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INDUSTRY

MALAYSIA EXPECTS MANUFACTURING INVESTMENTS TO EXCEED RM55 BIL THIS YEAR

Malaysia expects to secure over RM55 billion of investments in the manufacturing sector this year, exceeding the RM52 billion recorded last year, said Minister of International Trade and Industry, Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed.

The minister was speaking at a media briefing in Kuala Lumpur recently to announce the investment performance in the manufacturing and related services sectors for the first five months of the year.

He said approved manufacturing investments in the first five months of the year amounted to RM41.7 billion, which was 100% more than the same period in 2013, adding that the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) expects to secure some RM10 billion more before year-end.

Malaysia's investment climate is expected to remain positive despite external economic challenges, he added.

Foreign investors continue to view Malaysia as a choice location for investment. For the period January-May, foreign investments accounted for some 60.3% of the total approved investments with Japan as the top source of foreign investments, followed by China, Germany, Singapore and South Africa which together accounted for 84.9% of the total foreign investments, Dato' Sri Mustapa said.

Domestic investors remain confident of the local economy, with a two-fold increase in approved investments to RM16.5 billion for the first five months of the year.

More than 60 % or RM25.2 billion of the approved investments in 196 projects in the first five months of the year were for new projects, while at the same time existing manufacturers continue to expand and diversify their operations and moving into higher value-added products and activities, he said.

Among the notable projects with investment of over RM1 billion each include those from Petronas and Japan's Itochu in Refinery and Petrochemical Integrated Development (RAPID) projects in Johor, Alliance Steel in the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park, Ibiden Electronics in Penang and Sakura Ferroalloys in Sarawak, which will have significant multiplier effects on the national economy.

The bulk of the investments (87.8%) were in the chemical and chemical products, basic metal products, petroleum products (including petrochemicals), electrical and electronics, food manufacturing and transport equipment industries.

In terms of value, Johor registered the highest level of capital investments with RM14.9 billion, followed by Sarawak and Pahang.

The approved manufacturing projects for the first five months of the year are expected to create some 39,600 jobs of which some 85% would be high-skilled jobs.

Generally, manufacturing can be defined as the production of goods or items by using machines, equipments and labour force. Manufacturing activities vary from handicraft items to technology gadgets. But the term is applied to the process of industrial production in which raw materials are transformed into finished goods and ready for sale.

Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed

Dato' Azman Mahmud

Manufacturing is an important sector in Malaysia. Besides agriculture, Malaysian manufacturing sector is also labour intensive and is considered a high yield investment opportunity. The country's economic development driven by export orientated manufacturing sector makes Malaysia a top choice for foreigners to invest in the industry.

Basically, there are few reasons that encouraged continuous growth of manufacturing sector in Malaysia.

Ideally located in South East Asia, Malaysia definitely offers a dynamic and productive business environment suitable for investors to establish office, factories or corporations to manufacture high quality products for export market.

In addition to that, the well-developed infrastructure and abundant trained workforce are also some of the reasons that have brought in countless foreign investors to the country.

Having said that, the five state-of-the-art international airports complete with air-cargo facilities and seven international seaports make it convenient for investors to expand and flourish their business in regional and global market.

In terms of investments by state, Johor attracted the highest level of investments of RM14.9 billion due to Petronas' RAPID project. Sarawak came in second with RM7.8 billion followed by Pahang and Kedah with RM4.3 billion each and Selangor with RM3.7 billion, he said.

Malaysians investors continue to invest overseas particularly in the oil and gas, property and finance as they move to expand their market presence globally, noting the limited domestic market here.

The minister said Malaysians' investments abroad are encouraged as these investors would also bring revenue back to the country. iB

PALCO TO EXPAND OPS

US-based Palco Inc, a leading global reverse logistics provider, which set up its first overseas facility in Penang in March with an initial investment of RM11 million, plans to expand its operations to serve the Asia-Pacific region.

Palco's Malaysian facility under Palco Asia-Pacific Sdn Bhd, is located at the Batu Maung Free Commercial Zone on Penang island. It provides testing, reconfiguration, repair and re-work services of printed circuit board assemblies, failure analysis and related services.

