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US Imposes 25% Tariff on Malaysian Goods to Address Trade Imbalance

The White House has formally notified Malaysia of a 25% tariff on all Malaysian products, effective August 1, 2025. This measure aims to address the significant trade deficit the US faces with Malaysia. President Donald Trump emphasized the long-standing trade relationship but stressed the need for a balanced and reciprocal framework. The tariffs respond directly to Malaysia's tariff policies, non-tariff barriers, and trade practices that contribute to the imbalance.

The letter also warns that goods transshipped through Malaysia to avoid higher tariffs will face the same rate. To mitigate this, Trump offered an incentive: Malaysian companies that invest or manufacture in the US will avoid tariffs. The US government commits to facilitating such investments quickly and professionally. Additionally, any increase in Malaysian tariffs will result in corresponding increases on US tariffs.

Trump concluded with optimism, hoping for continued partnership, market openness, and the removal of trade barriers, while noting tariffs may be adjusted based on future relations.



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Malaysia's Digital Investments Surge 125%, Driving Growth and Jobs

Total investments under Malaysia Digital rose 125% to RM29.47 billion in Q2 2025, up from RM13.11 billion in Q1. This surge, led by data centre and cloud computing sectors, confirms Malaysia's role as ASEAN's preferred digital FDI destination. Digital Minister Gobind Singh Deo called it exceptional growth, reflecting the nation's digital readiness and strong investor confidence.

Singapore, the US, and China lead investment sources, with RM13.91 billion, RM6.44 billion, and RM2.97 billion respectively. Data centres contributed RM13.45 billion alone and are expected to create 1,440 high-skilled jobs. Artificial intelligence attracted RM3.29 billion, generating 6,920 jobs, while global business services secured RM4.99 billion, with 5,632 jobs projected.

MDEC CEO Anuar Fariz Fadzil highlighted the initiative's focus on impactful investments in value, innovation, and employment. MDEC remains committed to investor support, talent development, and ecosystem growth to maintain Malaysia's position as a dynamic, future-ready digital economy.



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Johor Leads Malaysia's Economic Growth with Data Centre Expansion

Johor recorded the highest GDP growth in Malaysia at 6.4% in 2024, driven by booming data centre investments and major infrastructure projects. This strong performance helped lift the national economy to 5.1%, up from 3.5% in 2023. All states showed positive growth, with Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Pahang, and Labuan also among the fastest-growing.

Malaysia's total GDP reached RM1.65 trillion, led by the services sector, which grew 5.3% and accounted for nearly 60% of the economy. Manufacturing and agriculture rose by 4.2% and 3.1%, while construction surged 17.5%. Mining and quarrying showed modest growth.

Johor's RM158 billion GDP reflects its strategic location and strong infrastructure. The rise in data centres boosted services, manufacturing, and construction. Construction grew 42.7%, supported by power, cooling, and fibre optic projects. Manufacturing gains included metals, electrical, and electronics products, reinforcing Johor's position as a key economic driver.



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ECERDC Achieves RM6.4 Billion Investment, Launches Kota MADANI Housing Project

The East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) secured RM6.4 billion in realised investments in the first half of 2025, surpassing expectations. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim highlighted RM10.4 billion in total investments secured to date, exceeding the RM10 billion annual target. This growth has created over 2,800 new jobs, reflecting strong investor confidence and effective facilitation.

Anwar emphasized the importance of aligning investments with long-term national interests, focusing on technology transfer and skills development. Eight high-impact projects are expected to be completed by year-end to reinforce ECER's competitive position nationally and internationally.

Separately, Anwar introduced the RM4 billion Kota MADANI project, a modern housing development for civil servants in Putrajaya. This public-private partnership will deliver 10,000 units and comprehensive amenities by 2027 without burdening government finances. The initiative underscores fiscal responsibility and addresses public housing needs with a sustainable, community-focused approach.



