



## Good Morning Craig,

This week, we spotlight major regional collaborations and economic shifts shaping Malaysia and ASEAN. The Johor-Singapore SEZ has emerged as a model for cross-border cooperation amid rising global trade tensions, while Chinese President Xi Jinping's official visit to Malaysia signals deepening bilateral ties.

In economic news, Malaysia's Q1 GDP is projected to grow 4.4%, supported by strong domestic demand, while ASEAN leaders reaffirm their opposition to US tariffs. Meanwhile, local interest in trade policy is rising, especially in Penang.

On the industry front, Tourism Malaysia aims for 45 million visitors by 2026, SD Guthrie and partners are investing RM3 billion in a new industrial park, and MAG is racing to secure Boeing jets as part of a fleet revamp.

In ESG developments, Stellantis and Leapmotor have launched EV assembly operations in Kedah, positioning Malaysia as a key regional hub.

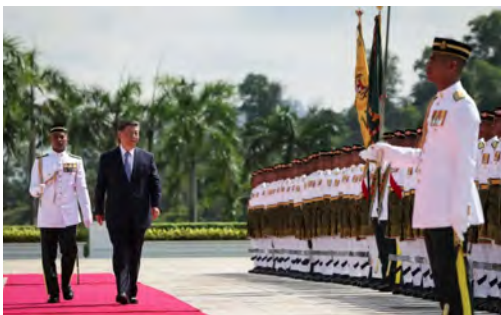
Thank you for reading MGCC's Pressespiegel! We hope you enjoy our selection of stories this week.



### **Johor-Singapore SEZ a showcase of like-minded states working together amid Trump tariffs, protectionism**

Singapore's Deputy Prime Minister Gan Kim Yong highlighted the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as a vital example of regional cooperation amid global trade uncertainties fueled by rising protectionism, including US-imposed tariffs. Speaking at a business forum in Johor, he said the SEZ strengthens supply chains and supports business growth despite volatile conditions. The SEZ, spanning 3,571 sq km in southern Johor, covers 11 key sectors and is backed by both Singapore and Malaysia to promote investment and economic resilience in response to shifting global trade dynamics.

Source: [Channel News Asia](#)



### **Chinese president Xi Jinping given state welcome at Istana Negara**

Chinese President Xi Jinping received a state welcome at Istana Negara as part of his three-day official visit to Malaysia, marking his first visit in 12 years. Welcomed by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Ibrahim, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, and key government leaders,



### **Malaysia's Sin Chew Daily under probe for illustration of incomplete national flag, gets rebuke from King**

Malaysian authorities are investigating Chinese-language newspaper Sin Chew Daily for publishing an image of the national flag, Jalur Gemilang, without the crescent moon—a key Islamic symbol—on its front page. The incident, which accompanied coverage of Chinese

the ceremony included a 21-gun salute and cultural performances. Xi held meetings with the King and is scheduled to meet Anwar to discuss bilateral ties and regional issues. His visit underscores the strong Malaysia-China relationship, with China remaining Malaysia's largest trading partner in 2024, accounting for RM484.12 billion in trade.

Source: [Free Malaysia Today](#)



### **'If Anwar interfered, Najib wouldn't be in jail': Nazri rejects chief justice's claim on judicial reform**

Former law minister Mohamed Nazri Aziz criticised Chief Justice Tengku Maimun Tuan Mat for suggesting the removal of the prime minister's role in judicial appointments, calling her remarks improper. He defended the current system, citing its British roots and the 2009 creation of the Judicial Appointments Commission, which he introduced. Nazri argued there's no interference in the judiciary, referencing Najib Razak's conviction under the current administration. He also questioned why Tengku Maimun raised concerns now, despite being appointed under the same system.

Source: [Malay Mail](#)

President Xi Jinping's visit, sparked public backlash and a rebuke from Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Ibrahim. Two editors have been suspended, and the Home Ministry is probing the case under two national laws, stressing that the flag must be treated with respect. Sin Chew Daily has since apologised in multiple languages, acknowledging the seriousness of the error.

Source: [Channel News Asia](#)



### **The price of an iPhone could soar to that of a car, says Tengku Zafrul**

The price of Apple's iPhone could significantly increase—potentially reaching the cost of a car—if the United States continues to raise tariffs, according to Malaysia's Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Tengku Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz. He highlighted the iPhone's globally sourced components, including chips from Taiwan, batteries from China, and cameras from multiple countries, all assembled in China. While the US recently granted exemptions for smartphone and computer parts, Zafrul warned that these could be reversed if former President Trump reinstates higher tariffs. Reports suggest iPhone prices could rise by 30–43% if tariffs are fully enforced.

