



MINISTRY OF ECONOMY
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS MALAYSIA

MEDIA STATEMENT

STATE SOCIOECONOMIC INDICATORS, SABAH FIRST QUARTER, 2026

Sabah's business prospects remained positive, in line with industrial capacity at 78.7 per cent in Q1 2026

PUTRAJAYA, 21 MAY 2026 – Sabah recorded modest socioeconomic performance in the First Quarter of 2026 (Q1 2026), with controlled inflation, a stable labour market, positive business sentiment and population growth. This performance is highlighted in the publication **State Socioeconomic Indicators, Sabah First Quarter 2026** which released today by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM). The publication is a rebranding of State Pocket Stats, which has been further enhanced through the inclusion of selected key indicators highlighting economic and social statistics at the state level. Among the key economic indicators are production in selected Agriculture sub-sectors, inflation, external trade and the labour market, while key social indicators include population, as well as household income and expenditure. This publication aims to provide better understanding while serving as a reference for general users.

Malaysia's economy expanded by 5.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2026 (Q1 2026: RM437.7 billion) compared to 6.2 per cent in the previous quarter (Q4 2025: RM457.9 billion). According to the Chief Statistician of Malaysia, Dato' Sri Dr. Mohd Uzir Mahidin, "Malaysia's economy continued to expand in the first quarter of 2026, reflecting the resilience of economic fundamentals and stable growth conditions amid a challenging global environment."

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 2.1 per cent in March 2026 compared to 1.8 per cent in February 2026. This reflected the overall rise in inflation equivalent with the increase in the national price index following uncertainties in global commodity price movements.

From the external trade perspective, exports in Q1 2026 declined by 3.0 per cent to RM7.2 billion (Q1 2025: RM7.4 billion). Imports also recorded decreases by 5.1 per cent to RM2.3 billion (Q1 2025: RM2.4 billion) in the same period. This performance reflects trade activity that is still active equivalent with the continuous of both major trade components.

Referring to the labour market, the level of labour force participation maintained stable, supported by continuous economic activities and sustained labour demand. Labour force recorded 1.89 million persons (Q4 2025: 1.88 million persons), while labour force participation rate (LFPR) recorded at 70.3 per cent (Q4 2025: 70.4 %). In line with this trend, the number of employed persons recorded increases to 1.78 million persons (Q4 2025: 1.76 million), while unemployment rate recorded at 5.5 per cent (Q4 2025: 6.0 %).

Looking ahead, net balance of business expectations remained positive at +6.8 per cent for January until June 2026, reflecting favourable business prospects in the near term. The positive outlook indicates careful confidence among businesses in the expansion of economic activities. This sentiment is consistent with the performance of the Manufacturing sector with industrial performance recorded 78.7 per cent in Q1 2026, reflecting sustainable and resilient operational levels among industrial players in the state.

Looking into demographic perspective, the population stood at 3.767 million in Q1 2026 compared to 3.769 million in Q4 2025. Live births recorded at 9,800 persons, while deaths recorded 4,323 persons during the same period.

The Chief Statistician of Malaysia mentioned that this publication serves as an initiative for communicating state-level statistics, providing a more frequent insights on socioeconomic performance and complementing the annual economic yardstick of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by State.

The Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) is conducting the **Economic Census 2026 (BE2026)**, with themed “**Data Nadi Ekonomi Rakyat**”. The sixth Economic Census, will be carried out from **5th January to 31st October 2026**. BE2026 aims to collect comprehensive and structured data from all registered and unregistered business establishments in Malaysia to assess the nation’s economic performance, structure and characteristics in an evidence-based manner.

Malaysia has, for the first time, successfully secured the **top position** globally in the biennial **Open Data Inventory (ODIN) 2024/25** report released by Open Data Watch (ODW), surpassing 197 other countries. This achievement marks a significant leap from its 67th position in the ODIN 2022/23 assessment.

OpenDOSM NextGen is a medium that provides data catalogue and visualisations to facilitate users' analysis and can be accessed through <https://open.dosm.gov.my>.