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UOB, FMM, and SMF Strengthen Malaysia-Singapore Manufacturing Integration

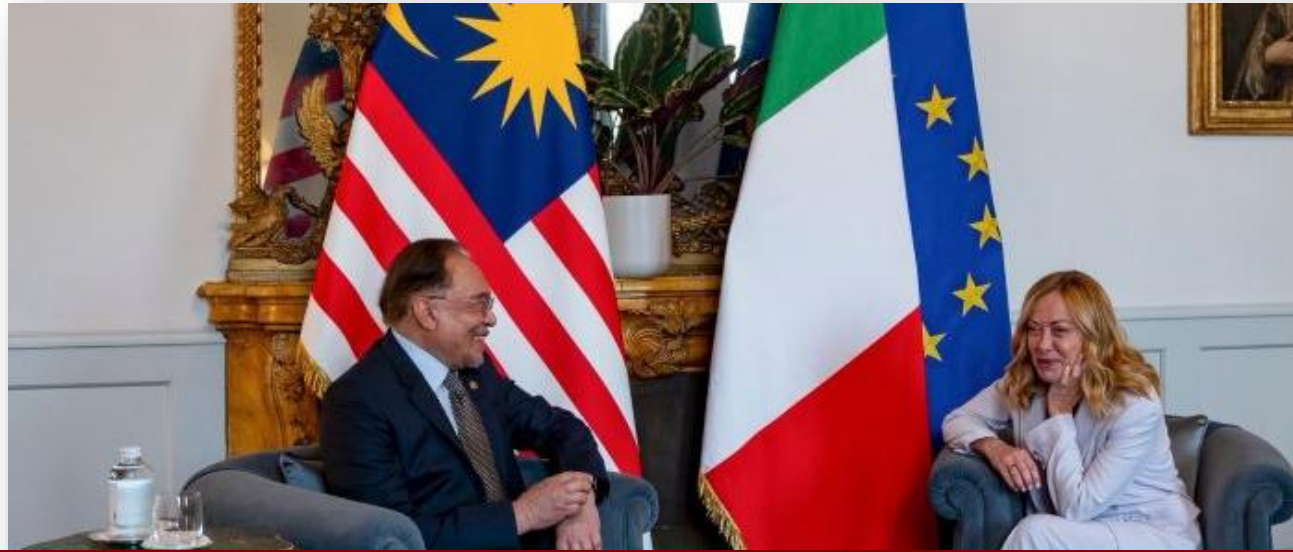
United Overseas Bank (Malaysia) Bhd (UOB Malaysia) signed a tripartite MoU with the Federation of Malaysian Manufacturers (FMM) and the Singapore Manufacturing Federation (SMF) to enhance regional economic integration and boost foreign direct investment flows. The partnership aims to leverage UOB's network to help businesses, especially SMEs, expand sustainably across borders, supporting the Malaysia-Singapore manufacturing corridor.

This initiative aligns with the 2025 ASEAN Summit's inclusivity theme and builds on the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone agreement. UOB has committed RM11.5 billion in financing to Johor businesses and facilitated RM10 billion in FDI since 2024. The MoU will provide advisory services to ease market entry and operational challenges across Southeast Asia.

FMM and SMF leaders emphasized this collaboration's role in fostering innovation, cross-border growth, and supply chain resilience. Deputy Minister Liew Chin Tong highlighted its importance for a more productive Malaysia-Singapore supply chain ecosystem.



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Malaysia Secures RM8.13 Billion Investment Opportunities from Italy

Malaysia has successfully secured potential investments worth RM8.13 billion through economic cooperation with Italy, following a high-level roundtable meeting involving 41 Italian companies and agencies. These investments cover sectors such as petrochemicals, machinery, electrical and electronics, as well as oil and gas services. Additionally, potential exports valued at RM425 million are set to boost Malaysia's renewable energy, biofuels, animal feed additives and food industries.

In a bilateral meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, both nations agreed to strengthen ties in renewable energy including solar, geothermal and hydrogen. Key collaborations were highlighted, including the Petronas-Eni joint venture in sustainable aviation fuel, Perodua's work on electric vehicle batteries, and modernising the electricity grid under the ASEAN Power Grid initiative.

Malaysia also pushed for recognition of its Sustainable Palm Oil certification and a fairer assessment of EU deforestation regulations. The visit underscored efforts to conclude the Malaysia-EU Free Trade Agreement while trade between both countries continued to rise.



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Malaysia Secures RM4 Billion Investments from France Trade Mission

Malaysia secured RM4 billion in potential investments and RM675 million in prospective exports from a high-level trade mission to France led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. The mission engaged 40 French industry leaders interested in sectors such as high-tech manufacturing, aerospace, renewable energy, tourism, digital economy, and sustainable infrastructure.

