

Biz sentiment expected to improve over next six months

KUALA LUMPUR: Business confidence figures for the fourth quarter of 2021 have improved following the easing of economic restrictions in mid-October, said the government's **chief statistician Datuk Seri Mohd Uzir Mahidin**.

"Businesses gain confidence towards the fourth quarter with the confidence indicator at minus 0.3 per cent compared with minus 21.3 per cent in the previous quarter," he said in a statement Friday released by the **Department of Statistics Malaysia (DoSM)**.

The Business Tendency Statistics for Fourth Quarter 2021, which is based on the Business Tendency Survey and is conducted quarterly, was released today and presented expectations on business performance for the upcoming quarter and the next six months.

Mohd Uzir said the survey showed that all sectors expected better business prospects with industry and wholesale and retail trade sectors rebounding to a positive trajectory.

"The industry sector predicts a positive outlook at 3.6 per cent in the reference quarter against minus 11.0 per cent in the last quarter. The confidence indicator for the wholesale and retail trade sector also rose in the fourth quarter of 2021 to 3.3 per cent from minus 39.4 per cent," he added.

The services and construction sectors anticipated an improved business performance, albeit at a negative trajectory, with the confidence indicator for the services sector standing at a better negative of minus 1.3 per cent against minus 22.8 per cent in the preceding quarter.

"As for the construction sector, it recorded a smaller negative, with a confidence indicator of minus 40.4 per cent compared to minus 45.0 per cent in the last quarter," he added.

Referring to the business outlook for six months ahead, the confidence in the industry, wholesale and retail trade, and services sectors boosted the overall net balance to record 24.1 per cent for the period of October 2021 until March 2022 compared to minus 21.7 per cent recorded previously.

The industry sector has predicted strong business conditions with a net balance of 24.5 per cent for the same period against minus 11.8 per cent recorded for the period of July to December 2021.

Notably, the wholesale and retail trade sector is optimistic about their business situation for the forthcoming six months with a surge of net balance at 35.1 per cent from minus 59.7 per cent recorded previously.

In particular, wholesale trade and retail trade subsectors rebounded to a positive trajectory, and the services sector anticipated positive business insights at 24.3 per cent for the next six months against minus 14.2 per cent.

"It is mainly reflected by all subsectors of the services sector which registered positive net balance except for real estate and information and communication technology subsectors. In contrast, the

construction sector remains in the pessimist zone with a better net balance of minus 18.4 per cent,” he added.

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