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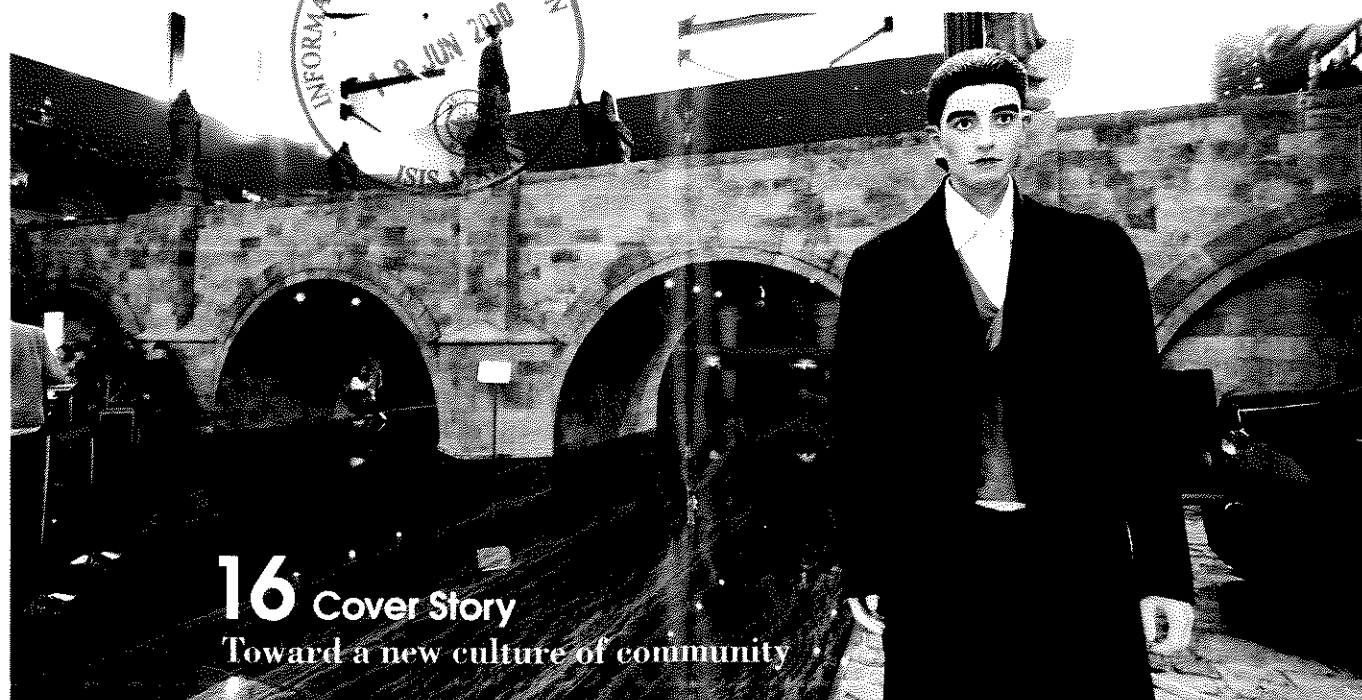
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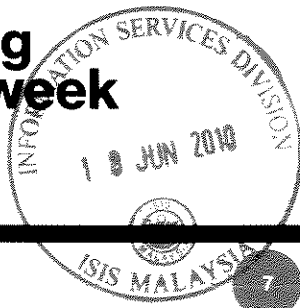
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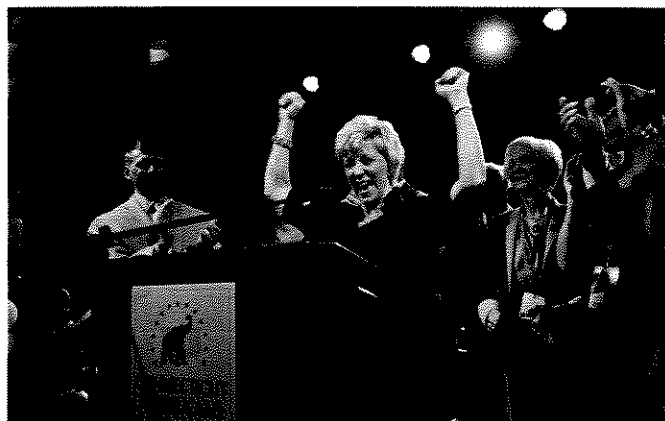
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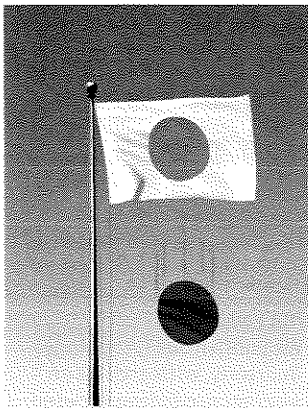
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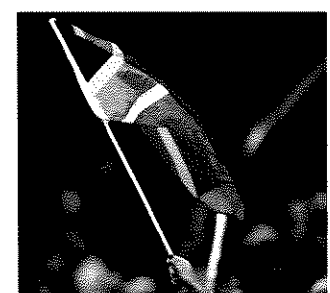
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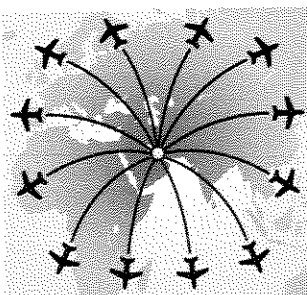
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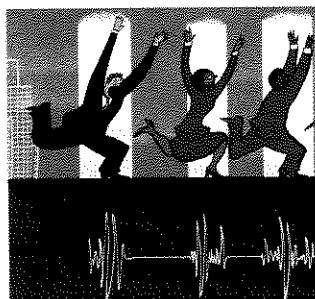
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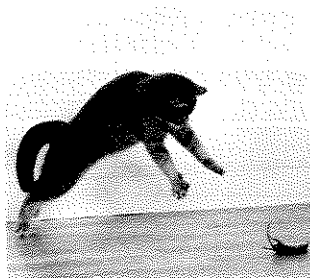