Accompanied by key ministers and officials, the mission aligns with Malaysia's New Industrial Master Plan 2030 and Green Investment Strategy. Potential exports focus on aerospace, automotive, pharmaceuticals, lifestyle, and halal products, reflecting investor confidence in Malaysia's economic direction and business environment.

Miti Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Aziz emphasized the mission's success in showcasing Malaysia's investor-friendly policies, supply chain efficiency, and growth potential. The investments promise new business opportunities for local companies and high-paying jobs, advancing the nation's Madani economic transformation agenda. French companies value Malaysia's stable climate, skilled workforce, and global demand for its products.



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YTL Power Leads Malaysia's Bold Push Into AI and Data Infrastructure

YTL Power International has invested around RM10 billion in AI and supporting infrastructure, urging other Malaysian companies to harness this momentum. A subsidiary of YTL Corporation, the firm has built one of the world's largest data centre parks, housing top-tier hyperscalers and advanced GPU technology through a strategic partnership with NVIDIA. With 200 megawatts already operational, capacity may expand up to 600 megawatts.

The company has secured cutting-edge chips like the GB200 Blackwell, now housed in their Malaysian data centres and set to go live soon. Executive Director Yeoh Keong Hann emphasized the government's support, especially from Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, who recognises AI's transformative potential and has encouraged further investment.

The company's participation in recent global visits to Europe and Brazil helped foster international connections. Looking ahead, YTL Power will launch ILMU 1.0, Malaysia's first large language model, and Ryt Bank, the country's first AI-powered digital bank.



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FSBM Partners with VisionTech to Advance Generative AI in Malaysia

FSBM Holdings Bhd has formed a strategic partnership with Singapore-based VisionTech Pte Ltd to accelerate its digital transformation. Through its subsidiary FSBM I-Design, FSBM will lead sales, marketing, customer engagement, and technical support to promote VisionTech's generative AI technologies across Malaysia's sectors.

This collaboration strengthens FSBM's position as a technology leader committed to scalable, intelligent solutions. FSBM manages the full sales cycle while VisionTech provides sales tools, technical support, and knowledge sharing. Joint branding and promotional efforts have already begun with the GEN AI Forum 2025, attracting senior executives from multiple industries.

VisionTech's CEO highlighted their shared vision to localize and scale AI capabilities in Malaysia. Both parties are exploring a joint venture and potential co-development of new AI solutions. This partnership promises to drive AI adoption and boost productivity and innovation for Malaysian businesses.



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Alibaba Expands AI-Driven Data Centres Across Southeast Asia

Alibaba Group is expanding its AI-driven growth by adding new data centres in Malaysia and the Philippines. The company launched its third data centre in Malaysia and plans to open a second in the Philippines by October. Additionally, Alibaba Cloud is establishing a global competency centre in Singapore to accelerate AI adoption, supporting over 5,000 businesses and 100,000 developers.

CEO Eddie Wu emphasized Alibaba Cloud's long-term globalisation strategy, aiming to build a robust cloud network across China, Japan, South Korea, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and the Americas within three years. Alibaba commits to investing more than US \$53 billion in AI infrastructure during this period.

Beyond e-commerce, Alibaba is advancing AI development through Qwen AI models and expanding cloud services. The company is also investing in data centres in Thailand, Mexico, and South Korea, aiming to lead in artificial general intelligence, which seeks AI systems with human-level intelligence.



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Powerwell Secures RM16.63 Million Orders for Hyperscale Data Centre Project

Powerwell Holdings Bhd has accepted purchase orders worth RM16.63 million to supply switchboards and components for a hyperscale data centre at Elmina Business Park, Selangor. The orders, received from April to July 2025, come from RYBE Engineering, Protech Builders, and LFE Engineering. Fulfillment is expected by the first quarter of 2026.

The company anticipates these orders will positively impact its earnings and net assets for the financial year ending March 31, 2026. Powerwell does not foresee any risks beyond normal operational challenges and plans to implement appropriate risk mitigation measures.

Managing Director Catherine Wong highlighted that these orders demonstrate Powerwell's technical expertise and strong track record in delivering complex data centre projects. The group's experience with multinational corporations reinforces its position as a trusted provider in this growing sector, supporting its continued growth and market confidence.



