Penang retains status as Malaysia's top exporter

State contributes 46.7% to country's total shipments to foreign destinations in March

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's total trade for March 2026 amounted to RM273 billion with exports and imports recording RM148.8 billion and RM124.2 billion, respectively.

Chief statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said that Malaysia's exports in March 2026 reached RM148.8 billion, marking a year-on-year increase of RM11.4 billion (+8.3%).

The increase in exports was attributed to the higher exports in Penang (+RM17.6 billion), Johor (+RM1.8 billion), Sabah (+RM607.3 million), Perak (+RM357 million), Terengganu (+RM224.2 million), Kedah (+RM162.6 million) and WP Labuan (+RM21.2 million).

However, exports fell in Selangor by RM4.6 billion, WP Kuala Lumpur (-RM1.2 billion), Malacca (-RM1.1 billion), Pahang (-RM1 billion), Sarawak (-RM831.6 million), Negeri Sembilan (-RM439.7 million), Kelantan (-RM112.7 million) and Perlis (-RM6.5 million).

Penang remained as the top exporter with a contribution of 46.7%, followed by Johor (17.6%), Selangor (14.3%), Sarawak (5.9%) and WP Kuala Lumpur (2.8%).

Elaborating on imports performance, Mohd Uzir stated that imports in March 2026 increased RM11.7 billion (+10.4%) as compared to the same month in year 2025.

The increase in imports was attributed by the higher imports in most states such as Penang (+RM7.3 billion), Selangor (+RM3.3 billion), Kedah (+RM1.4 billion), Johor (+RM1 billion), Perak (+RM458.6 million), Negeri Sembilan (+RM336.3 million), Sabah (+RM14 million), Kelantan (+RM13.5 million) and Perlis (+RM7.5 million).

However, imports fell in WP Kuala Lumpur by RM558.5 million, Sarawak (-RM445.9 million), Malacca (-RM250.3 million), Pahang (-RM215.9 million), Terengganu (-RM59.8 million) and WP Labuan (-RM15.5 million).

Mohd Uzir said Penang dominates Malaysia's imports with a share of 28.1%, followed by Selangor (24.8%), Johor (22%), WP Kuala Lumpur (7.5%) and Kedah (5.6%).

Meanwhile, Malaysia's export unit value index in March 2026 increased by 1.4% from 153.1 points in the previous month to 155.3 points. Import unit value index also increased by 1.8% from 122.6 points to 124.8 points. In the meantime, Malaysia's terms of trade decreased 0.3% month-on-month from 124.9 points to 124.4 points in March 2026.

Mohd Uzir said the export unit value index increased by 1.4% in March 2026, attributed to increases in the index of mineral fuels (+5.4%), chemicals (+0.6%) and machinery & transport equipment (+0.5%).

The export volume index also rose by 12% in line with increases in the indices of mineral fuels (+26.1%), manufactured goods (+19.4%) and machinery & transport equipment (+17.8%).

Meanwhile seasonally adjusted export volume index increased by 13.4% from 158.9 points to 180.1 points. Referring to the annual comparison, both the exports unit value index and the volume index expanded by 2.3% and 5.9% respectively. The import unit value index also increased by 1.8% in March 2026, resulting from the increases in the indices of mineral fuels (+17.1%), animal & vegetable oils & fats (+0.7%) and food (+0.1%).

Meanwhile, the import volume index also increased by 6.8% in 2026 as compared to the previous month, driven by the increases in the indices of chemicals (+15.3%), machinery & transport equipment (+10.5%) and manufactured goods (+10%).

The seasonally adjusted import volume index increased by 6.3% from 152.9 points to 162.5 points. A year-on-year comparison showed that the import unit value index declined by 1.7%, while volume index edged up by 12.3%.

Malaysia's terms of trade declined 0.3% month-on-month to 124.4 points in March 2026, driven by the decrease in the index of mineral fuels (-10%), animal & vegetable oils & fats (-0.5%) and manufactured goods (-0.1%). Meanwhile, Malaysia terms of trade increased 4.1% year-on-year from 119.5 points in March previous year.