

MANUFACTURING SECTOR

SALES VALUE JUMPS 1.4PC TO RM158.4B IN MARCH

This marks positive year-on-year growth for 3rd straight month, says Statistics Dept

S. BIRRUNTHA
KUALA LUMPUR
bt@nst.com.my

THE sales value of the manufacturing sector expanded by 1.4 per cent, year-on-year to RM158.4 billion in March, according to the Statistics Department.

Chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the increase marked a positive year-on-year growth trend for the third consecutive month.

He said this was driven by a 9.6

per cent growth in the sub-sectors of non-metallic mineral products, basic metal and fabricated metal products.

"The other sub-sectors are wood, furniture, paper products and printing (3.4 per cent), and electrical and electronics products (2.3 per cent).

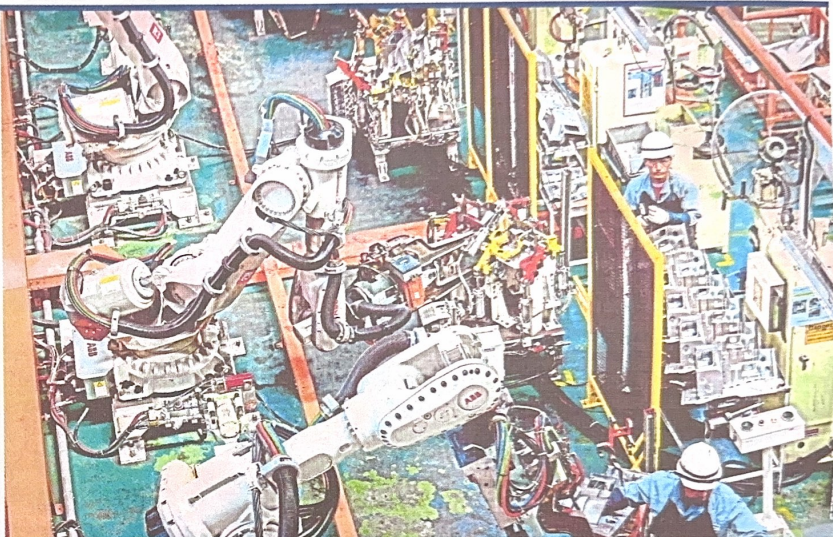
"On a month-on-month comparison, the sales value improved by 8.3 per cent," he said yesterday.

Mohd Uzir said the sales value of export-oriented industries, which accounted for 70.4 per cent

of total sales, dropped by 0.2 per cent in March, following a larger decline of 1.7 per cent in the preceding month.

He attributed this to the decline in the manufacture of coke and refined petroleum products (-6.7 per cent), manufacture of vegetable and animal oils and fats (-5.5 per cent) and manufacture of chemicals and chemical products (-3.0 per cent) sub-sectors.

He said the domestic-oriented industries remained vibrant, growing by 5.4 per cent in March compared with 6.5 per cent in February.



According to the Statistics Department, the sales value of the manufacturing sector improved by 8.3 per cent in March, compared with the 4.3 per cent contraction recorded in February.

The expansion was driven by the double-digit growth of the manufacture of fabricated metal products, except machinery and equipment, which accelerated to 16.6 per cent.

The manufacture of food processing products and manufacture of other non-metallic mineral products contributed by registering 7.7 and 6.5 per cent growth, respectively.

"Compared with the previous month, the sales value of domestic-oriented industries grew by 4.7 per cent, contrasting a decrease of five per cent in Febru-

ary," Uzir said.

He said the salaries and wages paid in the manufacturing sector grew by 0.7 per cent year-on-year to RM8.23 billion in March.

Uzir said on a month-on-month comparison, salaries and wages edged down by 0.2 per cent from RM8.24 billion in February.

He said the average monthly salaries and wages per employee posted an increase of 0.2 per cent with a value of RM3,482, while the sales value per employee was up by 0.9 per cent to RM67,022.