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Penang Launches Innovation Hub to Boost Malaysia's Chip Design Industry

The Penang government, via InvestPenang, has launched the 36,000-square-foot Silicon Research and Incubation Space (SRIS) to accelerate local integrated circuit (IC) design. Located in Bayan Lepas, SRIS offers startups access to advanced infrastructure, high-performance computing, and industry support, aligning with the National Semiconductor Strategy.

SRIS is part of the broader Penang Silicon Design @5KM+ initiative, which also includes the IC Design & Digital Park and the Chip Design Academy. Five firms—Filpal, Infinecs Lab, Silicon X, SkyeChip, and Sophic Automation—are its first occupants. SkyeChip unveiled new AI-focused technologies, while Silicon X is developing Malaysia's first proprietary chip.

Since 2024, the number of IC design companies in Penang has more than doubled to over 45. To sustain this momentum, the state has committed RM60 million, with RM50 million in federal co-funding. Local startups may access subsidies covering key operational costs and talent development.



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SuperSiC Breaks Ground on Advanced Wafer Plant in Penang

SuperSiC (Malaysia), a subsidiary of China's Zhejiang Jingsheng (JSG), has launched construction of a 40,000-square-metre wafer fabrication facility at Penang Technology Park, Bertam. This plant addresses a key gap in Malaysia's semiconductor value chain by producing 240,000 eight-inch silicon carbide wafers annually, vital for electric vehicle chargers and telecom power systems.

The facility aligns with Malaysia's strategic frameworks including the New Industrial Master Plan 2030, the Chemical Industry Roadmap, and the National Semiconductor Strategy. The Malaysian Investment Development Authority views this project as a catalyst for attracting more investment and reinforcing Malaysia's status as a regional advanced manufacturing hub.

JSG chairman Dr Cao Jianwei noted that the Penang plant marks a significant step in the company's global strategy. It enables localized production and deeper engagement with Malaysia's semiconductor ecosystem, further strengthening supply chain resilience and responsiveness to regional customer needs. Construction is expected to begin within a year.



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Avaland Expands in Petaling Jaya with RM320 Million Project

Avaland Bhd is set to acquire a 2.17-acre leasehold parcel in Section 13, Petaling Jaya, for RM49 million to undertake a high-rise commercial development with an estimated gross development value of RM320 million. The land, located adjacent to Plaza 33, will be purchased via its wholly owned unit, Leisure Event Sdn Bhd, from Comit Communication Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd. The acquisition will be financed through internally generated funds and bank borrowings and is expected to be completed by the fourth quarter of 2025.

The land was independently valued at RM49 million, and while the deal will not affect 2025 earnings, it is expected to boost future profits. Avaland sees this as a strategic step to grow its presence in a mature township.

Meanwhile, Warisan TC Holdings, which controls 75.5% of the selling entity, views the disposal as prudent due to the remaining 50-year lease tenure. The group noted that without lease renewal, the asset's value would gradually decline. Monetising it at current market value allows Warisan to unlock shareholder value efficiently.



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Kerjaya Prospek Expands with Land Buy and Penang Joint Venture

Kerjaya Prospek Group Bhd is strengthening its property development portfolio through a RM12.8 million land acquisition in Kuala Lumpur and a joint venture in Penang. The land, located in Kuchai Lama, comprises three freehold parcels and will be acquired through Senandung Raya Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Kerjaya Prospek. Situated in a well-connected and mature neighbourhood, the parcels are intended for future development. The transaction is expected to complete by September 2025 and will be funded through internal resources and bank financing.

Separately, Kerjaya Prospek is partnering with Aspen Vision Tanjung Sdn Bhd to develop a mixed-use project in Tanjung Bungah, Penang. A joint venture company will be formed, with Kerjaya Prospek holding a 60 percent stake. The 4.5-acre land will be acquired for RM17 million, partially through in-kind property units.

The project will feature residential, serviced apartment, and retail components, further boosting the group's development pipeline.



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WARISAN TC HOLDINGS BERHAD



Warisan TC Divests Industrial Asset to Boost Capital Flexibility

Warisan TC Holdings Bhd is selling its industrial property in Section 13, Petaling Jaya, for RM49 million in cash. The site, housing a 2½-storey office block and warehouse on 94,596 sq ft of leasehold land, is currently occupied by two subsidiaries and a related company. The disposal is managed through its 75.5%-owned unit, Comit Communication Technologies, and sold to Leisure Event Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Avaland Bhd.

