

**Life•**  
Travel  
insurance tips  
for December  
holidays |C3



**Insight•**  
Do young S'pore  
travellers feel superior  
to S-E Asian  
neighbours? |B2



**World•**  
Dozens dead  
after quake  
rocks Indonesia  
|A9



# THE STRAITS TIMES

## Muhyiddin claims majority support; Anwar woos BN

PN says it has declarations from majority of MPs; PH-BN talks end without deal

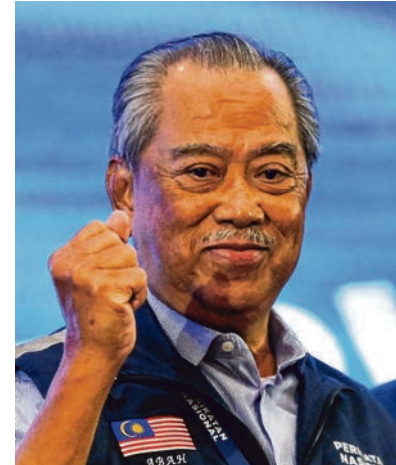
**Nadirah H. Rodzi**  
Malaysia Correspondent  
and Shannon Teoh  
Malaysia Bureau Chief

KUALA LUMPUR – The race to identify Malaysia's 10th prime minister took more twists on Monday, with one alliance claiming it has the numbers to cross the line and the other in talks to shore up support. Perikatan Nasional (PN) said its chief Muhyiddin Yassin has secured the support of a majority of MPs. His rival, Pakatan Harapan (PH) chairman Anwar Ibrahim, was meanwhile trying to win Barisan Nasional's (BN) backing. While the deadline to prove a parliamentary majority was pushed back 24 hours to 2pm on Tuesday, PN claimed it had sent in

statutory declarations from a majority of MPs – ostensibly including some from BN – supporting Tan Sri Muhyiddin to the King ahead of the original cut-off. “The number of statutory declarations sent exceeds 112, which is the number of MPs needed to appoint a prime minister,” said PN secretary-general Hamzah Zainudin. BN had sought more time to decide whether to support Datuk Seri Anwar for the premiership. The meeting between Mr Anwar and his BN counterpart Zahid Hamidi ended without an agreement. Zahid said his alliance's supreme council has not decided who to back. The council will meet on Tuesday morning. Saturday's general election threw up the nation's first-ever hung Parliament, with both Mr Anwar and Mr Muhyiddin staking a

claim to the prime ministership. Both need support from BN parliamentarians for a simple majority in the 222-seat legislature. Mr Anwar is backed by 82 lawmakers from PH and its electoral ally Muda. Mr Muhyiddin has the lead with 102 MPs – 73 from PN, six from Gabungan Rakyat Sabah and 23 lawmakers from Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS). But one GPS party leader said the coalition should wait for the political wrangling by other parties to be resolved before making a decision. Umno-led BN has 30 seats, which could help either candidate cross the 112-seat threshold. PH's largest component, the Democratic Action Party (DAP), agreed to Mr Anwar's move to rope in BN, sources said. Mr Anwar's move to team up with BN is controversial as PH has long championed clean governance and vilified Umno as riddled with corruption, while Zahid is on trial for dozens of graft charges. In 2018, Umno lost power for the

first time in six decades on the back of public ire over the IMDB scandal, in which billions of dollars in public funds were stolen. “Zahid won't be given government positions and there will be no interference in his court case. It is a rough, tough decision, but we have to recognise the bigger enemy. PAS cannot be allowed in government,” a member of DAP's leadership council told The Straits Times, referring to Parti Islam SeMalaysia. PAS, a member of PN, was the largest party in Parliament with 44 MPs after the election. It espouses Islamist views that critics say infringe on personal freedoms. When asked by reporters on Monday if he had enough MPs backing him, Mr Anwar said BN will make a collective decision and the statutory declarations from BN lawmakers whom PN claimed supported it would be cancelled. He also insisted that “there was no reference” to Zahid's graft charges during negotiations. “I want to make it very clear that this



Former prime minister Muhyiddin Yassin has secured the support of a majority of MPs, according to Perikatan Nasional. PHOTO: REUTERS



Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is backed by 82 lawmakers from his Pakatan Harapan coalition and his electoral ally Muda. PHOTO: EPA-EFE

was not raised at all during formal or informal meetings.” PH chief secretary Saifuddin Natusion Ismail also alleged that Datuk Seri Hamzah's claim of obtaining a simple majority was “premature, impossible and inconclusive”, as BN MPs had yet to commit to any prime ministerial candidate. But as at Monday evening, Umno was deeply divided. Some leaders had called on Zahid, who wants to commit BN's 30 MPs to support PH, to resign, and said they preferred to support PN. However, Zahid insisted that any written pledge of support for any prime ministerial candidate prior

to a decision by BN's supreme council would be invalid as it violates an oath undertaken by BN candidates to abide by the coalition's collective decision. Caretaker Senior Defence Minister Hishammuddin Hussein, said to be leading the pro-PN group, insisted he would not work with Mr Anwar and DAP. “No Anwar, No DAP. Those who feel they can sack me for holding to this stance, go ahead,” he said. [nrodzi@sph.com.sg](mailto:nrodzi@sph.com.sg) [shannont@sph.com.sg](mailto:shannont@sph.com.sg) **SEE THE BIG STORY • A4**