Released by:

THE OFFICE OF CHIEF STATISTICIAN MALAYSIA
DEPARTMENT OF STATISTICS MALAYSIA
21 MAY 2026

Table 1: Key Socioeconomic Indicators, Sabah

Indicators	2024				2025				2026
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Exports (RM billion)	7,268	8,383	7,052	9,363	7,378	8,606	7,925	8,282	7,157
Imports (RM billion)	2,657	2,513	3,340	2,392	2,421	2,699	2,904	2,712	2,297
Labour force ('000)	1,828.1	1,850.9	1,858.7	1,867.2	1,871.5	1,874.8	1,859.4	1,876.4	1,885.5
Employed ('000)	1,685.2	1,711.7	1,718.7	1,734.9	1,758.3	1,748.6	1,737.1	1,764.1	1,782.2
Unemployed ('000)	142.9	139.3	140.0	132.3	113.2	126.3	122.3	112.4	103.4
Outside labour force ('000)	769.2	772.2	778.3	775.3	784.2	780.0	789.7	789.3	795.3
Labour force participation rate (%)	70.4	70.6	70.5	70.7	70.5	70.6	70.2	70.4	70.3
Unemployment rate (%)	7.8	7.5	7.5	7.1	6.0	6.7	6.6	6.0	5.5
Net Balance (%)	-0.8	+18.2	+15.9	+6.1	+12.2	+9.6	+19.5	+24.1	+6.8
Capacity Utilisation (%)	73.4	74.8	77.0	76.2	72.6	81.6	79.2	82.5	78.7
Value of Work Done (RM billion)	1,999	2,181	2,449	2,667	2,461	3,506	4,271	4,205	4,133
Natural Rubber Production ('000 tonnes)	643	345	1,096	1,200	816	366	1,071	1,237	834
Population ('000)	3,705.7	3,742.0	3,746.4	3,750.8	3,755.2	3,759.6	3,764.3	3,769.0	3,767.2
Live Births ('000)	10,609	10,368	10,488	10,603	9,889	10,093	10,094	10,639	9,800
Deaths ('000)	4,099	4,075	4,095	4,203	4,292	4,160	4,214	4,344	4,323

Indicator	2025												2026		
	Mac	Apr	Mei	Jun	Jul	Ogos	Sep	Okt	Nov	Dis	Jan	Feb	Mac	Apr	Mei
Consumer Price Index	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.8	2.1	2.1
Exports (RM mil.)	2,113	2,798	2,999	2,809	3,121	2,255	2,550	2,356	2,629	3,297	2,591	1,846	2,720	2,720	2,720
Imports (RM mil.)	822	933	778	987	903	973	1,028	929	956	828	793	668	836	836	836
Natural Rubber Production (Tonnes)	183	157	68	141	298	382	391	456	398	383	258	283	293	293	293
Crude Palm Oil (Tonnes)	304,638	384,803	402,720	363,422	347,068	360,907	372,935	445,587	436,752	437,282	396,710	306,882	329,671	329,671	329,671

Note: n.a. - not applicable

Chart 2: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Malaysia, Q1 2023 – Q1 2026

