

# Shining a light on trade successes

## EEA 2024 Gala Night celebrates top exporters who excelled on global stage

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia's export sector continues to thrive, driven by agile and resilient businesses, says Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz at the Export Excellence Awards (EEA) 2024 Gala Night.

The Investment, Trade and Industry Minister said businesses must adopt forward-looking strategies in today's rapidly evolving global landscape.

"Malaysia's exporters have demonstrated remarkable adaptability and resilience, contributing to the continued strength of our trade sector," he said in the keynote address yesterday.

His speech was delivered by the ministry's deputy secretary-general (Trade) Mastura Ahmad Mustafa.

The nation's top exporters were celebrated at the prestigious EEA 2024 Gala Night, recognising outstanding contributions in propelling Malaysia's global trade presence.

Organised by Star Media Group (SMG) in partnership with Standard Chartered Malaysia, the EEA marks its fifth year as a premier platform showcasing exemplary Malaysian exporters who have demonstrated innovation, resilience and excellence in the international marketplace.

A total of 30 outstanding exporters were honoured across 14 award categories, celebrating their achievements across various sectors and company sizes.

Notable accolades included the Special Award: Rising Star, presented to Euro Facade (M) Sdn Bhd; Woman Exporter of the Year (SMEs) to Joanne Tay of KJH Wood Industrial Sdn Bhd; and Woman Exporter of the Year (Mid-tier and Large Companies) to Sarah Ho of Hovid Bhd.

GPRO Global Sdn Bhd and Swift PMAS Sdn Bhd were named Exporters of the Year for the SME and Mid-tier/Large Company categories, respectively.

Tengku Zafrul further highlighted the strategic importance of the EEA, saying the collaboration between SMG and Standard Chartered Malaysia is a testament to how strategic partnerships can drive industry growth.



**Celebrating industry excellence:** (Front, from left) Standard Chartered Saadiq Malaysia CEO Bilal Parvaiz, Tio, SMG chief content officer Datin Paduka Esther Ng, Chan, Shahril, Wong, Mastura, Chia, Mak, Jai Shankar and Wang posing with the award winners at EEA 2024 Gala Night. — GLENN GUAN/The Star

"Since its inception five years ago, the EEA has played a crucial role in showcasing and elevating Malaysia's top exporters in the global arena, reinforcing our nation's competitiveness.

"It also fosters a robust ecosystem that encourages knowledge-sharing, best practices, and capacity-building among industry players," he said.

Among the distinguished guests present were SMG chairman Tan Sri Wong Foon Meng, Standard Chartered Malaysia chief executive officer (CEO) Mak Joon Nien, SMG group CEO Chan Seng Fatt, Standard Chartered Malaysia chairman Datuk Yvonne Chia, Standard Chartered Malaysia independent non-executive director Tan Sri Shahril Ridzuan, Matrade Export Promotion and

Market Access Division senior director S. Jai Shankar, PKT Logistics Group group chief executive and managing director Datuk Seri Dr Michael Tio and SMG chief operating officer Lydia Wang.

Mak provided a broader economic perspective in his remarks, highlighting global fiscal trends and technological disruption.

"Back in 2019, the US government debt-to-GDP ratio stood at 74%. Today, it has risen to 124%, marking a 70 percentage-point increase in just five years," he said.

Drawing comparisons with Malaysia, Mak noted: "Despite having seen four different governments since 2019, Malaysia has displayed remarkable resilience, maintaining an average GDP growth of around 4% over

the last five years. This underscores the strength of our economic fundamentals."

Mak also pointed to the country's performance in the EEA, where over 60% of submissions since 2019 have come from high-value industries.

"Export performance has grown from RM986.4bil in 2019 to RM1.508 trillion in 2024 – a 53% increase – demonstrating the country's ability to recalibrate and thrive," he added.

In his address, Chan emphasised the EEA's founding vision.

"The EEA was established with a clear purpose – to shine a spotlight on Malaysian exporters who have successfully carved their mark in global markets.

"Over the past five years, we have witnessed remarkable

growth, resilience and inspiring success stories that have solidified Malaysia's reputation as a dynamic trading nation," he said.

Chan also underscored the growing importance of digitalisation and sustainability in trade.

"Our exporters have shown an extraordinary ability to weather economic uncertainties and embrace digital transformation, sustainability and global expansion as the new cornerstones of success.

"The future of Malaysian exports lies in these pillars, which will ensure our continued competitiveness on the world stage," he said.

PKT Logistics Group co-sponsored the EEA 2024, with Matrade serving as patron and BDO as the official auditor.

## OIC nations must lead global AI development, says Zambry

**PUTRAJAYA:** The Islamic world must take a proactive approach in shaping the direction of global technology, particularly in the field of artificial intelligence (AI), says Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir.

The Higher Education Minister said science and technology had long been the foundation of Islamic civilisation and it was now the shared responsibility of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC-15) member states to restore this leadership through a holistic, ethical and Islamic value-based approach.

He said this at the Second Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15

Dialogue Platform held in Teheran, Iran, on May 18 and 19.

According to the ministry's statement, Zambry said Malaysia had proposed seven main pillars for joint consideration within the OIC-15 framework of action.

The proposed pillars include developing a common curriculum covering AI, data ethics and digital humanities; establishing cross-country research and innovation hubs; launching a widespread AI literacy movement among member states; as well as setting up the OIC-15 Digital Solidarity Fund and the OIC Digital Readiness Index.

The other pillars proposed are

the formation of the OIC Cybersecurity Consortium; the setting up of the OIC-15 Foresight Unit to shape the future of Islamic technology; and the introduction of a Crisis Innovation Fund to assist communities affected, including Gaza.

Zambry also shared Malaysia's progress in formulating the Malaysian Higher Education Plan (PPTM) 2025-2035, which focuses on AI-based education, lifelong learning and digital talent development.

"The Malaysia Madani concept, which is based on balanced, comprehensive and humane development, is highlighted as a model

for the country's digital transformation.

"Malaysia also offers cooperation in the form of scholarships, mobility programmes and AI Fellowships to support talent development with OIC-15 member states," according to the statement.

The ministry added that Zambry paid a courtesy call on Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, alongside ministers and representatives of other OIC member states, Bernama reported.

"In addition, a bilateral meeting was held between Zambry and Iranian Science, Research and Technology Minister Hossein

Simayi Saraf to discuss potential cooperation in skilled manpower, science and technology between Malaysia and Iran," said the ministry.

The meeting, themed "Innovation in Science and Technology through Harnessing Artificial Intelligence: A Strategy for a Brighter Future in the Islamic World", brought together more than 20 representatives from OIC member states to explore AI technology's potential as a driver of shared progress.

The Third Ministerial Meeting of the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform is scheduled to be held in Saudi Arabia.