



Strong French presence in Greater KL

More companies choose Malaysia's capital city as their regional hub on solid IT infrastructure, skilled workforce, competitive costs

MALAYSIA features prominently French companies in South-East Asia. The nation is France's third-largest trading partner and fourth-largest supplier within Asean, with bilateral trade between the two countries climbing 8.2% year-on-year to RM19.36 billion in 2017.

With 270 subsidiaries of French companies established in Malaysia, France has a considerable economic presence in the country. This represents a total turnover of RM19.31 billion in 2015 with 26,000 jobs.

"France's economic footprint in Malaysia is highly visible on the radar with Greater Kuala Lumpur (KL) clearly on the roadmap of big French industry players," said French ambassador to Malaysia Frédéric Laplanche.

Earlier this year, Laplanche officiated the launch of Air Liquide SA's Smart Innovative Operations (SIO) Centre for the South-East Asia Pacific region in KL.

The French multinational has invested €20 million (RM95 million) in the project built on the success of its shared business services established in Malaysia in 2017. The new SIO Centre enables remote production management for the company's 18 large industries production units spanning eight countries across the South-East Asia Pacific area.

The same year also saw French insurance company AXA SA opening its shared services centre in KL, creating some 200 jobs across different technology sectors by the end of 2018.

The centre puts the insurer at the forefront of industry innovation as they continue to embark on their transformation journey. Greater KL was chosen as one of the located centres for its potential robust growth which AXA envisions will improve its agility and cost efficiency.



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Having skillful multilingual and multicultural talents is one of Greater KL's best assets to continue attracting MNCs, says Zainal

A third French company, Veolia Environnement SA, a provider of water treatment technologies, has set up its Asia-Pacific regional headquarters (HQ) and engineering centre of excellence in Greater KL.

As a provider of optimised resource management, some of Veolia's notable projects include the Tun Razak Exchange and Petroleum National Bhd's raw water supply project in Pengerang Integrated Complex. The presence of Veolia's Asia-Pacific HQ in Greater KL strengthens Malaysia's engineering know-how in sustainable water solutions and development.

On the strong presence of French corporations in Greater KL, Laplanche said it reflects the true strategic assets of Malaysia for foreign investors as well as the outcome of the excellent job done by InvestKL Corp Sdn Bhd to attract French top multinational corporations (MNCs).

"I am a strong supporter of InvestKL and I am looking forward to furthering our collaboration in the near future, in particular with a view to better connect Greater KL to Greater Paris," he said.

Trading Nation

As a trading nation, Malaysia has been relying on foreign direct investment (FDI) to help transform industries and it remains business friendly



Air Liquide has invested RM95m in its SIO Centre for the South-East Asia Pacific region in KL

to foreign investors. The World Bank Doing Business 2019 Report ranked Malaysia at the 15th position among 190 economies worldwide, a significant improvement from the 24th position the year before.

Prime Minister (PM) Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has always welcomed MNCs that bring in capital investment and technology transfer to the country. The PM said the Malaysian government would facilitate the ease of doing business in Malaysia and remove any obstacles faced by investors.

"FDI has a role to play in rebuilding the Malaysian economy. We will be very free, very business friendly and very accessible to businessmen whether they are domestic or for-

eign," he told reporters during a visit to Japan in November.

For foreign investors who choose to invest in Malaysia, they are set to benefit from the government's focus on building a digital economy to accelerate its next phase of development.

Recently, the Ministry of International Trade and Industry announced the National Industry 4.0 Policy Framework to call for digital transformation of the manufacturing sector and its related services by facilitating companies to embrace Industry 4.0 in a systematic and comprehensive manner, driven by people, process and technology.

"Malaysia is well positioned to ride the digital wave and KL is a

competitive option for companies seeking a regional technology hub to serve South-East Asia and the Asia-Pacific regions," said InvestKL CEO Datuk Zainal Amanshah.

To expand the talent pool, InvestKL launched the Malaysian Global Talent (MGT) programme in collaboration with Talent Corp Malaysia Bhd and the support of the Ministry of Education in March 2018.

"The MGT programme aims to enhance, develop and produce homegrown talents that can scale up the leadership ladder of corporate organisations including global MNCs. Having skillful multilingual and multicultural talents is one of Greater KL's best assets to continue attracting MNCs," he said. — TMR

PTP, Johor Port hold Southern Gateway Retro Bowling Party



The event was aimed to fortify the relationships among PTP, Johor Port, JPA and members of the media

SOME 70 people from various media agencies took part in the maiden Southern Gateway Retro Bowling Party organised by a ports fraternity.

The inaugural event on Nov 13, held at Daiman Bowl centre in Johor Baru, was co-organised by port operators Pelabuhan Tanjung Pelepas Sdn Bhd (PTP) and Johor Port Bhd together with Johor Port

Authority (JPA). It attracted a strong turnout from various media agencies in the state.

The event was aimed to fortify the relationships among PTP, Johor Port, JPA and members of the media. Both PTP and Johor Port are units of the MMC Corp Bhd.

PTP, Malaysia's largest container terminal, is a joint venture between

MMC (70%) and APM Terminals (30%), a global ports group with a global port network in 62 countries.

Johor Port, which commenced operations in 1977 as the southern gateway multi-purpose port in Malaysia, is strategically positioned at the heart of the sprawling 8,000-acre (3,237.5ha) Pasir Gudang Industrial Estate. — TMR

Sharp pushes AI, IoT for consumer appliances



The company is also looking at R&D, M&A and talent cultivation as it pushes forward its 8K ecosystem, says Wu

CONSUMER electrical product maker Sharp Corp plans to expand its artificial intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) offerings.

Riding on big data application, the company said it intends to create a combination of AI and IoT ecosystem to produce products, services and platforms that are people-oriented, connecting homes and social systems.

It currently offers IoT-applicable flagship models for air conditioners and air purifiers, and further expansion will see it launching small and beauty appliances in the near future, the company said in a statement.

The company is also looking at research and development (R&D), mergers and acquisitions (M&A), and

talent cultivation as it pushes forward its 8K ecosystem, said Sharp Electronics Malaysia Sdn Bhd MD Robert Wu in the same statement.

Sharp has been a major innovator in the LED television (TV) technology, particularly in the high-definition 8K segment. However, the company said its direction in the segment goes beyond TV panel as it works to create and develop an 8K ecosystem through partnerships with related parties to build up a series of value chain in 8K solution.

It added that the strategy will see Sharp's imprint in various fields, particularly in industrials, security, medical, education, entertainment and broadcasting.