Acquired in 2013 for RM33.1 million, the property's market value stood at RM48.5 million as of April 2025. The final price was secured via a public tender handled by Savills Malaysia. WTCH expects the transaction to complete by the fourth quarter of 2025.

The proceeds will support operations and be channelled into growth initiatives aligned with the group's long-term strategy. The board views the sale as timely, noting the lease's expiry in 2074 and the need to unlock shareholder value.



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LB Aluminium Expands Asset Base with Strategic Property Acquisition

LB Aluminium Bhd is acquiring a 6.74-acre industrial property in Banting, Selangor, for RM22 million. The purchase from Lucksoon Coatings Sdn Bhd includes existing buildings and forms part of the company's broader strategy to strengthen its asset portfolio while optimising deal value through a debt offset mechanism.

As part of the arrangement, RM4.01 million in outstanding debt owed by Lucksoon Metal Works Sdn Bhd will be offset against the purchase price. Once the acquisition is completed, LB Aluminium will lease the property back to Lucksoon Metal Works under a three-year tenancy agreement, ensuring operational continuity.

Strategically located near Port Klang and Kuala Lumpur International Airport, with strong connectivity to key highways, the site offers long-term capital appreciation potential. The acquisition will be funded through a mix of internal funds and bank borrowings, reinforcing LB Aluminium's focus on sustainable growth and operational efficiency.



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The SkyWorld logo is positioned at the top right of the image. It features the word "SkyWorld" in a blue, sans-serif font, with a registered trademark symbol (®) to its upper right. A green swoosh underline is positioned beneath the letters "y" and "o".

SkyWorld®



SkyWorld Advances Affordable Housing Plans with RM48.5 Million Land Buy

SkyWorld Development is acquiring a 25.9-acre land parcel in Batu Kawan, Penang for RM48.51 million. The site, known as Parcel 1, is part of a 161.5-acre tract in Bandar Cassia and will host Rumah Bakat Baru Madani (RBB) homes under a joint development with Penang Development Corporation and its unit, PDC Properties.

The land deal, priced at RM43 per square foot, follows shareholder approval in April 2025. The RBB project, first unveiled in December 2024, aims to serve middle-income households earning below RM11,800 monthly, with unit prices ranging from RM225,000 to RM420,000. The homes will feature community-focused amenities and will be open to locals and out-of-state workers.

SkyWorld will fund the purchase through internal resources, borrowings, and remaining IPO proceeds. Completion is expected by Q2 2026. The development forms part of a larger RM13 billion initiative spanning Batu Kawan and Seberang Jaya, reinforcing SkyWorld's growth in Penang.



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MRCA Targets RM120 Million Transaction Value at Franchise Expo 2025

The Malaysian Retail Chain Association (MRCA) aims for RM120 million in transactions at the 8th Franchise Expo Malaysia 2025, a 20% increase from 2024. This optimistic outlook is driven by record international participation, including new exhibitors from the US, Japan, and the UK, alongside strong local demand. The expo, held from August 21 to 23 at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre, expects around 18,000 visitors and features 364 booths across four halls. The theme “Invest in the Future” highlights opportunities in digitalisation, tourism recovery, and regional integration.

MRCA president Datuk Ken Phua also voiced concerns about the planned Sales and Service Tax (SST) expansion, which could raise costs significantly for franchisors and franchisees. MRCA is advocating for deferring or adjusting the SST, emphasizing its potential negative impact on net profits and business viability.

Additionally, MRCA has requested the government to delay the electricity tariff increase to support local businesses amid ongoing economic challenges.



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Toppen Shopping Centre Expands with Jaya Grocer and Sanctum Garden

Toppen Shopping Centre in Johor continues to grow as a vibrant community hub with two major additions this year. Jaya Grocer will open in August, offering a 27,106 sq ft space with a clean, minimalist design focused on fresh, organic, and local produce. The store integrates eco-friendly practices and GrabMart's online service, enhancing convenience for health-conscious shoppers. This marks Jaya Grocer's fifth outlet in South Malaysia and reflects a shared commitment to community-focused retail.

In September, The Sanctum Garden by CS Group will debut as a multi-concept dining destination. It combines a garden-themed banquet hall for events and an ala carte restaurant serving pork- and lard-free Nanyang cuisine. The venue is designed for daily dining and special occasions, reinforcing Toppen's role as a social and cultural gathering place.

