

# Malaysia Gloves Sector

# NEGATIVE [Downgrade]

## Trade truce sparks fresh uncertainty

### Risk outweighs potential returns; D/G to NEGATIVE

The latest US-China tariff rollback may not favour Malaysia glove makers, in our view, as it could delay purchasing decisions due to ongoing uncertainty. We believe a reversion to the previous tariff schedule on China gloves remains possible, depending on the outcome of ongoing negotiations. At the same time, new capacity from China glove makers in Southeast Asia, expected from 2026, poses a growing supply risk. In our view, these risks outweigh potential returns. We downgrade the Malaysia glove sector to NEGATIVE with corresponding rating cuts to SELLS on HART, KRI and TOPG.

### US and China to slash tariffs for 90 days

The US and China have reached a surprise agreement to temporarily reduce reciprocal tariffs for 90 days. Under the deal announced on 12 May 2025, the US will cut the additional tariffs imposed on China imports in Apr 2025 from 145% to 30%, while China will lower its tariffs on US goods from 125% to 10%. The mutual tariff revisions will be effective from 14 May-12 Aug 2025. However, Trump's 20% fentanyl-related levies on China, imposed in Feb and Mar 2025, will remain, while China will suspend or cancel its non-tariff countermeasures imposed on the US since 2 Apr 2025.

### Uncertainty arises from latest 90-days tariff pause

The tariff on China glove makers remains unclear. Industry sources suggest an 80% rate, combining the 30% reciprocal tariff (for 90 days) and earlier Biden-imposed tariffs. However, this is unconfirmed, as 30% may not apply to goods with pre-existing high tariffs. The effective rate could instead be the original Biden-imposed rate of 50%. The US tariffs on Malaysia gloves are at 10% from 9 Apr-8 Jul 2025, then 24% thereafter.

### Time to take a stand - sector downgrade to NEGATIVE

While the temporary tariff rollback may not lead to a more competitive rate for China glove makers, the lingering uncertainty could prompt customers to adopt a wait-and-see approach, delaying purchasing decisions and slowing sales. More critically, new capacity from China glove makers in SEA, expected from 2026, poses supply risks that may pressure volume and ASP. We cut TPs for HART, TOPG, and KRI to MYR1.88, MYR0.73, MYR1.60 respectively (from MYR2.16, MYR1.99, MYR0.92) and downgrade all to SELLS (from HOLDs).

### Analyst

Wong Wei Sum, CFA  
(603) 2297 8679  
weisum@maybank-ib.com

**Figure 1: US tariff on gloves from various countries**

	Tariff (incl. reciprocal)	90 days tariff*
Malaysia	24%	10%
Thailand	36%	10%
China	195%	80%

\*from 9 Apr-8 July 2025 for M'sia and Thailand  
from 14 May - 12 Aug 2025 for China  
Source: various media reports, USTR

**Figure 2: Change in stock rating**

Glove makers	New	Old
HART MK	SELL	HOLD
KRI MK	SELL	HOLD
TOPG MK	SELL	HOLD

Source: Maybank IBG

**Figure 3: Change in TPs (MYR/sh)**

Glove makers	New	Old
HART MK	1.88	2.16
KRI MK	1.60	1.99
TOPG MK	0.73	0.92

Source: Maybank IBG

Stock	Bloomberg code	Mkt cap (USD'm)	Rating	Price (LC)	TP (LC)	Upside (%)	P/E (x)		P/B (x)		Div yld (%)	
							25E	26E	25E	26E	25E	26E
Hartalega	HART MK	1,651	Sell	2.07	1.88	(8)	80.1	62.7	1.5	1.6	6.0	1.0
Top Glove	TOPG MK	1,645	Sell	0.86	0.73	(14)	55.6	33.3	1.5	1.5	0.9	1.5
Kossan Rubber	KRI MK	1,048	Sell	1.76	1.60	(7)	30.4	41.9	1.2	1.2	2.3	2.3

## Intensified competition post-2025

While the 50% and 100% tariffs on China-made gloves present an opportunity for Malaysia glove makers to gain market share in the US, they have also led to an overreliance on a single market. This growing dependence on the US has come at the expense of non-US markets, where Malaysia glove makers are steadily losing ground to China competitors. Notably, glove producers in other countries, such as Thailand, are also redirecting their focus to the US to avoid price competition with China glove makers in non-US markets, further intensifying competition in the US.

