

ECONOMY

[Jobless Rate Holds Steady at 2.9% in January 2026](#)

The Edge – 11 March 2026

Malaysia's unemployment rate remained stable at 2.9% in January 2026, close to the level considered full employment. The number of unemployed rose slightly to 509,600 persons, while the labour force increased 0.1% month-on-month to 17.28 million, with the labour force participation rate edging up to 70.9%.

GOVERNMENT

[Construction of Buildings in Earthquake-Prone Areas Expected to See Cost Increase](#)

The Star – 7 March 2026

The Public Works Ministry expects higher construction costs for buildings in earthquake-risk areas, as projects must adopt stronger structural specifications and specialised construction methods. Developments located within the Malaysia Seismic Hazard Zone Map are required to comply with these guidelines to ensure earthquake-resistant and safe building structures.

[Government to Standardise Renovation Application Procedures Nationwide](#)

The Star – 12 March 2026

The Government has approved nationwide guidelines to standardise application procedures and technical requirements for renovation works involving residential and commercial properties. Approved by the National Council for Local Government (MNKT), the guidelines aim to clarify permitted renovation works while ensuring structural safety, proper ventilation and compliance with urban planning standards.

[Government Finalising JS-SEZ Master Plan, Investment Blueprint](#)

The Edge – 12 March 2026

The Ministry of Economy is finalising the master plan and investment blueprint for the Johor–Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ), expected to be launched on 30 March 2026 in Johor Bahru. The blueprint will serve as a public reference, while the detailed master plan will guide implementing parties in the development of the special economic zone.

[Penang Landowners Can Now Pay Land Tax in Instalments](#)

The Star – 13 March 2026

The Penang Government now allows landowners who face financial constraints to pay land tax in instalments within the same year, subject to approval by the Land Administrator. Applications for instalment payments for the 2026 assessment must be submitted before 31 May 2026, while the deadline for subsequent years is the end of April.

PROPERTY

[Cement Price Index Rises 0.8%-5.9% Year-On-Year in February 2026](#)

The Edge – 11 March 2026

The cement unit price index rose between 0.8% and 5.9% year-on-year in February 2026, while the steel price index declined between 1.2% and 8.1%, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia. Cement prices increased across all regions, with the largest rise in Pahang (5.9%), followed by Perak (5.5%) and Selangor, Kuala Lumpur, Melaka and Negeri Sembilan (5.1%).

[Middle East Tensions May Delay Malaysia Property Projects, Raise Construction Costs](#)

The Edge – 13 March 2026

Prolonged Middle East geopolitical tensions may lead to moderate delays in property projects and higher construction costs in Malaysia, according to **Real Estate Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA)**. A survey of REHDA developer members found that 30% expect a significant impact and 43% anticipate a moderate impact, with concerns mainly centred on steel, cement, fuel and logistics costs.

[High Debt, Low Income Deter Two-Thirds of Malaysians from Owning Properties](#)

The Edge – 13 March 2026

A survey by **Real Estate Housing Developers' Association Malaysia (REHDA)** involving 166 developers found that over two-thirds of prospective homebuyers face difficulties obtaining housing financing, with 72% of developers reporting issues relating to end-financing. The main reasons include high debt commitments, insufficient income and incomplete financial documentation.

INFRASTRUCTURE

[Mutiara Line LRT: Penang Government Focusing on Land, Resident Resettlement Issues](#)

The Edge – 9 March 2026

The Penang Government is addressing land acquisition and resident resettlement for the Mutiara Line Light Rail Transit (LRT) project, with about 12 houses in Sungai Dua identified for relocation. The 29.67km LRT line with 20 stations, which began construction in 2025, is scheduled to start operations in December 2031.

[Cabinet Approves Development of Third Port Klang Terminal on Carey Island](#)

The Edge – 11 March 2026

The Malaysian Cabinet has approved the development of a third terminal at Port Klang on Carey Island, a major strategic infrastructure project aimed at strengthening Malaysia's port and logistics capacity. The project will be led by the Selangor State Government, following approval of an implementation model proposed by the Ministry of Transport (MOT).

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