In seeking a suitable site for Palco's base in Asia following the move by one of its customers, World Micro a US database software company, to set up operations in Penang, the company had considered Penang, Singapore and Thailand, its President, Randolph K. Piechocki told reporters at a media conference in Bayan Lepas, yesterday.

He said the company was impressed with the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER)'s skilled manpower, excellent logistics facilities and connectivity and cost-competitiveness.

He explained that the company is involved in handling precision components, test modules and stringent quality standards, as such its operations require skilled workforce in the field of electrical and electronics (E&E).

In addition, the company's business is heavily dependent on air freight for the movement of mission-critical products between Palco and its customers, who need to respond to their market needs speedily.

For its expansion in Penang, the company is in talks with the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) on its requirements as well as exploring possible collaboration to strengthen the company's human resource development efforts, he said

Palco's customers include companies in multimedia telecommunications, computer manufacturing, data storage and web-hosting, aerospace and defence and healthcare, which have operations in China, Japan, Australia, South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong, New Zealand, Mongolia, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Timor Leste, Samoa and Tonga, he added.

Also present were Palco's Vice-President, Phil C. Terry and NCIA Logistics Division Director, Kuan Eu Jin.

SCOMI TECHNOLOGY FOR SAO PAULO MONORAIL PROJECT

Bursa Malaysia-listed Scomi Engineering Bhd (SEB), the transportation solutions provider under Scomi Group Bhd, has been appointed as the technology provider to Consorcio ABC Integrado, the consortium that has been awarded the Sao Paulo Line 18 monorail project in Brazil.

In a statement issued yesterday, SEB Chief Executive Officer, Kanesan Veluppillai said the company is honoured that Scomi's technology is once again recognised in Brazil after two previous wins in Manaus and Sao Paulo for Line 17. The latest award has reaffirmed the company's capabilities as one of the leading global monorail solutions providers, he added.

SEB would provide services in three key areas-design of rolling stock and track switches, supply of vehicle management system and bogies as well as system integration, he said. The company will also make the rolling stock with its joint-venture company in Brazil.

Hilmy Zaini Zainal, SEB's Country President for Brazil said the project is scheduled to commence in early 2015 and the company would also be involved in the operations and maintenance support for the project, spanning 25 years, four years for implementation and 21 years for operation and maintenance.

The Line 18 project covers some 14.35km and will link the municipalities of Santo Andre, Sao Bernardo do Campo and Sao Caetano do Sul in the metropolitan region of Sao Paulo.

DEVELOPING A PROGRESSIVE MOTION

The Malaysian government has identified the domestic pharmaceutical industry as an industry to be developed and promoted under it's new economic development plan.

The global pharmaceutical market is expected to be worth over US$971 billion (RM3,153.8 billion) by the end of 2016, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 24%.

In 1986, drug registration was introduced in Malaysia and the drug control authority (DCA) established. All drugs/medicine in pharmaceutical dosage forms and cosmetics have to be registered before sale and marketing is permitted in the country.

In 2009, the total market size for prescription and over the-counter (OTC) medicine was estimated at RM4.5 billion while the traditional medicine and health supplements market was estimated at RM3 billion.

Of the 250 DCA licensed manufacturers in 2011, 74 are licensed to manufacture prescription and OTC medicines while the remaining 176 are licensed traditional medicine manufacturers.

Nevertheless, Malaysia's pharmaceutical industry has shown significant progress in tandem with this global growth, with both foreign and local investors playing a key role in the industry's development.

Malaysian manufacturers currently export to countries in South East Asia, Africa and the Middle East with new markets being explored beyond these countries. Growth in exports has been steady at between 10% to 12% annually.

Hence, pharmaceutical products

manufactured in Malaysia can be broadly categorised as prescription medicine, OTC medicine, herbal and health supplements and traditional medicine.

The local industry remains focused on the production of generic drugs which is dominated by domestic investments.

A total of 12 projects with investments of RM539 million were approved in 2013, most of which were foreign investments amounting to RM338.3 million (62.7%) while domestic investments came to RM200.7 million (37.3%).

Six of these projects were new projects and involved investments of RM371.1 million (68.8%) with the rest being expansion/diversification projects.

The projects approved are expected to generate employment of 1,150 persons.

The increasing domestic demand for haemodialysis solutions has resulted in more investments in the field of renal products.