The situation could worsen as additional capacity from China glove makers in Southeast Asia (SEA) is expected to come online from 2026, with these facilities targeting a recovery of US market share. As a result, Malaysia glove makers may face stiffer competition in the US, while continuing to lose share in non-US markets increasingly dominated by China glove makers.

## Negative surprise not priced in; downgrade to NEGATIVE

We downgrade the glove sector to NEGATIVE (from NEUTRAL) as we see earnings risks arising from slower sales. Sales have not rebounded meaningfully following the front-loading activities in 4Q24, and ongoing tariff uncertainty could further weigh on demand.

We believe these negatives may not yet be fully reflected in current valuations. While we maintain our earnings forecasts, we lower our target prices accordingly (see Figure 5) for the glove stocks under our coverage to reflect concerns over weaker earnings visibility and, more importantly, the upcoming capacity expansion by China makers in SEA, which is expected to pressure both volume and ASP.

As a result, we downgrade HART, KRI and TOPG to SELLS, from HOLDs. Malaysia glove makers have been focusing on automation and cost efficiency since the pandemic to better withstand external risks beyond their control. Maintaining a strong balance sheet remains critical to sustaining operations over the longer term, especially in the event of a price war. HART and KRI were in net cash position while TOPG's net gearing was 0.13x in end-2QFY25.

Figure 4: Net gearing\*

Developer	Net gearing (x)
HART MK	Net cash
KRI MK	Net cash
TOPG MK	0.13

Source: Companies, \* latest quarterly results

Figure 5: Changes in valuation multiples, TPs and stock ratings

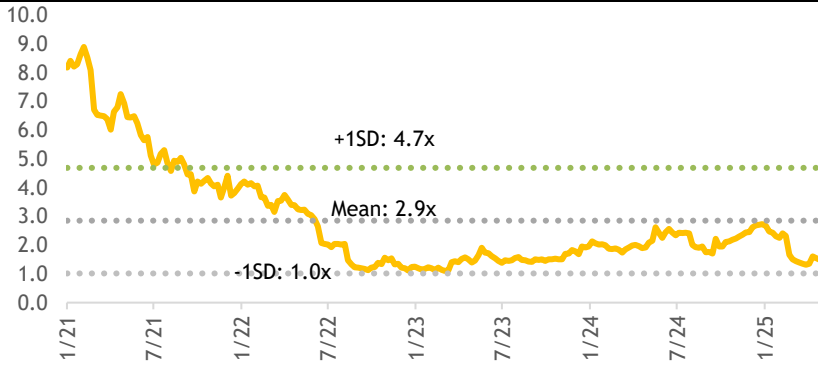
Glove makers	PBV peg (x)		Target price (MYR/sh)		Stock rating		Remarks Change in valuation basis
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New	
TOPG ^	1.6	1.2	0.92	0.73	HOLD	SELL	-0.75 SD to mean, from -0.5 SD to mean
HART	1.7	1.5	2.16	1.88	HOLD	SELL	-0.75 SD to mean, from -0.5 SD to mean
KRI	1.4	1.1	1.99	1.60	HOLD	SELL	-0.5 SD to mean, from mean