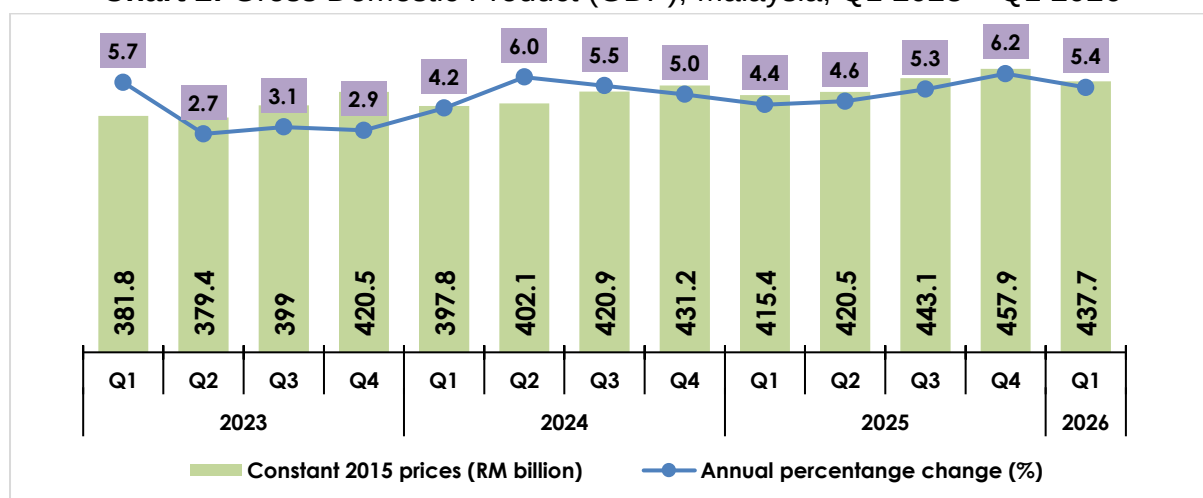


Chart 3: Gross Domestic Product (GDP), Sabah, 2021–2024

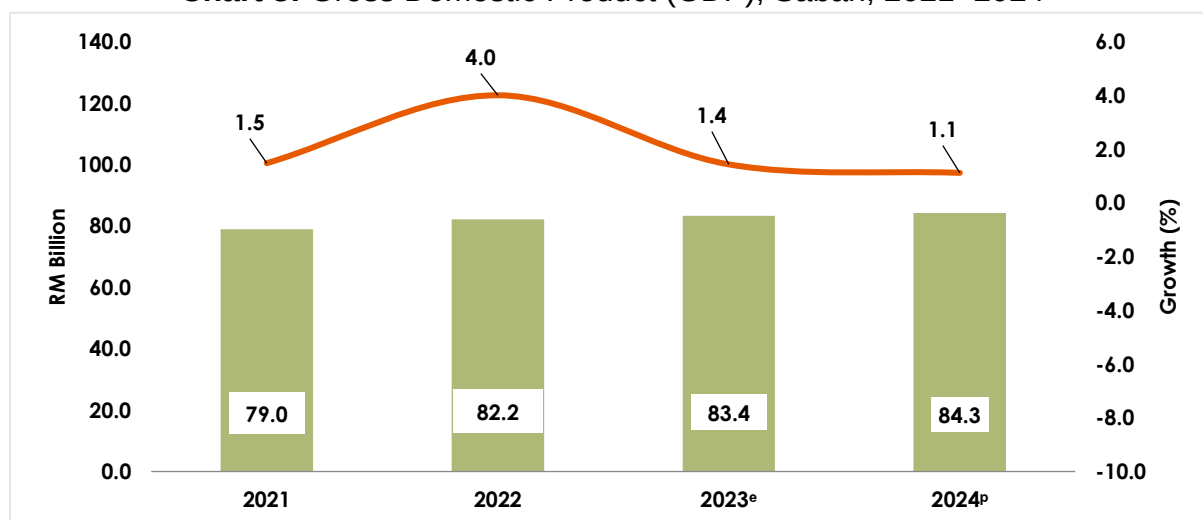


Chart 4 : Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by Sector, Sabah, 2021– 2024

