

ECONOMY

Over 1.2 million Malaysians Still Living in Poverty

The Star – 1 February 2026

More than 1.2 million Malaysians are still living in poverty, according to Datuk Mustapha Sakmud, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah and Sarawak Affairs). He said data from the Household Income Survey showed that in 2024, a total of 1,204,995 Malaysians, including 247,062 heads of household, were categorised as living in poverty. Sabah recorded the highest number of poor people at 254,303, followed by Kelantan with 239,850 and Terengganu with 117,159.

GOVERNMENT

1,399 Housing Projects Revived Under Task Force

The Star – 31 January 2026

Since the establishment of the Task Force for Sick and Abandoned Private Housing Projects in 2023, a total of 1,399 private housing projects involving 167,423 units with a Gross Development Value of RM133.78 billion have been successfully revived. This included 109 projects restored from "sick" to "active" status and 1,265 sick projects that were completed and issued Certificates of Completion and Compliance. In addition, 34 abandoned housing projects were resolved either through physical completion or by settling issues with buyers, according to Deputy Minister of Housing and Local Government, Datuk Aiman Athirah Sabu.

Direct Hiring System for Foreign Workers in the Works

The Star – 4 February 2026

The Human Resources Ministry is formulating a pathway to enable Malaysian employers to directly hire foreign workers, with the aim of eliminating third-party agents or middlemen from the recruitment process, said Minister, Datuk Seri R. Ramanan. The proposed hiring solution, which is currently being refined, will be discussed with the Home Ministry and relevant stakeholders before being presented to the Cabinet for approval.

New Scheme to Buy, Rent Johor Homes

The Star – 4 February 2026

First-time homeowners and renters in Johor can now expect some relief following the introduction of three housing assistance initiatives under the State's 2026 Budget, which provide financial support of up to RM7,000 per household. State housing and local Government committee chairman, Datuk Mohd Jafni Md Shukor said the initiatives are intended to ease the financial burden of homeownership and rental costs, particularly among the younger generation.

Malaysia My Second Home (MM2H): 744 Participants Bought Homes in Country

The Edge – 4 February 2026

As of 31 December 2025, a total of 744 MM2H participants have purchased houses in the Country, according to Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister, Tiong King Sing. He said buyers under the programme were mainly from the top 10 source countries, led by China with 304 participants, followed by Taiwan (91), Singapore (63), the United States (41), the United Kingdom (40), Hong Kong (34), Australia (29), Bangladesh (19), South Korea (15) as well as Indonesia and Japan with 14 each.

Long-Awaited Residential Tenancy Act (RTA) to be Tabled in 2026

The Edge – 5 February 2026

The RTA is in its final drafting stage and is expected to be tabled in 2026, according to Housing and Local Government Minister, Nga Kor Ming. He said the legislation aims to create a regulated rental market that protects both landlords and tenants while improving access to affordable housing.

CONSTRUCTION

Contractors Warned Against Farming Out Awarded Projects

The Star – 2 February 2026

The Works Ministry has issued a stern warning to contractors, particularly those in classes G1 to G4, not to pass on awarded projects to subcontractors but to undertake the work themselves, as Ministry Secretary-General, Datuk Seri Azman Ibrahim said this is crucial for companies to strengthen their skills, capabilities and overall competitiveness.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Government Allocates RM350 million to Upgrade East-West Highway (JRTB) in Perak

The Edge – 2 February 2026

The Government has allocated RM350 million under the First Rolling Plan of the 13th Malaysia Plan to upgrade the JRTB, focusing on the Perak stretch, to make the road safer, more comfortable and more resilient, Works Minister, Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi said. He added that preliminary works are expected to begin in 2026, with hopes that physical implementation can start in 2027.

Senai-Desaru Expressway (SDE) Upgrading 55% Complete, Due April 2027

The Edge – 2 February 2026

The project to widen the SDE to four lanes has reached 55% completion and is expected to be completed by April 2027, Deputy Works Minister, Datuk Seri Dr. Ahmad Maslan said. He added that the RM160 million project involves a 30-month construction period and is progressing smoothly with no extension of time required.

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