Source: Maybank IBG

## Risks to our calls & ratings

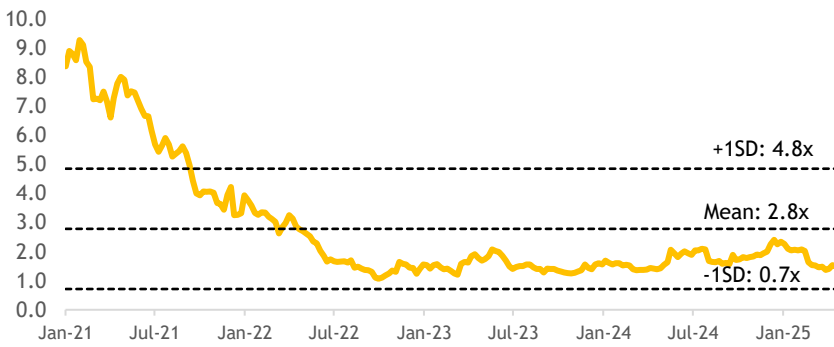
(i) Import restrictions or additional tariffs imposed by the US on China glove makers; (ii) favorable forex (MYR/USD) movement and (iii) stronger-than-expected demand for gloves.

**Fig 6: HART's 1-year forward PBV (2021-2025)**



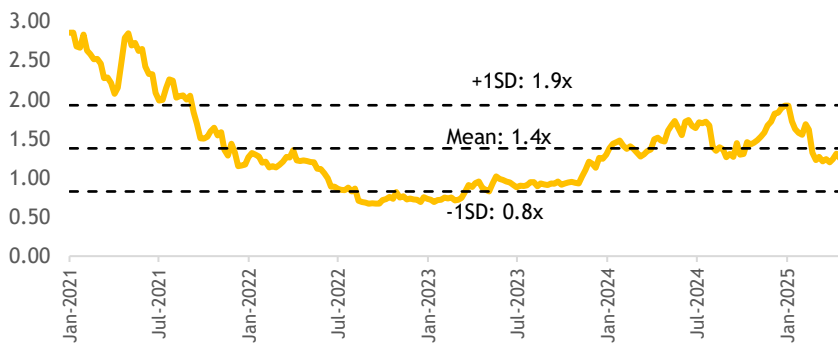
Source: Bloomberg, Company data, Maybank IBG Research