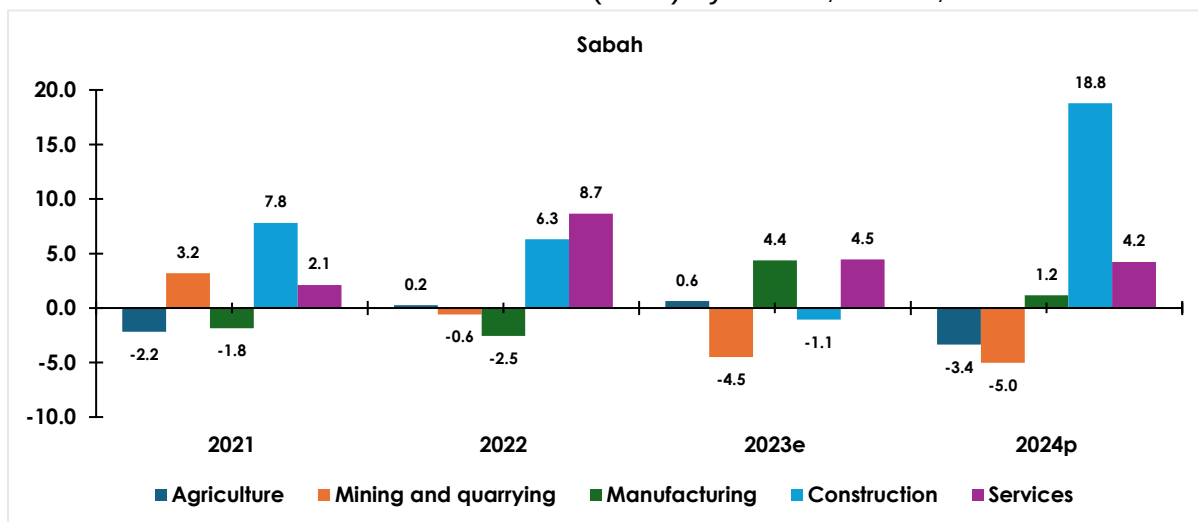


Chart 5: Consumer Price Index, Sabah, March 2024 – March 2026

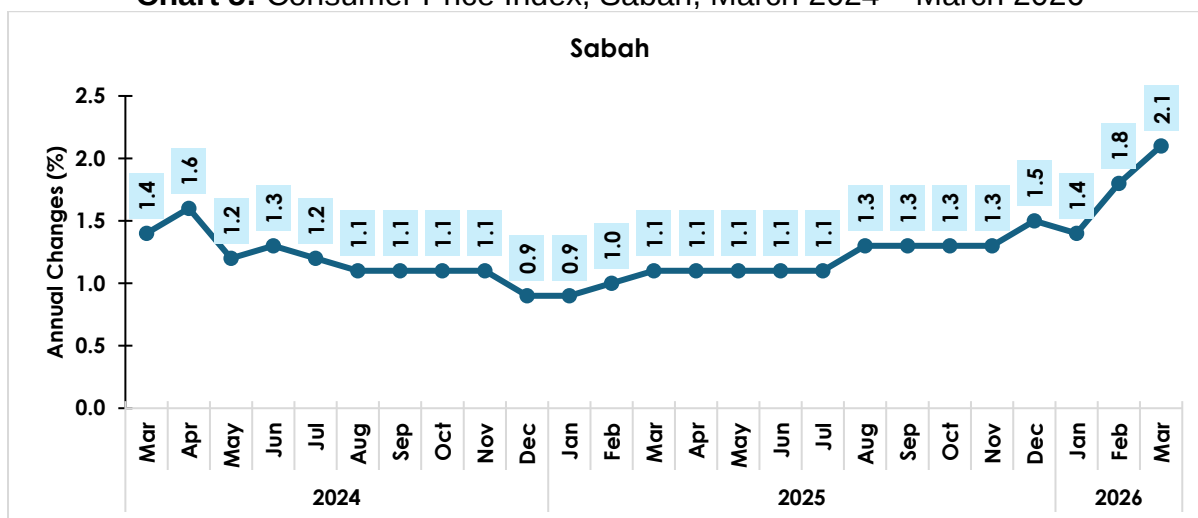


Chart 6: External Trade(Exports), Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

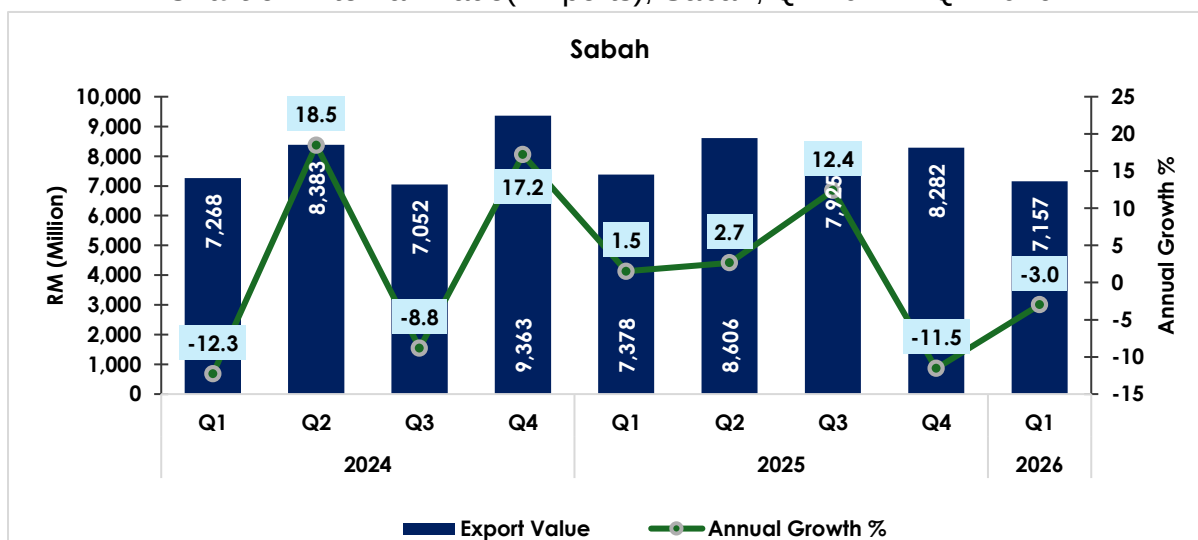


Chart 7: External Trade (Imports), Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