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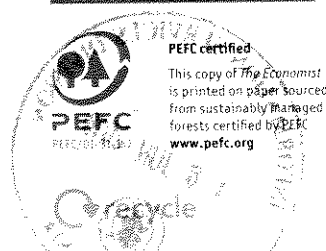
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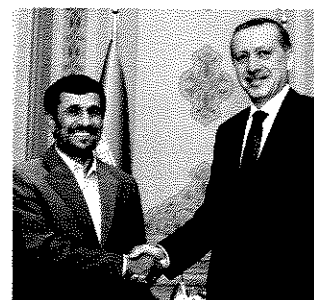
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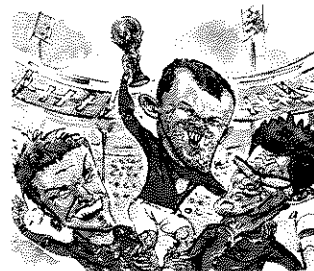
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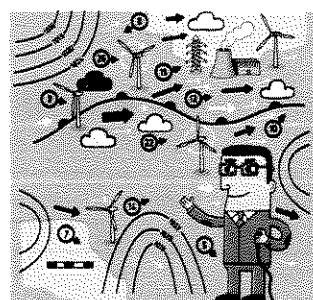
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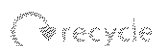
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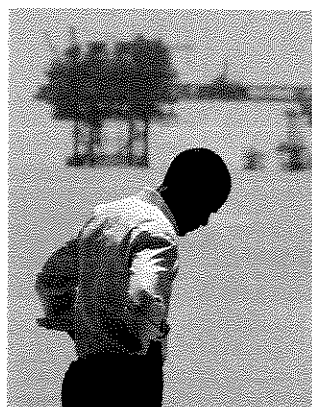
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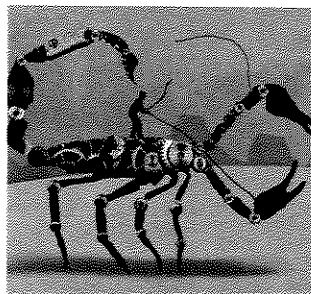
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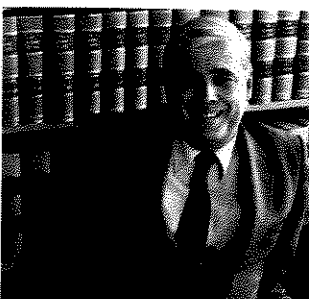


