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THE participation of **Umno** and **Barisan Nasional** (BN) in the **Unity Government** was one of the issues raised by the Umno Youth, Wanita and Puteri chiefs in their policy speeches at the general assembly of the party's wings on Jan 12. Umno Youth chief **Datuk Dr Asyraf Wajdi Dusuki** said Umno's participation in the Unity Government, as decided by the Umno Supreme Council on Nov 23, should be fully supported.

SYARIKAT Takaful Malaysia Keluarga Bhd has entered into a five-year bancatakaful service arrangement with **Affin Islamic Bank Bhd** starting Jan 1, 2023, with an option for the bank to extend for another five years. Under the arrangement, Affin Islamic shall distribute, market and promote credit-related, advisory and other family takaful products of **Takaful Malaysia Keluarga** and general takaful products of **Takaful Malaysia Am**.

MALAYSIA'S wholesale and retail trade sales grew 15.2% year-on-year (YoY) to RM133.9 billion in October 2022, mainly boosted by growth in the retail trade sub-sector, said the **Department of Statistics Malaysia** (DoSM). On a month-on-month (MoM) basis, the sales value of wholesale and retail trade decreased by 0.1%, contributed by the contraction of motor vehicles (-3.5%) and wholesale trade (+0.3%).

PRASARANA Malaysia Bhd is projecting an increase in average daily ridership across all its rail and bus services from 722,000 last year to 1.2 million in 2023, with the full opening of the **Mass Rapid Transit (MRT) Putrajaya Line** in March. President and group CEO **Mohd Azharuddin Mat Sah** said an estimated 100,000 people will benefit daily in the first year of the full opening and demand is expected to increase year-on-year.

CIVIL engineering specialist **Sarawak Consolidated Industries Bhd** (SCIB) is proposing a private placement to raise

gross proceeds of up to RM10.98 million for working capital, repayment of bank borrowings and estimated expenses for the proposed private placement. While the issue price and the actual number of shares to be issued will be determined later, under the maximum scenario in which all the company's 245.18 million outstanding warrants are exercised, the proposed private placement will entail the issuance of up to 82.72 million placement shares at an indicative price of RM0.1327 per placement share.

BERJAYA Corp Bhd (BCorp) is in talks with **MCIS Insurance Bhd** to acquire the latter's life insurance arm, **MCIS Life**. The group informed Bursa Malaysia Securities in a filing on Jan 10 that it is "in the midst of negotiation for the proposed acquisition of a controlling stake in MCIS Insurance Bhd". South Africa-based **Sanlam Ltd** holds a 51% stake in MCIS Life, while **Koperasi MCIS Bhd** holds another 44.39% equity interest in the life insurance company.

SIXTY-THREE percent of **Malaysian sellers** are optimistic about **e-commerce opportunities** in 2023, according to a report on **Shopee Malaysia's New Consumer Trends** on sellers. The report stated that in particular, sellers from health and beauty (71%), toys, kids and babies (69%), and fashion and lifestyle (66%) categories are the most excited, stating that they are on the right track to capture the opportunities this year.

PHARMANIAGA Logistics Sdn Bhd (PLSB), a wholly owned subsidiary of Malaysia's leading pharmaceutical company **Pharmaniaga Bhd**, has officially opened its new distribution centre in Penang. In a statement, Pharmaniaga group MD **Datuk Zulkarnain Md Eusope** said this new centre is targeted to increase the group's distribution capacity coverage, buffer the stock readiness, as well as cater to the increasing demand from the northern region clientele, especially among the Health Ministry facilities in Perlis, Kedah, Penang and Perak.