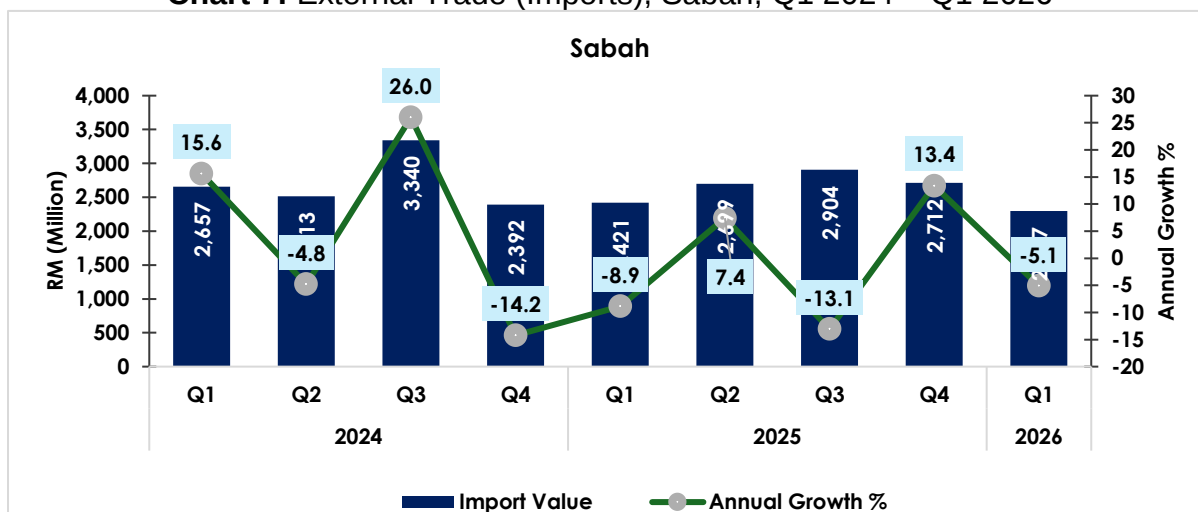


Chart 8: Principal Statistics of Labour Force, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

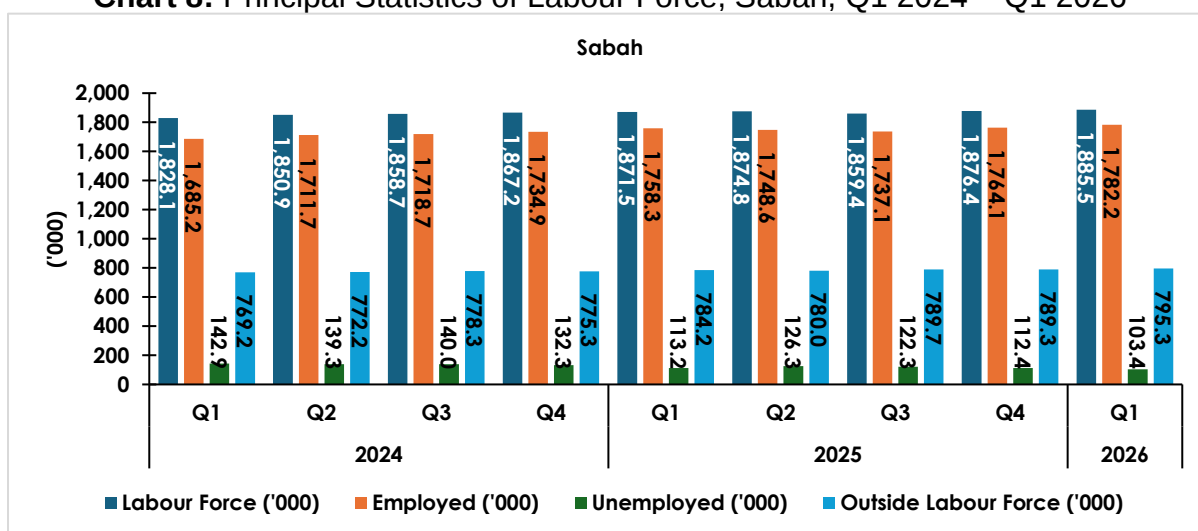


Chart 9: Labour Force Participation Rate and Unemployment Rate, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