Among the significant projects approved in 2013 was a new project by a foreign-owned company with investments of RM230 million to manufacture haemodialysis concentrates,peritoneal dialysis solutions and automated dialysis solutions.

This project will provide a complete solution from research and development (R&D) to manufacturing in order to provide complete therapy options within the clinics owned by the company's group.

Another new project by a domestic-owned company will involved investments of RM30 million to manufacture large volume parenteral sodium chloride, dextrose and ringers.

Meanwhile, an expansion project by a jointventure company involving RM40 million of investments will soon enable the company to become one of Malaysia's largest pharmaceutical producers and exporters.

Investment trends in the pharmaceutical industry in 2013 indicate that the industry is on track towards achieving the government's objective to increase productivity and sustainable growth of high value-added pharmaceutical products and thus contribute to import substitution in Malaysia.

Nonetheless, to remain competitive internationally, Malaysian pharmaceutical manufacturers must concentrate on biopharmaceuticals, biosimilars and other high value-added products.

Investments by multinational pharmaceutical companies in Malaysia will continue to provide opportunities for local companies to invest in such products and contribute towards the development of the country's pool of talent. iB

SEACERA EXPANDS PRODUCTION CAPACITY

Seacera Group Bhd, a leading local manufacturer of vitrified homogeneous porcelain tiles, will invest RM50 million to relocate its tile manufacturing plant from Selayang, Selangor to Kamunting, Perak, which will see a four- fold increase in its production capacity.

Seacera Group Managing Director Zulkarnin Ariffin said the first phase of the plant would be at least twice its current production capacity of 6,000 sq m. The new production line is expected to be operational by end-2015.

He said to-date there is no tile factory in State of Perak for the time being serving the northern region, which is the group's second-largest market after the central region.

Meanwhile, the group is focusing more on the construction and property development sectors and plans to bid for jobs related to buildings, infrastructures and highways to complement its tiles business. iB

DFRAN BUILDS PEOPLE AND INNOVATES SOLUTION

DFRAN Research Technologies of Malaysia is an independent research and development (R&D) company conducting innovative research and product development focus on meeting important needs of its clients, partners, market and community.

DFRAN integrates people (IP) and technologies into high-value innovative product and solutions and that bring the invention to the marketplace through smart partnership, IP licensing and exclusive product.

Executive Chairman Dato' Sri Syed Zainal Abidin Bin Syed Mohamed Tahir says the group seek to improve the quality of people's lives through focusing on advanced and innovative solution.

"Quite simply aspire creativity and passion toward science and technology to help people live in prosperity, fulfilled life," he says.

The group's vision is to be the profitable leading source of high value innovative product and solution provider and its mission at the same time to promote innovative and conducive working environment aspiring creativity and passion toward science and technology.

According to Syed Zainal, the core thing to the business is the customer and market needs.

"Our focus on meeting important needs, instead of focusing only on interesting research topics, helps assure that the results of our work will have positive impact for our clients and partners, the market and the community," he says.

Having said that, the progress innovation is needed for each project which is driven by a passionate advocate to advance the value creation process.

"We believe having a champion for each initiative is critical to success. Champions build productive teams. Our multidisciplinary, team-based approach taps into the collective genius of DFRAN, our clients, and our partners. We commit to 'open innovation' by bringing the best collaborators and ideas together to meet our clients' needs," he explains.

Hence, DFRAN also provides technical trainings and short courses for mathematical modelling, computer aided engineering, physics knowledge and applications, artificial intelligence, super computing and electric vehicles and hybrid powertrain.

Dato' Sri Syed Zainal Abidin Bin Syed Mohamed Tahir

Through collaboration with clients and partners, DFRAN's R&D delivers innovative solution to engineering challenges and provide a platform for commercialisation of innovations.

"DFRAN conducts core and applied research for technology development, system integrations and innovative products commercialisation for our partners and customers. Our disciplined approach through collaboration with universities as well as Industrial experts across multiple disciplines produces innovative ideas and solutions from the best of minds," he says.

Collaboration of its experienced experts with the clients' and partner's engineering team bring fresh perspectives and advanced skills necessary to respond timely to new opportunities for growth and introductions of new technology, from discovery of breakthrough solutions to deployment for real-world applications.