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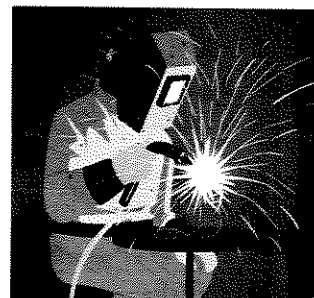
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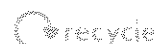
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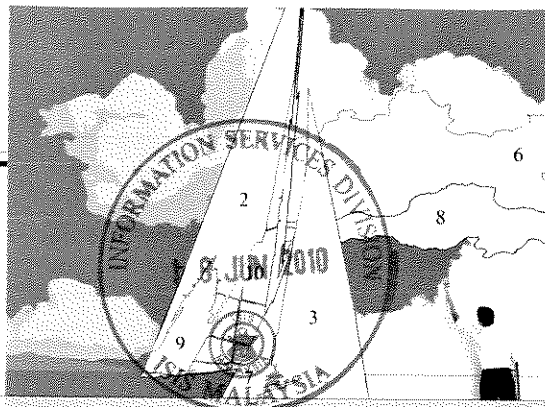


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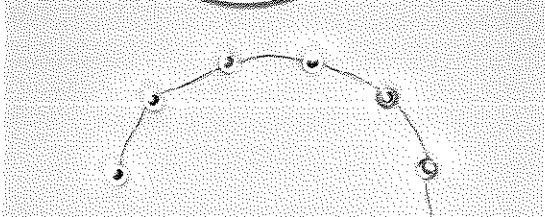


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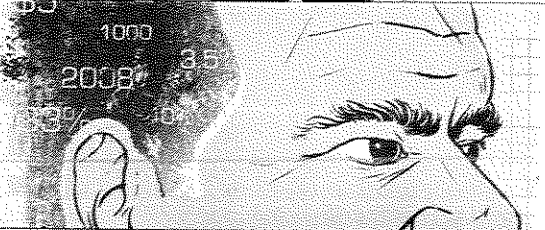


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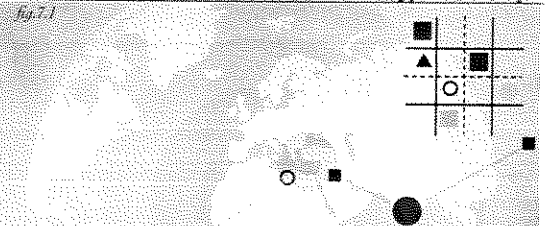


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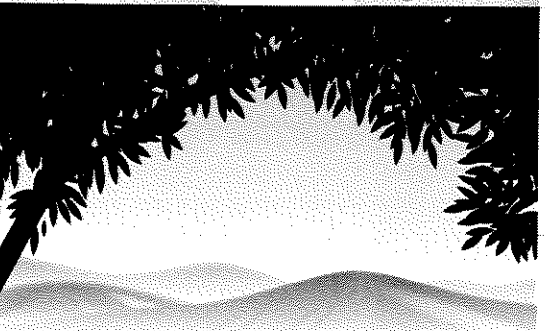


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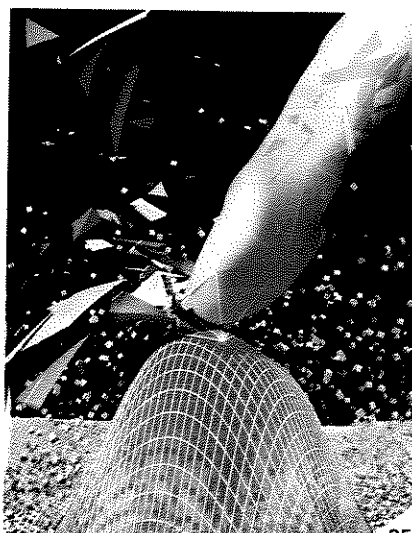
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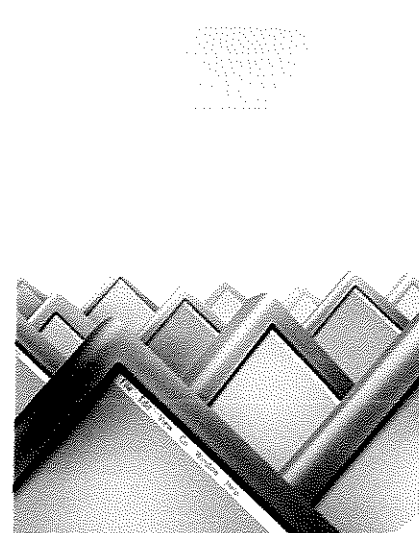
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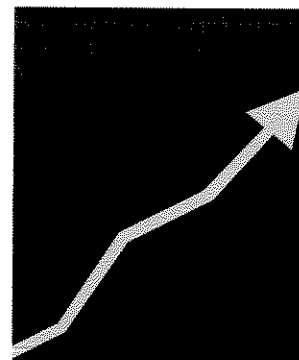
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MALAYSIA'S superlative first-quarter growth of 10.1% is most welcome news for Malaysians groping for direction in the gloom and doom of the global financial crisis. But there are also mixed feelings. While the experts laud the double digits – albeit with some qualifications – the man-in-the-street wonders when the 'feel-good' effect is going to hit him. The good news is that domestic and external demand has improved, fuelling the prospect for increased trade, especially regionally. However, economists warn that Malaysia's breath-taking first-quarterly figure is partly due to the low-base effect and not likely to be repeated anytime soon. Developments in crisis-hit Europe could also derail global recovery.