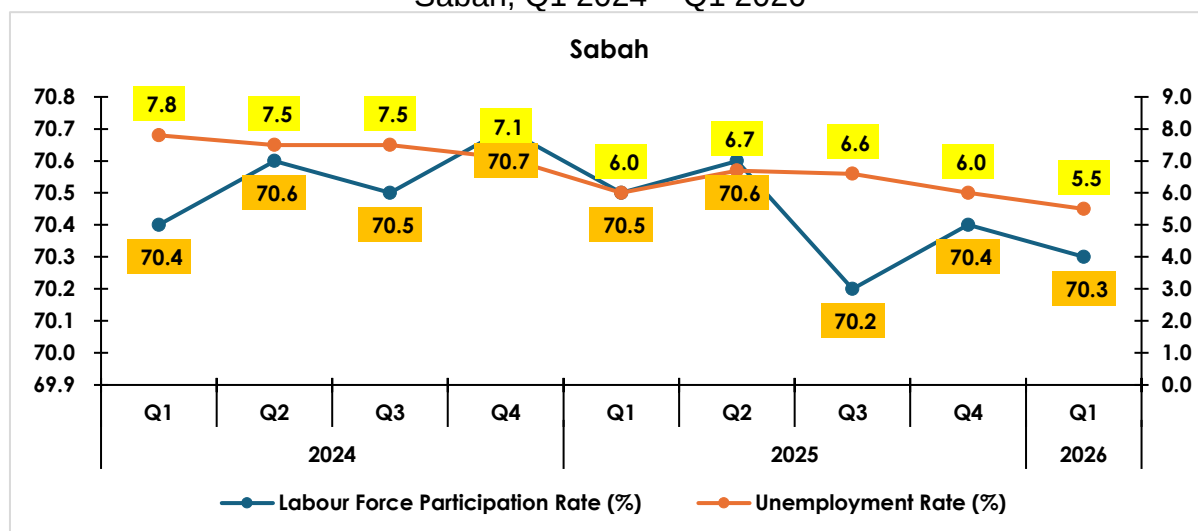


Chart 10: Net Balance of Current Business Situation and Expectation for The Next Six Months, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

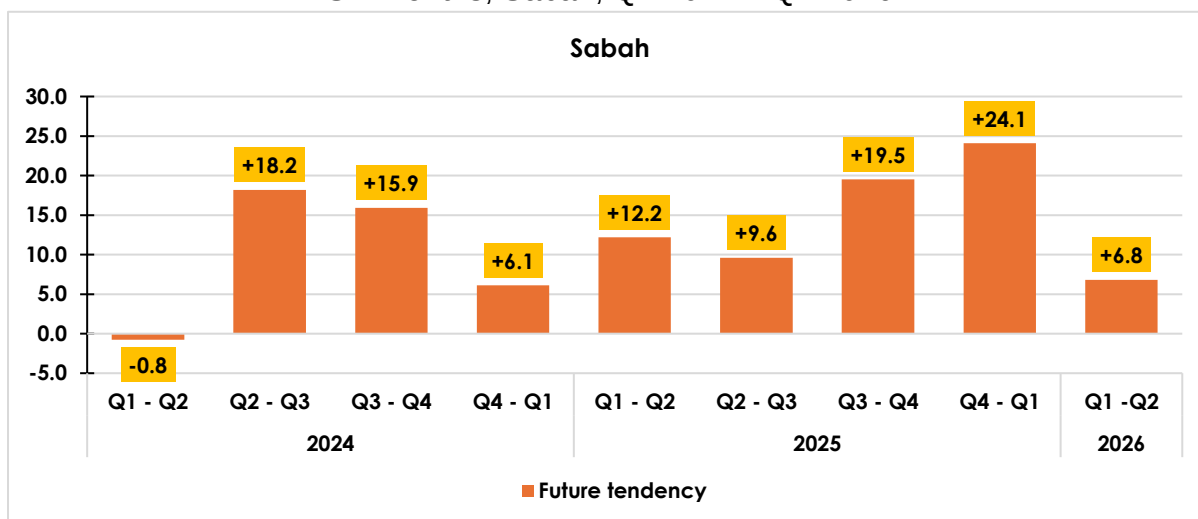


Chart 11: Manufacturing Industry Capacity Utilisation, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

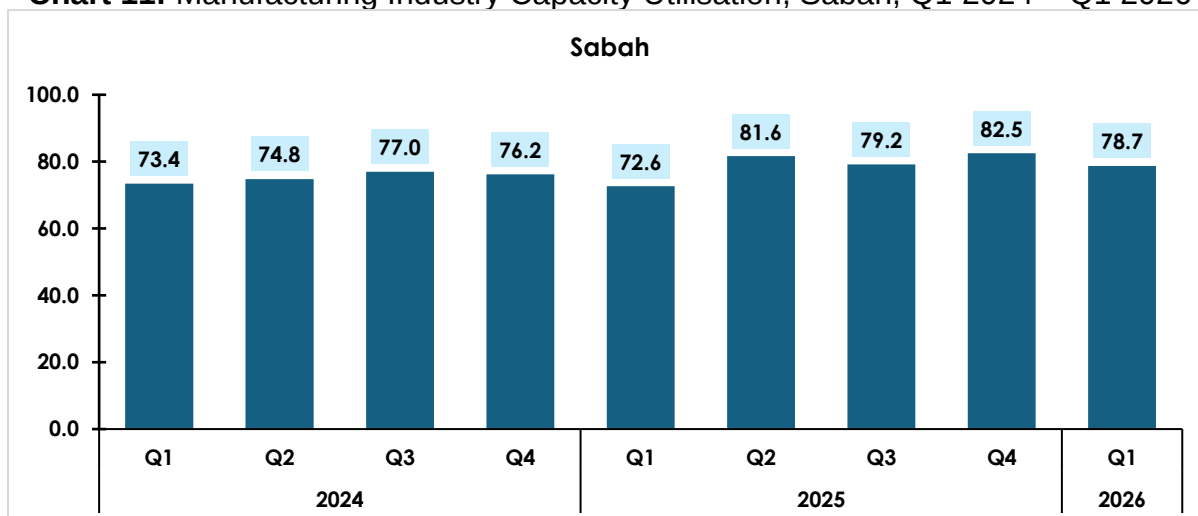


Chart 12: Value of Work Done Construction Sector, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