Toppen's continued tenant growth and innovative experiences underline its vision as a one-stop lifestyle destination, fostering strong community connections while meeting evolving local needs.



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Strong Demand for S P Setia's Nadi Phase 3A Commercial Units

S P Setia Bhd recorded a 70% take-up rate for its Nadi Phase 3A commercial units at Setia EcoHill 2 in Semenyih during the launch weekend. The 5.5-acre development features 44 shopoffices, with prices ranging from RM1.79 million to RM3.8 million and built-up areas between 3,899 and 8,365 sq ft. Designed with 26-foot frontages, these units target F&B and retail tenants.

The units appeal to business owners, brands seeking expansion, and Citizen Setia loyalty members. This launch follows full sales for Phases 1 and 2. The entire Nadi development consists of 224 units with a gross development value of RM489.4 million, expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2028.

Setia EcoHill 2 benefits from strategic access to major highways and proximity to 5,470 upcoming apartment units. Future developments include a petrol station, corporate offices, and an F&B lifestyle hub, supported by 1,144 parking bays and wide walkways for commercial convenience.



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Sime Darby Property's Elmina Ridge 2 Sees Strong Early Sales

Sime Darby Property's latest residential project, Elmina Ridge 2, recorded a 90% take-up rate during its soft launch. The development includes 221 units valued at RM339 million and forms part of the City of Elmina township. Completion is expected by 2028.

The freehold project offers superlink, cluster, and semi-detached homes with built-up areas from 2,274 to 3,288 square feet. Prices start at RM1.21 million for superlink, RM1.76 million for cluster, and RM2.22 million for semi-detached homes. Each unit is equipped with solar panels, battery storage, EV charging readiness, and energy-efficient roof insulation.

According to Sime Darby Property's COO of township development, Apollo Leong, the strong demand reflects buyers' preference for well-designed, future-ready homes supporting sustainable living. He credited the company's placemaking strategy and design innovations for driving interest in Elmina Ridge 2 following the full sell-out of Elmina Ridge 1.



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Tropicana Unveils Skypark Kepler, Enhancing Premium Living and Accessibility

Tropicana Corporation officially opened Skypark Kepler, its first branded residential project in partnership with Banyan Group. Positioned as the highlight of the LIDO master plan, Skypark Kepler offers a premium lifestyle under a globally recognised hospitality brand. The development features two 54-storey towers with 1,596 units ranging from 463 to 807 square feet, starting at RM580,000. Units come fully or semi-furnished with branded fittings from Samsung and Kohler.

To improve homeownership accessibility, Tropicana partnered with MBSB Bank to provide tailored financing with up to 35-year tenures and preferential rates exclusive to Skypark Kepler buyers. Sustainability is integral, with EV charging stations, energy- and water-efficient fittings, rainwater harvesting, smart-home automation, and 5G infrastructure.

Located near the RTS link, the development includes a 2.5km coastal boardwalk, a 32-acre green park, and multi-tiered security. Tropicana's managing director, Ixora Ang, expressed confidence in the project, supported by leading global partners.



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Selangor Advances Affordable Housing with Early Rumah Idaman Melur Handover

The Rumah Idaman Melur project in Cybersouth, Selangor, was handed over to homeowners ahead of schedule, marking a significant milestone in the state's affordable housing initiative. The development comprises 1,448 apartment units in two 23-storey blocks, priced from RM250,000 with built-up areas of at least 1,000 square feet.

Developed on 12 acres with a gross development value of RM406 million, the project was led by PNSB Construction in partnership with MGB and LBS Bina. It achieved a strong Qclassic construction quality score of 79%, reflecting high standards.

Selangor's Chief Minister emphasized the government's commitment to quality, affordable homes that improve residents' well-being. The broader Rumah Idaman MBI programme aims to deliver 7,210 units across six projects by 2028, supporting Selangor's goal of 200,000 affordable homes. LBS highlighted the use of advanced precast concrete technology, ensuring efficient delivery and construction quality.



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NCT Expands Industrial and Residential Footprint Across Key Malaysian States

NCT Group is launching its second industrial park, NCT Innosphere, through a joint venture with Northern Gateway Group (NGX), a Ministry of Finance subsidiary. Located in Bukit Kayu Hitam near the Thailand border, the 127-acre site will be developed in four phases over six years, with Phase 1 launching in 3Q2025. The RM1 billion project includes factories, commercial shoptlots, a duty-free complex, and a tourism centre, aiming to establish a future-ready logistics and industrial hub.