**Fig 7: TOPG's 1-year forward PBV (2021-2025)**



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, Maybank IBG Research

**Fig 8: KRI's 1-year forward PBV (2021-2025)**



Source: Bloomberg, Company data, Maybank IBG Research

## Research Offices

### ECONOMICS

**Suhaimi ILIAS**  
Chief Economist  
Malaysia | Philippines | Global  
(603) 2297 8682  
suhaimi\_ilias@maybank-ib.com

**CHUA Hak Bin**  
Regional Thematic Macroeconomist  
(65) 6231 5830  
chuahb@maybank.com

**Erica TAY**  
China | Thailand  
(65) 6231 5844  
erica.tay@maybank.com

**Brian LEE Shun Rong**  
Indonesia | Singapore | Vietnam  
(65) 6231 5846  
brian.lee1@maybank.com

**Azril ROSLI**  
Malaysia | Philippines | Global  
(603) 2082 6818  
azril.rosti@maybank-ib.com

**Fatin Nabila MOHD ZAINI**  
Malaysia | Philippines  
(603) 2297 8685  
fatinnabila.mohdzaini@maybank-ib.com

**Luong Thu Huong**  
(65) 6231 8467  
hana.thuhoang@maybank.com

**LEE Jia Yu**  
(65) 6231 5843  
jiayu.lee@maybank.com

### FX

**Saktiandi SUPAAT**  
Head of FX Research  
(65) 6320 1379  
saktiandi@maybank.com

**Fiona LIM**  
(65) 6320 1374  
fionalim@maybank.com

**Alan LAU, CFA**  
(65) 6320 1378  
alanlau@maybank.com

**Shaun LIM**  
(65) 6320 1371  
shaunlim@maybank.com

### STRATEGY

**Anand PATHMAKANTHAN**  
ASEAN  
(603) 2297 8783  
anand.pathmakanthan@maybank-ib.com

### FIXED INCOME

**Winson PHOON, FCA**  
Head of Fixed Income  
(65) 6231 5831  
winsonphoon@maybank.com

### PORTFOLIO STRATEGY

**ONG Seng Yeow**  
(65) 6231 5839  
ongsengyeow@maybank.com

**Sean LIM**  
(603) 2297 8888  
lim.tzekhang@maybank.com

### MIBG SUSTAINABILITY RESEARCH

**Jigar SHAH**  
Head of Sustainability Research  
(91) 22 4223 2632  
jigars@maybank.com

**Neerav DALAL**  
(91) 22 4223 2606  
neerav@maybank.com

### REGIONAL EQUITIES

**Anand PATHMAKANTHAN**  
Head of Regional Equity Research  
(603) 2297 8783  
anand.pathmakanthan@maybank-ib.com

**WONG Chew Hann, CA**  
Head of ASEAN Equity Research  
(603) 2297 8686  
wchewh@maybank-ib.com

### MALAYSIA

**LIM Sue Lin, Co-Head of Research**  
(603) 2297 8612  
suetin.lim@maybank-ib.com  
• Equity Strategy

**WONG Chew Hann, CA Co-Head of Research**  
(603) 2297 8686  
wchewh@maybank-ib.com  
• Equity Strategy  
• Non-Bank Financials (stock exchange)  
• Construction & Infrastructure

**Desmond CH'NG, BFP, FCA**  
(603) 2297 8680  
desmond.chng@maybank-ib.com  
• Banking & Finance

**ONG Chee Ting, CA**  
(603) 2297 8678  
ct.ong@maybank-ib.com  
• Plantations - Regional

**YIN Shao Yang, CPA**  
(603) 2297 8916  
samuel.y@maybank-ib.com  
• Gaming - Regional • Healthcare  
• Media • Aviation • Non-Bank Financials

**TAN Chi Wei, CFA**  
(603) 2297 8690  
chiwei.t@maybank-ib.com  
• Power • Telcos

**WONG Wei Sum, CFA**  
(603) 2297 8679  
weisum@maybank-ib.com  
• Property • Glove

**Jade TAM**  
(603) 2297 8687  
jade.tam@maybank-ib.com  
• Consumer Staples & Discretionary

**Nur Farah SYIFAA**  
(603) 2297 8675  
nurfarahsyifaa.mohamadfuad@maybank-ib.com  
• Renewable Energy • REITs

**LOH Yan Jin**  
(603) 2297 8687  
lohyanjin.loh@maybank-ib.com  
• Ports • Automotive

**Jeremie YAP**  
(603) 2297 8688  
jeremie.yap@maybank-ib.com  
• Oil & Gas • Petrochemicals

**Nur Natasha ARIZA**  
(603) 2297 8691  
natashaariza.aizarizal@maybank-ib.com  
• Healthcare

**Lucas SIM**  
(603) 2082 6824  
lucas.sim@maybank-ib.com  
• Technology (EMS)

**Arvind JAYARATNAM**  
(603) 2297 8692  
arvind.jayaratnam@maybank.com  
• Technology (Semicon & Software)

**TEE Sze Chiah Head of Retail Research**  
(603) 2082 6858  
szechiah.t@maybank-ib.com  
• Retail Research

**Amirah AZMI**  
(603) 2082 8769  
amirah.azmi@maybank-ib.com  
• Retail Research

**Amirul RUSYDY, CMT**  
(603) 2297 8694  
rusydy.azizi@maybank-ib.com  
• Chartist

### SINGAPORE

**Thilan WICKRAMASINGHE Head of Research**  
(65) 6231 5840  
thilanw@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Consumer  
• Banking & Finance - Regional