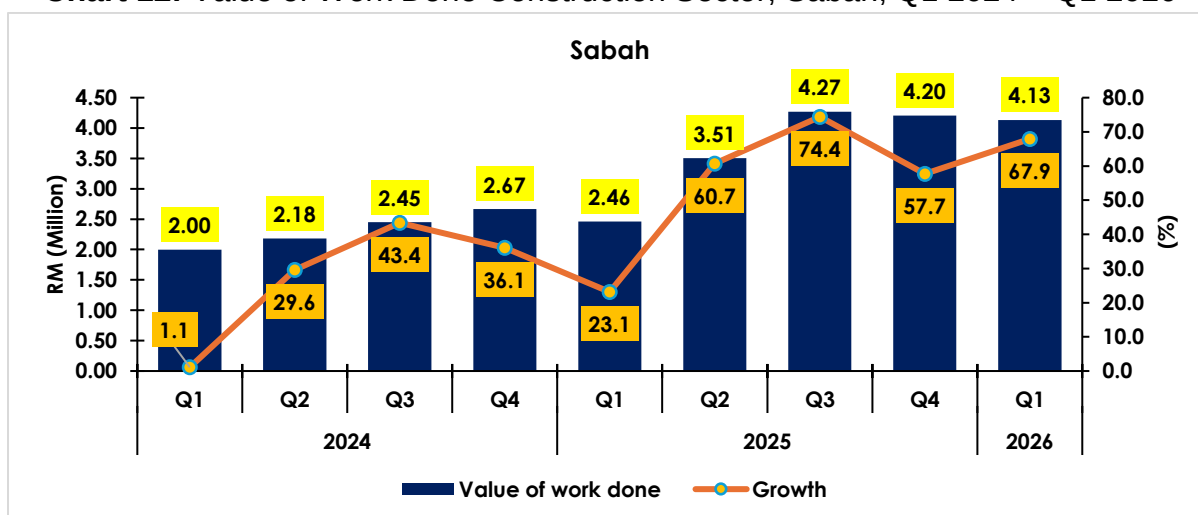


Chart 13: Crude Oil Palm, Sabah, Mar 2025 – Mar 2026

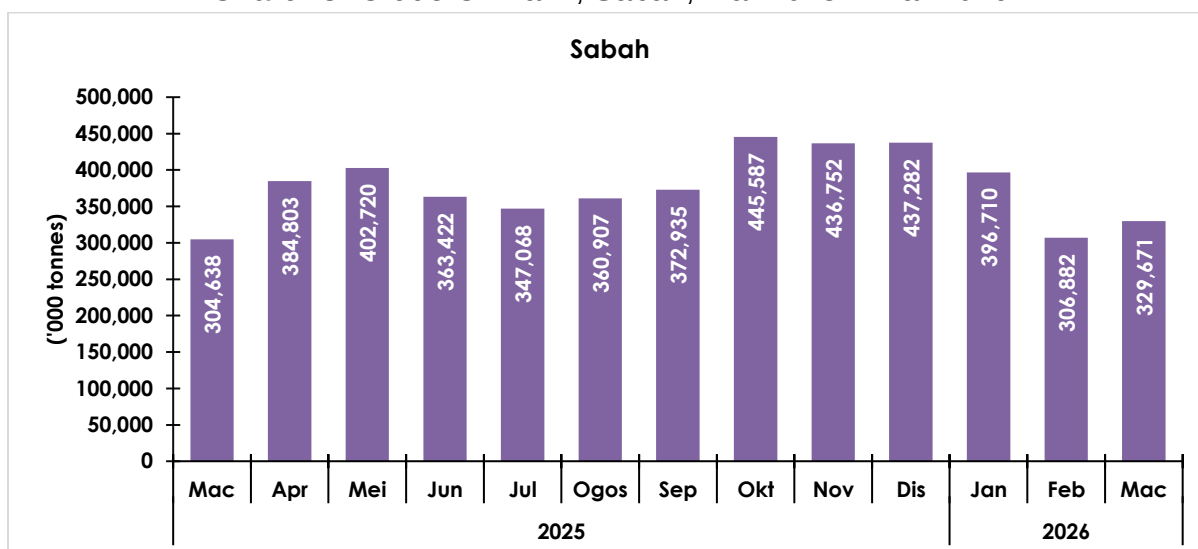


Chart 14: Production of natural rubber, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