## Iran goalie suffers head clash as England win World Cup match 6-2

Iran goalkeeper Ali Beiranvand colliding with teammate Majid Hosseini (in red) in the ninth minute of their World Cup match against England in Doha on Monday, which left him with a bloodied face. Despite concussion protocols stating that he should be withdrawn, the 30-year-old insisted on continuing after getting medical treatment. But he went down again a few minutes later and was replaced. England won 6-2. PHOTO: EPA-EFE **SEE SPORT • B14-18**



## New building tech at Tengah BTO projects to help reduce waiting time

**Michelle Ng**  
Housing Correspondent

Two upcoming Build-To-Order (BTO) projects in Tengah will pilot construction technologies such as 3D concrete printing to increase productivity and cut material wastage, and this may set the standards for future BTO developments. The 2,077 units in Garden Waterfront I and II @ Tengah will have one of the shortest waiting times – three years and four months – in the BTO sales exercise on Wednesday, the Housing Board said on Monday. A bumper crop of nearly 10,000 flats across 10 projects will be launched. The shorter waiting time is because construction technologies used at both Tengah sites are expected to yield a 25 per cent improvement in site productivity compared with other BTO projects, said the HDB. The waiting time for buyers is reduced as more floor areas are completed with the same amount of labour. “With the same available construction resources, higher productivity reduces construction time,” added the HDB. **CONTINUED ON PAGE A2**

## Singapore to hire about 4,000 new nurses by end-2023

**Zhaki Abdullah**

As part of efforts to enhance Singapore's nursing workforce, the Republic expects to employ almost 4,000 new nurses by end-2023, Minister for Health Ong Ye Kung said on Monday. This increase, which will begin from the middle of 2023, represents about 10 per cent of the current number of nurses here, said Mr Ong, adding that it is about 700 more than the number of new nurses in 2021. Foreign nurses will make up about 60 per cent of the new nurses, to make up for the slowdown in foreign nurse recruitment during the Covid-19 pandemic, he said. “Even whilst we ramp up foreign recruitment to bolster our nursing workforce, the large majority of our nursing workforce will continue to be local and contributed

through our nursing school intakes and mid-career training programmes,” he added. Tackling the manpower shortage will help lighten the workload of nurses, said Mr Ong, noting the country had lost many experienced foreign nurses as a result of the competition for nurses from other countries during the pandemic. In August, Senior Parliamentary Secretary for Health Rahayu Mahzam said the proportion of nurses in public hospitals who resigned reached a five-year high in 2021, with 7.4 per cent of local nurses and 14.8 per cent of foreign nurses leaving their jobs. In July, Mr Ong announced that more than 25,000 nurses in the public sector would receive a special payment of between 1.7 and 2.1 months of their base salary in 2022, as part of efforts to attract and retain nursing talent. Though the crunch at hospitals

**BOLSTERING MANPOWER**

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**”**  
**MINISTER FOR HEALTH**  
**ONG YE KUNG**

has made headlines recently, bed occupancies, emergency department (ED) attendances and bed

wait times have improved with the wave of infections caused by the XBB Covid-19 sub-variant having subsided, Mr Ong said. He added that hospitals have reported that the number of non-urgent ED patients waiting for beds has halved from the peak of the XBB wave, while patients who require urgent care have always been admitted immediately. The median wait times at EDs have fallen from seven hours two weeks ago to about four hours, Mr Ong noted. He added that the authorities are working to further reduce bed occupancies by removing the ring-fencing of beds for Covid-19 patients, as well as expanding the number of transitional care facilities. Such facilities admit medically stable patients from public hospitals while they wait for their transfers to intermediate and long-term care facilities or for their discharge

plans to be finalised. Mr Ong noted the newest such transitional care facility, Crawford Hospital, which opened on Nov 4, has 43 beds for transitional patients, of which about 15 are now occupied. This has helped relieve the inpatient load for Tan Tock Seng Hospital, which it is partnered with, he said. The Health Ministry is now working with Ang Mo Kio-Thye Hua Kwan Hospital to act as a partner facility for Khoo Teck Puat Hospital, he added. Mr Ong was speaking during the ceremony of the Tan Chin Tuan Nursing Award for Enrolled Nurses, held at Lee Kong Chian School of Medicine, Nanyang Technological University. Ms Anna Goh, a senior enrolled nurse who has been with Tan Tock Seng Hospital's neurology ward for 17 years, clinched the top prize this year. Besides caring for patients with

neurological conditions, the 37-year-old has participated in many clinical projects, including assisting in developing a clinical guideline to eliminate catheter-associated urinary tract infection. Mr Ong said the shift to preventative healthcare under the Healthier SG initiative means the role of enrolled nurses will evolve further. Enrolled nurses – who typically support registered nurses and are responsible for providing bedside care and monitoring a patient's condition – can play a key role in supporting patients, said Mr Ong. These changes are currently under deliberation, he said, adding he hoped to engage enrolled nurses in these discussions. [azhaki@sph.com.sg](mailto:azhaki@sph.com.sg)

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