**Eric ONG**  
(65) 6231 5849  
ericong@maybank.com  
• Healthcare • Transport • SMIDs

**Jarick SEET**  
(65) 6231 5848  
jarick.seet@maybank.com  
• Technology • SMIDs

**Krishna GUHA**  
(65) 6231 5842  
krishna.guha@maybank.com  
• REITs • Industrials

**Hussaini SAIFFEE**  
(65) 6231 5837  
hussaini.saiffee@maybank.com  
• Telcos • Internet

### PHILIPPINES

**Kervin Laurence SISAYAN Head of Research**  
(63) 2 5322 5005  
kervin.sisayan@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Banking & Finance • Telcos

**Daphne SZE**  
(63) 2 5322 5008  
daphne.sze@maybank.com  
• Consumer

**Raffy MENDOZA**  
(63) 2 5322 5010  
joserafael.mendoza@maybank.com  
• Property • REITs • Gaming

**Germaine GUIATO**  
(63) 2 5322 5006  
germaine.guinto@maybank.com  
• Utilities

**Ronalyn Joyce LALIMO**  
(63) 2 5322 5009  
rona.lalimo@maybank.com  
• SMIDs

### VIETNAM

**Quan Trong Thanh Head of Research**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8184  
thanh.quan@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Banks

**Hoang Huy, CFA**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8181  
hoanghuy@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Technology

**Le Nguyen Nhat Chuyen**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8082  
chuyen.le@maybank.com  
• Oil & Gas • Logistics

**Nguyen Thi Sony Tra Mi**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8084  
trami.nguyen@maybank.com  
• Consumer Discretionary

**Tran Thi Thanh Nhan**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8088  
nhan.tran@maybank.com  
• Consumer Staples

**Nguyen Le Tuan Loi**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8182  
loi.nguyen@maybank.com  
• Property

**Nguyen Thanh Hai**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8081  
thanhhai.nguyen@maybank.com  
• Industrials

**Nguyen Thanh Lam**  
(84 28) 44 555 888 ext 8086  
thanhlam.nguyen@maybank.com  
• Retail Research

### INDONESIA

**Jeffrosenberg CHENLIM Head of Research**  
(62) 21 8066 8680  
jeffrosenberg.lim@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Banking & Finance • Property

**Willy GOUTAMA**  
(62) 21 8066 8688  
willy.goutama@maybank.com  
• Consumer

**Etta Rusdiana PUTRA**  
(62) 21 8066 8683  
etta.putra@maybank.com  
• Telcos • Internet • Construction

**Paulina MARGARETA**  
(62) 21 8066 8690  
paulina.tjoa@maybank.com  
• Autos • Healthcare

**Jocelyn SANTOSO**  
(62) 21 8066 8689  
jocelyn.santoso@maybank.com  
• Consumer

**Hasan BARAKWAN**  
(62) 21 8066 2694  
hasan.barakwan@maybank.com  
• Metals & Mining • Oil & Gas

**Faiq ASAD**  
(62) 21 8066 8692  
faiq.asad@maybank.com  
• Banking & Finance

**Kevin HALIM**  
(62) 21 8066 2687  
kevin.halim@maybank.com  
• Property • Cement

**Satriawan HARYONO, CEWA, CTA**  
(62) 21 8066 8682  
satriawan@maybank.com  
• Chartist

### THAILAND

**Chak REUNGSINPINYA Head of Research**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1399  
chak.reungsinpinya@maybank.com  
• Strategy • Energy

**Jesada TECHAHUSDIN, CFA**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1395  
jesada.t@maybank.com  
• Banking & Finance

**Wasu MATTANAPOTCHANART**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1392  
wasu.m@maybank.com  
• Telcos • Technology (Software) • REITs  
• Property • Consumer Discretionary

**Suttatip PEERASUB**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1430  
suttatip.p@maybank.com  
• Food & Beverage • Commerce

**Natchaphon RODJANAROWAN**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1393  
natchaphon.rodjanarowan@maybank.com  
• Utilities • Property

