

Malaysia's trade robust, rises to RM273b in March

▶ Exports increase to RM148.8 billion and imports reach RM124.2 billion

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's trade performance remained strong in March 2026, supported by continued expansion in both exports and imports.

Total trade rose by 9.3% year-on-year from RM249.8 billion to RM273 billion, driven by stronger growth of exports (+8.3%) valued at RM148.8 billion and imports (+10.4%) amounting to RM124.2 billion.

The trade surplus decreased by 0.9% to RM24.6 billion in March 2026, according to the Malaysia External Trade Statistics Bulletin, March 2026 released yesterday.

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said Malaysia's exports increased in March 2026, supported by growth in re-exports and domestic exports.

Re-exports, which accounted for 25.5% of total exports, rose by 38.3% year-on-year to RM37.9 billion. Meanwhile, domestic exports,

contributing 74.5% of total exports, expanded by 0.9% to RM110.9 billion.

Correspondingly, imports increased to RM124.2 billion, registering a rise of 10.4%. The trade surplus decreased by 0.9% to RM24.6 billion, marking the 71st consecutive month of surplus since May 2020.

Compared with February 2026, exports, imports, total trade and trade surplus grew by 13.6%, 8.7%, 11.3% and 47%, respectively.

From the perspective of commodity groups, 90 out of 259 export groups and 126 out of 259 import groups posted gains compared to the same month of the previous year.

Mohd Uzir said the rise in exports was primarily underpinned by increased shipments to the United States (+RM4.2 billion), followed by Taiwan (+RM3.1

billion), Hong Kong (+RM1.8 billion), Vietnam (+RM1.6 billion), Mexico (+RM1.5 billion), South Korea (+RM1.4 billion) and China (+RM1.1 billion).

The import rise largely reflected higher inflows originating from China (+RM6.9 billion), followed by Singapore (+RM3.6 billion), South Korea (+RM1.5 billion), Vietnam (+RM1.4 billion), Taiwan (+RM1.4 billion), United States (+RM1 billion) and Switzerland (+RM777 million).

Export growth was anchored by heightened shipments of E&E products (+RM9.4 billion), other manufactures (+RM2.4 billion), petroleum products (+RM1.8 billion), optical & scientific equipment (+RM1.5 billion), manufacture of metal (+RM1.2 billion) and metalliferous ores & metal scrap (+RM1.1 billion).

Concurrently, imports corresponded with stronger inflows of E&E products (+RM12.2 billion), machinery, equipment & parts (+RM2 billion), metalliferous ores & metal scrap (+RM1.1 billion), manufacture of metal (+RM1 billion),

optical & scientific equipment (+RM745.4 million) and petroleum products (+RM494.3 million).

Mohd Uzir noted that the expansion in imports by end-use was attributable to increased demand for capital goods. Imports of capital goods (13.1% of total imports) rose by 24.7% or RM3.2 billion, settling at RM16.3 billion. Consumption goods (7.2% of total imports) decreased by 7.8% or RM760.1 million to reach RM9 billion.

Meanwhile, imports of intermediate goods (46.9% of total imports) declined by 1.1% or RM635.7 million, amounting to RM58.3 billion compared to March 2025.

Total trade, exports and imports for the period of January to March 2026 registered improvements.

Total trade noted a double-digit increase by 10.4%, from RM715.7 billion to RM789.8 billion, in line with the rise in exports (+12.7%) as well as imports (+7.7%).

Moreover, the trade surplus expanded by 54% to post a value of RM63.2 billion.