For each value creation, every initiative, the group work closely with its clients to articulate their important needs, define the most compelling and unique approach to address their needs, analyse the benefits per costs of that approach and quantify why the chosen approach is better than the competition and alternatives.

The needs, approach, benefits (per costs), and competition (NABC) —helps DRFAN quickly define, create, and communicate the highest customer value.

"Our innovation teams align with client and partner needs to ensure we are focused on delivering the highest value. DFRAN is committed to leadership in innovation best practices and in the continuous improvement of our business," he concludes. iB

CLICK HERE FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE DFRAN RESEARCH TECHNOLOGIES.

FGV / CAMBRIDGE UNI GRAPHENE JV PLANT TO BE READY IN OCTOBER

Felda Global Ventures Holdings Bhd (FGV), which has tied up with Cambridge University to set up a graphene plant in Cambridge, UK, expects the new facility to be ready in October.

FGV Chairman, Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad said the 70% FGV-owned graphene plant is expected to start operation by year-end or early next year.

He said memorandums of understanding have also been signed with several companies for the sale of this material, involving an investment of £20 million.

Last October, Felda concluded a deal with Cambridge Nanosystems Ltd (CNS) in which Felda will provide the raw material (by-products from crude palm oil) while CNS provides the proprietary technology to produce carbon nanotubes and graphene.

Isa revealed the development of the joint venture project in response to the statement by the Minister in the Prime Minister's Department, Datuk Seri Idris Jala during the launch of the National Graphene Action Plan 2020 recently, which the later said aimed to generate potential revenue of RM9 billion and create some 9,000 jobs by 2020.

Isa said this after a breaking of fast at the Tuanku Muhriz Mosque in Bandar Seri Jempol, Negri Sembilan, which was graced by the Yang Dipertuan Besar Tuanku Muhriz Tuanku Munawir and Tunku Ampuan Besar Tuanku Aishah Rohani Tengku Besar Mahmud.

FGV is the world's largest crude palm oil producer and the second largest Malaysian palm oil refiner. It forms part of the FELDA Group, the world's largest palm oil producer and oil palm plantation operator by planted hectares.

MALAYSIA ROLLS OUT NATIONAL ACTION PLAN TO TAP POTENTIAL OF GRAPHENE

Malaysia's move towards an innovation-based economy has been given a boost with the launch of the National Graphene Action Plan, which will pave the way for the country to tap the economic potential of the material.

Graphene, a one atom thick carbon, is acclaimed as the new wonder material this century. The material, which is 200 times stronger than steel and is able to conduct electricity better than any known material, has the potential for various industrial applications.

Andre Geim and Konstantin Novoselov from the University of Manchester were jointly awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2010 "for groundbreaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material graphene."

The duo had shown that carbon in such a flat form has exceptional properties, paving the way for the manufacture of innovative electronics among others.

In unveiling the plan in Putrajaya recently, Performance Management and Delivery Unit (PEMANDU) Chief Executive Officer, Datuk Seri Idris Jala, who is also a Minister in the Prime Minister's Department said Malaysia could not depend only on a strong domestic-led economy as the local population is small, hence the need to look beyond, pointing out that the graphene venture is part of the government's Economic Transformation Programme (ETP).

Malaysia is looking to tap the potential downstream applications including in lithium-ion battery, battery anodes and ultracapacitors, rubber additives, nanofluids (drilling fluid and lubricants), conductive inks and plastic additives.

The graphene venture is expected to generate some RM9 billion in revenue and creating 9,000 jobs by 2020.

PEMANDU, Agensi Inovasi Malaysia (AIM) and NanoMalaysia Bhd, the agencies entrusted to spearhead the venture will collaborate with the private sector, research and development institutions and universities on graphene commercialisation.

Also present at the event were the Minister of International Trade and Industry, Dato' Sri Mustapa Mohamed; Deputy Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation, Datuk Dr Abu Bakar Md Diah; AIM Chief Executive Officer, Mark Rozario; NanoMalaysia Chief Executive Officer, Dr Rezal Khairi Ahmad and NKEA Director (Palm & Rubber), Ku Kok Peng.