**Boonyakorn AMORNSANK**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1394  
boonyakorn.amornsank@maybank.com  
• Services (Hotels, Transport)

**Nontapat SAHAKITPINYO**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 2352  
nontapat.sahakitpinyo@maybank.com  
• Healthcare

**Yugi TAKESHIMA**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1530  
yugi.takeshima@maybank.com  
• Technology (EMS & Semicon)

**Tanida JIRAPORNKASEMSUK**  
(66) 2658 5000 ext 1396  
tanida.jirapornkasemusuk@maybank.com  
• Food & Beverage

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### Malaysia

Maybank Investment Bank Berhad  
(A Participating Organisation of  
Bursa Malaysia Securities Berhad)  
33rd Floor, Menara Maybank,  
100 Jalan Tun Perak,  
50050 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: (603) 2059 1888;  
Fax: (603) 2078 4194

Stockbroking Business:  
Level 8, Tower C, Dataran Maybank,  
No.1, Jalan Maarof  
59000 Kuala Lumpur  
Tel: (603) 2297 8888  
Fax: (603) 2282 5136

### Singapore

Maybank Securities Pte Ltd  
Maybank Research Pte Ltd  
50 North Canal Road  
Singapore 059304

Tel: (65) 6336 9090

### Indonesia

PT Maybank Sekuritas Indonesia  
Sentral Senayan III, 22<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
Jl. Asia Afrika No. 8  
Gelora Bung Karno, Senayan  
Jakarta 10270, Indonesia

Tel: (62) 21 2557 1188  
Fax: (62) 21 2557 1189

### Thailand

Maybank Securities (Thailand) PCL  
999/9 The Offices at Central World,  
20<sup>th</sup> - 21<sup>st</sup> Floor,  
Rama 1 Road Pathumwan,  
Bangkok 10330, Thailand

Tel: (66) 2 658 6817 (sales)  
Tel: (66) 2 658 6801 (research)

### London

Maybank Securities (London) Ltd  
PNB House  
77 Queen Victoria Street  
London EC4V 4AY, UK

Tel: (44) 20 7332 0221  
Fax: (44) 20 7332 0302

### India

MIB Securities India Pte Ltd  
1101, 11<sup>th</sup> floor, A Wing, Kanakia  
Wall Street, Chakala, Andheri -  
Kurla Road, Andheri East,  
Mumbai City - 400 093, India

Tel: (91) 22 6623 2600  
Fax: (91) 22 6623 2604

### Vietnam

Maybank Securities Limited  
Floor 10, Pearl 5 Tower,  
5 Le Quy Don Street,  
Vo Thi Sau Ward, District 3  
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

Tel : (84) 28 44 555 888  
Fax : (84) 28 38 271 030

### Hong Kong

MIB Securities (Hong Kong)  
Limited  
28/F, Lee Garden Three,  
1 Sunning Road, Causeway Bay,  
Hong Kong

Tel: (852) 2268 0800  
Fax: (852) 2877 0104

### Philippines

Maybank Securities Inc  
17/F, Tower One & Exchange  
Plaza  
Ayala Triangle, Ayala Avenue  
Makati City, Philippines 1200

Tel: (63) 2 8849 8888  
Fax: (63) 2 8848 5738

### Sales Trading

#### Indonesia

Helen Widjaja  
helen.widjaja@maybank.com  
Tel: (62) 21 2557 1188

#### Philippines

Keith Roy  
keith\_roy@maybank.com  
Tel: (63) 2 5322 3184

#### London

Greg Smith  
gsmith@maybank.com  
Tel: (44) 207 332 0221

#### India

Sanjay Makhija  
sanjaymakhija@maybank.com  
Tel: (91) 22 6623 2629

[www.maybank.com/investment-banking](http://www.maybank.com/investment-banking)  
[www.maybank-keresearch.com](http://www.maybank-keresearch.com)