bapa harus memastikan persekitaran sihat dengan menyediakan anak-anak dengan makanan yang sihat, termasuk menyediakan makanan ringan yang tidak berkalori dan menggalakan aktiviti fizikal seperti bersepeda dan bermain di luar rumah. Pihak sekolah juga boleh membantu dengan mengadakan kempen kesihatan serta menyediakan makanan berkhasiat di kantin. Selain itu, pakar pemakanan perlu menawarkan contoh pemakanan sihat dan diet harian yang bersepadu dengan kanak-kanak mengikut umur.

Keseluruhannya, obesiti dalam kalangan kanak-kanak merupakan masalah serius yang memerlukan kerjasama semua pihak untuk dibendung. Langkah pencegahan awal perlu diambil bagi memastikan generasi akan datang membesar dengan sihat dan cergas.



PKADA masa kini, makanan dihidangkan dalam pelbagai jenis dan variasi yang sering memaklukkan selera golongan dewasa malahan kanak-kanak.

Namun begitu, tabiat pemakanan yang tidak sihat boleh menimbulkan pelbagai masalah, terutamanya masalah obesiti yang semakin memburukkan. Khususnya dalam kalangan kanak-kanak. Obesiti merujuk kepada keadaan di mana seseorang mempunyai berat badan yang berlebihan akibat pengumpulan lemak dalam tubuh. Fenomena ini bukan sahaja memberi kesan kepada kesihatan fizikal, malah turut memusnahkan kesihatan mental dan emosi kanak-kanak. Oleh itu, ia ini harus dipandang serius oleh semua pihak.

Antara punca utama obesiti dalam kalangan kanak-kanak ialah gaya hidup yang tidak sihat. Kanak-kanak masa kini lebih gemar menghabiskan masa dengan bermain permainan video atau melayan internet berbanding melakukan aktiviti fizikal di luar rumah. Aktiviti yang tidak melibatkan pergerakan tubuh badan menyumbang kepada pembakaran kalori yang rendah, seterusnya mengakibatkan pengumpulan lemak yang membawa kepada obesiti.

Selain itu, tabiat pemakanan yang tidak sihat juga menjadi penyumbang utama kepada obesiti. Pengambilan makanan segera, minuman bergula, dan makanan ringan yang tinggi kalori semakin menjadi kebiasaan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berbanding makanan yang berkhasiat. Sikap ibu bapa juga sering memanjatkan anak-anak dengan memberikan makanan kegemaran mereka tanpa memikutkan nilai gizinya. Rangkaian ini mendedahkan mereka kepada risiko kegemukan dan penyakit kronik seperti diabetes dan masalah jantung pada masa muda.

Malapetaka nemi yang mengancam bahawa kanak-kanak yang memiliki badan yang berlebihan akibat obesiti, kanak-kanak dalam kalangan kanak-kanak mendalangi kesan yang amat memburukkan. Dari segi kesihatan, mereka berpotensi mendapat penyakit yang pada akhirnya hanya bertukar kepada orang dewasa seperti tekanan darah tinggi, kolestrol tinggi, dan masalah pernafasan. Dari segi emosi pula, kanak-kanak yang mengalami obesiti sering menjadi mangsa ejekan dan buli, menyebabkan mereka hilang keyakinan diri dan mengalami tekanan perasaan. Masalah obesiti dalam kalangan



## OBESITI dalam Kalangan Kanak-kanak