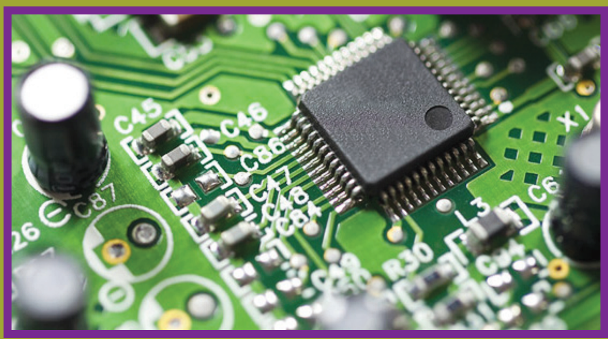
PENANG'S DYNAVIEW COMPLEX SETS TO ATTRACT MORE INVESTORS

The Dynaview warehouse complex in Penang is set to draw more investors in reverse logistics, freight forwarding as well as small and medium electrical and electronics (E&E) supply chain. (Reverse logistics involves the collection of spent and discarded products, packaging and transport materials, returned orders and such).

Dynaview Sdn Bhd, is a joint venture between Penang Development Corporation (PDC) and the Heng Lee Group of Companies, the owner of the land on which the complex is sited.

Dynaview is the owner and operator of the warehouse complex which is located at Penang International Airport's Batu Maung Air Cargo Complex.

Currently 33 units out of 68 warehousing units at the complex are occupied and the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) is in talks with Dynaview to attract more players.



SMEs providing logistics support to the E&E industry with a customer base within the Asia Pacific, including component distributors, reverse logistics companies and test houses can leverage on the many advantages of operating from the complex. These include the availability of skilled workforce as the complex is within the vicinity of the Bayan Lepas Free Industrial Zones, which have a highly developed E&E ecosystem.

International express courier services providers such as UPS, FedEx, DHL and TNT are also located within the same area thus providing speedy delivery for shipments within the Asia-Pacific.

The complex which is also within the Batu Maung Air Cargo Complex's Free Commercial Zone, allows operators to benefit from minimal Customs requirements especially when compared with the other existing industrial estates.

Recently, the complex has attracted the US-based World Micro Inc and Palco Inc to set up base there.

Meanwhile, NCIA expects some 250 direct jobs to be created when the complex is fully occupied as well as new business opportunities for logistics companies, equipment makers and component suppliers. These companies will also encourage more outsourcing and component sourcing activities, which will translate to a reduction in cost and transit time for players in the E&E industry. iB

BUSINESSES IN PCA BENEFIT FROM SELF-DECLARATION MECHANISM

Manufacturers, hotel businesses and haulage operators can now benefit from a self-declaration mechanism for exemption of import duty and sales tax on machinery and equipment, spare parts, consummables, prime movers and container trailers, implemented by the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA).

At a media recently, MIDA's CEO Dato' Azman Mahmud said the new mechanism would benefit some 1,200 companies both foreign and local in the Principal Customs Area (PCA).

The self- declaration mechanism besides helping reduce further the cost of doing business in Malaysia would at the same time reduce the number of physical applications to the minimum by next year from some 5,000 applications processed by MIDA annually.

Since the introduction of the new mechanism on 2 May, some 280 companies in the PCA have benefitted from the exemption. PCA companies have welcomed the new initiative which has reduced the time and costs to import and clear the goods.

With the self-declaration mechanism, a company is required to submit a confirmation letter issued by MIDA together with the list of machinery, equipment, spare parts, consumables, prime movers and container trailers to be imported or purchased from licensed manufacturing warehouse (LMW), bonded warehouse or free zone to the customs for permission to claim the exemption.

MIDA Tariff Division Director, Jasbir Kaur said companies would benefit from savings in bank guarantee cost as well as storage cost of the machinery and equipment.

In its continuing efforts to enhance the business environment in Malaysia, particularly on the ease doing business, MIDA is likely to consider raw material exemption next. iB

MIDA Worldwide Network

The Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) is the government's principal agency for the promotion of the manufacturing and services sectors in Malaysia. MIDA assists companies intending to invest in the manufacturing and services sectors, as well as facilitates the implementation of their projects. The wide range of services provided by MIDA include providing information on the opportunities for investments, as well as facilitating companies which are looking for joint venture partners.

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