Source: [The Vibes](#)

## **Economy**





### **ASEAN firmly opposes US tariffs, says Anwar, reaffirming commitment to multilateralism**

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim reaffirmed ASEAN's united stance against unilaterally imposed tariffs, stating they undermine multilateralism and free trade. Speaking after a visit to Thailand, Anwar said ASEAN leaders, along with Japan and New Zealand, oppose the recent tariffs introduced under US President Donald Trump's Reciprocal Trade and Tariffs Policy. ASEAN will not retaliate but prefers resolving the issue through diplomacy and multilateral dialogue. The new US policy, effective from 3 April, imposes a minimum 10% tariff on all imports, with higher rates on ASEAN countries—Malaysia and Brunei face 24%, while others like Vietnam and Cambodia face up to 49%. Most tariffs are under a 90-day suspension, except for those on China.

Source: [The Vibes](#)



### **Nation's economy expected to grow 4.4% in Q1 2025 based on resilient domestic demand**

Malaysia's GDP is projected to grow by 4.4% in Q1 2025, slightly easing from 5% in the previous quarter, supported by strong domestic demand despite global headwinds, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia. Key growth drivers include robust services and manufacturing sectors, with services up 5.2% and manufacturing up 4.2%, particularly in electronics and food processing. Construction posted strong double-digit growth at 14.5%, while agriculture rebounded slightly. The labour market remained healthy, but the mining and quarrying sector continued to decline, contracting by 4.9%.

Source: [The Vibes](#)



### **Penang tops Google searches on tariffs**

Penang tops the nation in Google searches related to tariffs, reflecting strong local interest likely due to its significant role in Malaysia's electrical,



### **Use 90-day tariff pause to plan long-term shift away from US, ASEAN told**

Economists Jayant Menon and Goh Lim Thye say Southeast Asian nations should use the 90-day US tariff pause to reduce their trade dependence on the

electronics, and semiconductor industries. Google Trends data from 2–11 April shows Penang scoring 100 in search interest, ahead of Kuala Lumpur (77) and Selangor (76). Experts link this to Penang's concentration of American multinational corporations and the ongoing tariff developments announced by the US, including a 24% tariff affecting various E&E products, though semiconductors remain exempt—for now. Globally, Singapore leads in tariff-related searches, while Malaysia ranks 11th.

Source: [The Star](#)

US and strengthen regional resilience. They urge ASEAN to negotiate collectively with the U.S. while accelerating intra-regional trade through platforms like the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), despite its slow progress due to protectionist interests. Goh calls the AEC the “only credible path” for a minus-US strategy, while Menon suggests the broader Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) may be more effective due to limited economic complementarities within ASEAN.

Source: [Free Malaysia Today](#)

## Industry



### **Tourism Malaysia targets 45 million visitor arrivals this year**

Tourism Malaysia aims to attract 45 million visitors as part of the Visit Malaysia 2026 (VM2026) campaign, building on the 38 million arrivals recorded last year. Director-General Manoharan Periasamy expressed optimism, citing a 31.3% increase in tourist arrivals as of February 2025. He emphasised the need for collaboration with industry players and state governments, especially in underrepresented states like Kelantan and Negeri Sembilan, and encouraged greater use of available tourism grants and incentives to boost promotion and cultural activities.

Source: [The Malaysian Reserve](#)



### **SD Guthrie inks RM3bil deal for industrial park**

SD Guthrie Bhd, Eco World Development Group Bhd, and NS Corp have partnered to develop Eco Business Park 7 (EBP7), a RM2.95 billion integrated industrial park in Bukit Pelandok, Port Dickson, as part of the Malaysian Vision Valley 2.0 (MVV2.0) project. Spanning 1,195 acres over nine years, EBP7 aims to attract investments, create high-value jobs, and boost Negeri Sembilan's economy. The park will cater to industries like aerospace, electronics, logistics, and biotech, with strong connectivity via the proposed Nilai Labu Expressway. EcoWorld will hold a 55% stake, SD Guthrie 30%, and NS Corp 15%.

