

Pertama Digital appoints Saify Akhtar as new CEO, Sivabalan as CFO

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KUALA LUMPUR: Main Market-listed Pertama Digital Bhd (PDB) today announced the appointment of Saify Akhtar as the new chief executive officer (CEO) and Sivabalan Poobalasingam as the new chief financial officer (CFO), effective 1 December 2022.

Saify, as CEO, will be responsible for spearheading and driving PDB forward with bold and innovative business plans to ensure a sustainable and profitable future.

PDB chairman Tun Zaki Tun Azmi said Saify's understanding and commitment are pivotal in ensuring the success of future plans for the company.

"Combined with the strength of our people and service offerings, I believe he will be able to elevate the company to greater heights. He has the leadership skill necessary to guide PDB to achieve its goals and aspirations," he said in a statement.

Saify was previously PDB's director of strategy and was instrumental in driving the company through the progressive years during its formation.

As the director of strategy, he has brought clarity, structure and focus to PDB.

He brings the necessary drive and experience required to lead the company's development into its next strategic phase of growth and expansion.

Saify will lead PDB through its strategic plan for digitalising government services, shariah compliance and leadership, and customer experience and satisfaction.

Saify has extensive entrepreneurial experience throughout the various stages of building and developing a technology business, specifically identifying impending trends in the technology landscape and preparing compelling solutions for entry into emerging markets like Southeast Asia.

Saify's experience also includes attracting investments, both locally and internationally, towards high-growth technology opportunities in these same markets where 85 per cent of the global population resides.

Beyond capital, he is adept at facilitating international technology companies, including unicorn start-ups, to land and deploy their offerings in Southeast Asia.

As the new CFO, Balan will be tasked with structuring and improving the company's financial health through prudent financial management, as any publicly listed company requires.

Balan's past positions include director of finance at Edotco Group (Axiata Group) and with Khazanah Nasional Bhd's subsidiary, Rhizophora Ventures Sdn Bhd.

He was responsible for business planning, budgetary controls, financial operations, and statutory reporting for the latter while also originating multiple investment initiatives for Khazanah Nasional.

His extensive experience with other companies in Malaysia includes director, head of business development at Kuwait Finance House Asset Management and head of corporate finance at Astro All Asia Networks (Usaha Tegas Group).

Balan is also a chartered accountant with the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, with experience in ensuring organisations achieve their strategic priorities.

His achievements have allowed him to assist organisations in transforming and growing exponentially.

Tun Zaki said Balan would provide the C-suite strategic advice and direction in the company's current and future business endeavours.

"This would include matters about mergers and acquisitions of related businesses in our digital sphere.

"Alongside Saify, they are to work on providing greater returns to shareholders and investors alike, as well as increasing potential future investment partner opportunities," he said.

He said Saify will drive the company forward stronger than ever before and be more focused on strengths and abilities as a whole. In addition, Balan will further develop and enhance PDB's financial strength and ensure the company's financial stability.

"Pertinent to all this is the razor-sharp focus on increasing shareholder returns and target potential acquisitions for the continued growth of PDB," said Tun Zaki.