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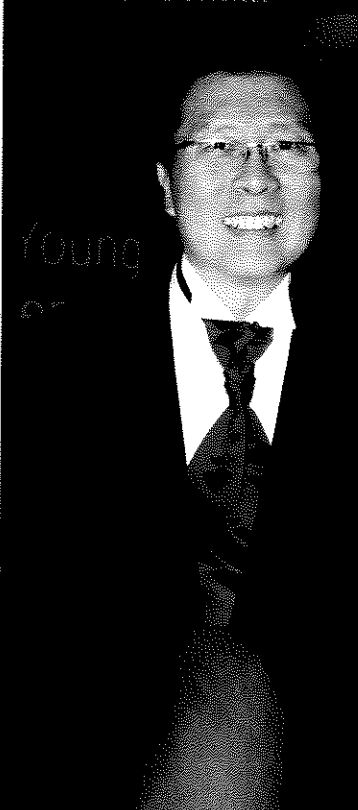
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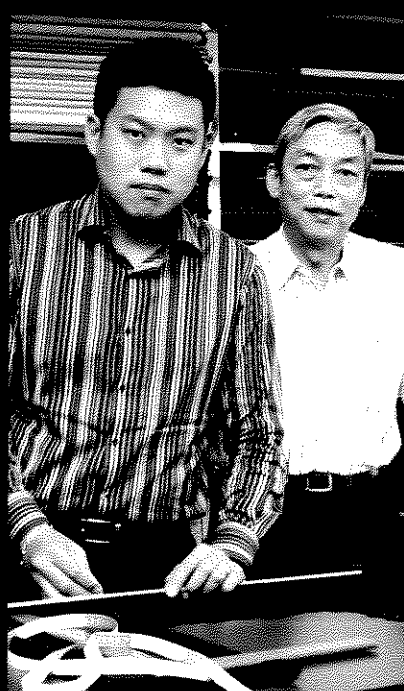
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AFTER a bumpy start marked by public misgivings over its acquisitions in Indonesia, Vietnam and Pakistan, Malaysia's largest banking group Maybank Bhd resumes its push for regional domination. Its controversial buy in Indonesia, in the form of Bank Internasional Indonesia, is starting to bring in results, apart from giving Maybank a foothold in a huge, under-tapped market. Ditto with the other two banks, which operate in countries with low banking penetration. On top of that, Muslim-dominated Indonesia and Pakistan provide fertile ground for Maybank to sow its Islamic banking operations. With enough on its plate for the time-being, the Tiger consolidates its position, preparing itself for the next strike.

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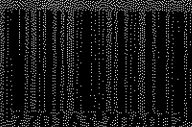
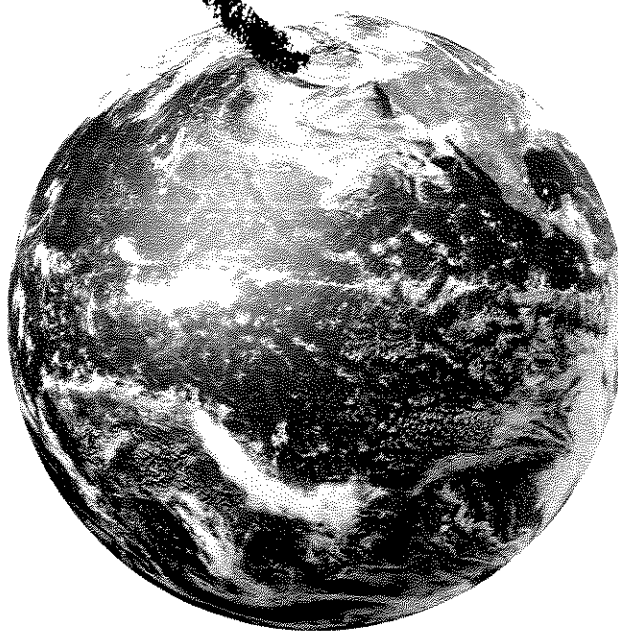
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