Source: [The Star](#)



### **Malaysian durians surge in China as demand for fresh, tree-ripened fruit grows after Xi Jinping's visit**

Sales of Malaysian durians in China are soaring in 2024, boosted by strong demand for fresh, naturally ripened fruit and improved logistics. Following President Xi Jinping's recent visit to Malaysia, exports have jumped by 30%, with Malaysian durians gaining popularity among affluent Chinese consumers. While Thailand still leads the market, Malaysia's high-quality offerings are seeing rapid growth and strengthening bilateral trade ties.

Source: [Malay Mail](#)



### **Malaysia Aviation races to secure Boeing jets dropped by China, plans fleet shift and capital raise**

Malaysia Aviation Group (MAG) is exploring the possibility of accelerating its Boeing aircraft acquisitions by securing delivery slots potentially vacated by Chinese carriers amid the ongoing US-China trade tensions. Group managing director Captain Izham Ismail said MAG is in talks with Boeing, although competition for these slots is fierce. Any additional aircraft would be outside MAG's current lease agreement with Air Lease Corporation and would require capital market funding. Izham emphasised that factors such as production status, seat configuration, and cabin layout are critical considerations before finalising any acquisition.

Source: [Malay Mail](#)

**ESG**





### **Stellantis Malaysian assembly plant to serve as ASEAN regional hub**

Chinese EV maker Leapmotor, in partnership with Stellantis, has launched local assembly operations in Malaysia, with production set to begin by end-2025 at Stellantis' Gurun plant in Kedah. Backed by an RM24 million investment, the initiative positions Malaysia as a regional hub for EV manufacturing, serving both domestic and ASEAN markets. The first locally-assembled model will be the C10 EV, with plans to expand production and exports across the region by 2026–2027 and globally by 2030. The move supports Malaysia's National Automotive Policy 2030 and Stellantis' "Built in ASEAN for ASEAN" roadmap.

Source: [The Edge](#)



**Good to know**

---

Tucked away in the dense forests of Southeast Asia lives a cat you've probably never seen—but definitely should know about. Meet the clouded leopard, a mysterious and stunning wild feline that roams the treetops from Nepal to Malaysia and even the islands of Borneo and Sumatra. There are actually two species: the mainland clouded leopard (*Neofelis nebulosa*) and the Sunda clouded leopard (*Neofelis diardi*), the latter found only on Borneo and Sumatra. These cats are masters of the canopy, preferring tropical rainforests, but they've also been spotted in dry forests, Himalayan foothills (up to 9,000 feet!), and even mangroves. Despite their beauty, they're in trouble. Clouded leopards are classified as vulnerable, and a recent study in Malaysian Borneo's Sabah state estimates only 750 Sunda clouded leopards remain. To make things worse, genetic research has revealed alarmingly high levels of inbreeding, shrinking genetic diversity, and worrying mutations that may affect reproduction—all fueled by habitat loss and poaching. Fun fact: These leopards are small compared to other wild cats—females weigh in at just 25–35 lbs, while males can hit 50 lbs. That size gap? It's actually the biggest male-female size difference among all wild cats! They're rare, they're reclusive, and they're hanging on by a thread. But knowing they're out there—and sharing their story—might just help keep them in the wild.

(Source and pic: Fact Animal, Oxford University, Mongabay)

## Nachrichtenhäppchen

---

**Malay Mail:** Four cultures, one date: How Malaysia's Indian communities celebrate New Year together

**Deutsche Welle:** China's Xi promises to 'safeguard' Asia amid Trump tariffs

**The New York Times:** Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, a calming prime minister of Malaysia, dies at 85

**Free Malaysia Today:** Trump's tariffs a timely signal to revamp our automotive policy

**The Star:** A delicious taste of Malaysia for Xi

**The Edge:** A third of German firms mull cutting jobs in 2025, says think tank

**The Star:** 5 reasons to get excited for KL Cocktail Week 2025

**Business Today:** Malaysia's challenge with climate change

**The Vibes:** The UiTM KKK prank: Racist 'jokes' fuel genocide



Premium Member



#PartnerInMalaysia



---

*Copyright © 2024 AHK Malaysia, All rights reserved.*  
You are receiving this email because you are a member of MGCC  
or have subscribed to our MGCC e-newsletter.

Lot 20-01, Level 20, Menara Hap Seng 2 Plaza Hap Seng, No. 1 Jalan P. Ramlee 50250 Kuala Lumpur