NCT will lead end-to-end development while NGX manages infrastructure and regulatory matters. This follows the success of NSIP and highlights NCT's focus on sustainable, high-impact industrial ecosystems to attract global investors. NCT also remains committed to enhancing Malaysia's global standing through innovation and sustainability.

Further expanding its reach, NCT is venturing into Sabah with the RM3.4 billion Ion Marina Bay project in Putatan. Simultaneously, it is reviving the 200-acre Belian Garden residential project in Selangor, due for full completion by 2028.



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WCT Secures RM365 Million Contract for North-South Expressway Expansion

WCT Holdings Bhd has won a RM365.22 million contract to add lanes to the Sedenak-Simpang Renggam section of the Yong Peng-Senai stretch on the North-South Expressway in Johor. The contract was awarded by Projek Lebuhraya Usahasama Bhd and accepted by WCT's wholly-owned subsidiary.

The scope covers site clearance, demolition, earthworks, drainage and lighting installation, road surfacing, signage, geotechnical and bridge work, utility relocation, and culvert extension. The project starts on July 28 and is slated for completion within three years.

Despite a 25.87% decline in net profit to RM11.97 million for Q1 2025 due to lower associate profits, WCT's revenue rose slightly by 1.02% to RM472.13 million. The increase was partially offset by reduced construction revenue as several projects near completion. WCT's share price rose 0.75% to 67 sen on Friday, reflecting investor confidence in the new contract.



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Econpile Wins RM58 Million Contracts for Ara Damansara Development

Econpile Holdings Bhd secured two contracts totaling RM57.94 million for construction services and material supply for the proposed Oasis Ara development in Selangor. The contracts were awarded to its wholly owned subsidiary, Econpile (M) Sdn Bhd, by units of LFE Corporation Bhd.

The RM27.99 million construction services contract is from LFE Engineering Sdn Bhd, while the RM29.96 million material supply contract comes from LFE Innovative Sdn Bhd. Both projects will run for 21 months starting June 30, 2025, and are expected to contribute positively to Econpile's revenue and earnings from the 2026 financial year.

These contracts add to four others secured by Econpile this year, valued at RM145.96 million. Despite the wins, Econpile's shares closed 1.3% lower at 37 sen, with the stock down over 20% year-to-date, reflecting some market caution amid broader sector challenges.



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Binastra Secures RM405 Million Contract, Boosts Order Book Strength

Binastra Corp has secured a RM405 million construction contract from Exsim Jalil Link to build a residential project, The Queenswoodz, in Bukit Jalil. The deal, awarded to its unit Binastra Builders, involves two residential blocks with 1,004 units and related facilities. Construction will take 41 months, starting upon confirmation from the architect.

The contract is a recurrent related party transaction, as Binastra's major shareholders Datuk Jackson Tan and Lee Seng Yong hold indirect stakes in EJL. Despite the related ties, the project marks Binastra's fourth award on the same 17.9-acre Bukit Jalil site, with a combined value of RM1.8 billion to date.

So far in 2025, Binastra has secured RM1.4 billion in new contracts, raising its total outstanding order book to RM4.6 billion. The company expects this pipeline to support earnings over the next four years. Binastra also plans to accelerate job replenishment in the second half of the year.



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Malaysia Needs Targeted Housing Reforms to Boost Affordability and Ownership

Malaysia faces a housing overhang because many homes built are too expensive for lower- and middle-income groups. The country's price-to-income ratio is 9.78, much higher than the global standard of 3.0, making homeownership difficult. Dr Muhammad Najib Razali suggests introducing a vacancy tax to discourage owners from leaving homes empty. This would encourage better pricing and use of unsold homes.

He also highlights the need for affordable homes to be well located and accessible, recommending better public transport connections. Customized mortgage schemes backed by government guarantees could help lower-income families afford homes. Banks should use flexible credit assessments beyond standard scores to lend to more buyers.

Najib calls for stronger partnerships between the public and private sectors, improved data on housing demand, and incentives to convert unsold homes into rental or shared living spaces. These measures can help create a more balanced, affordable, and sustainable housing market in Malaysia.



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