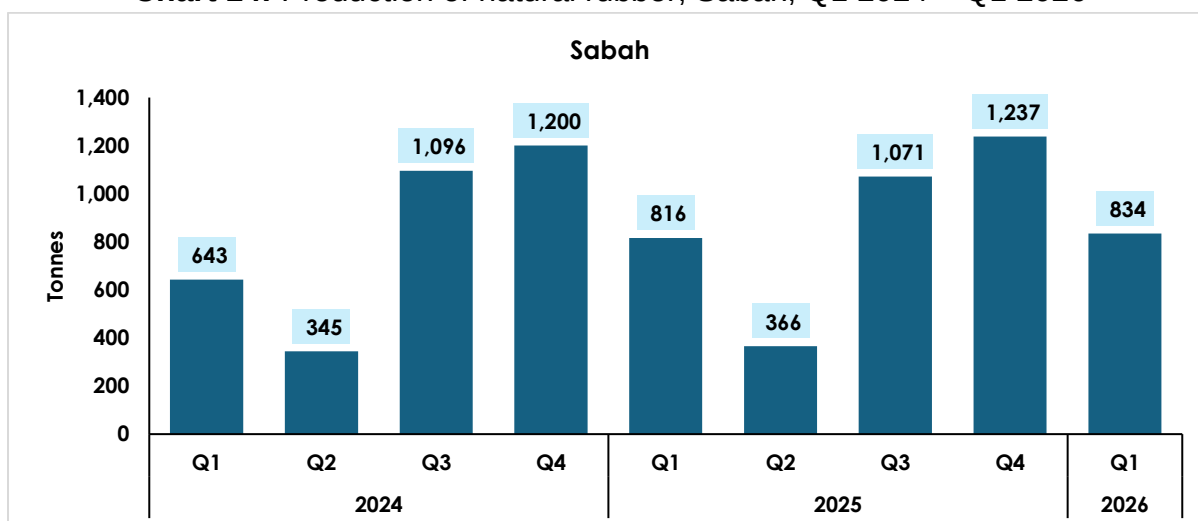


Chart 15: Total Population, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

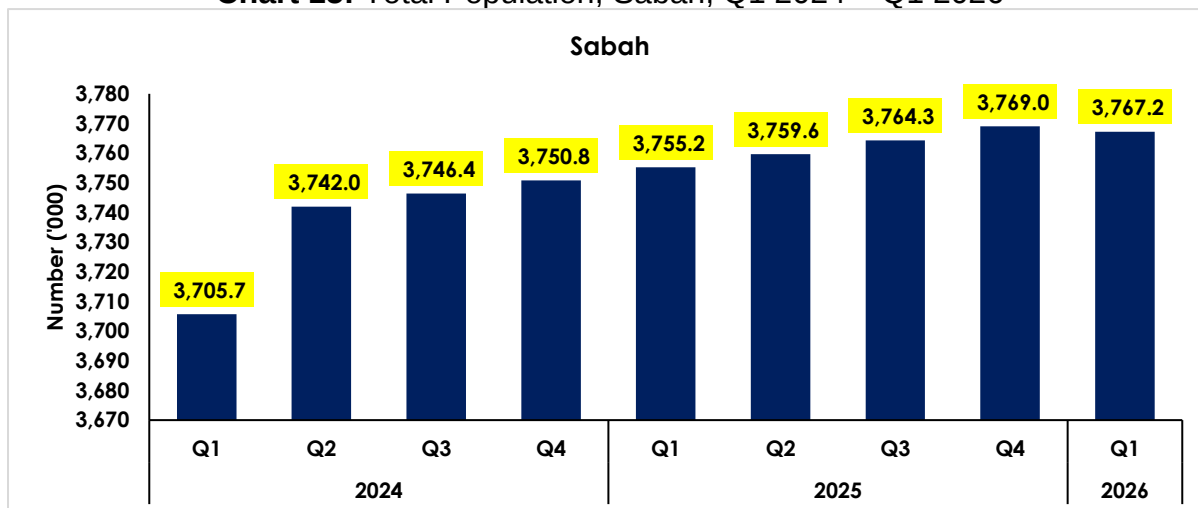


Chart 16: Vital Statistics on Live Births and Deaths, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

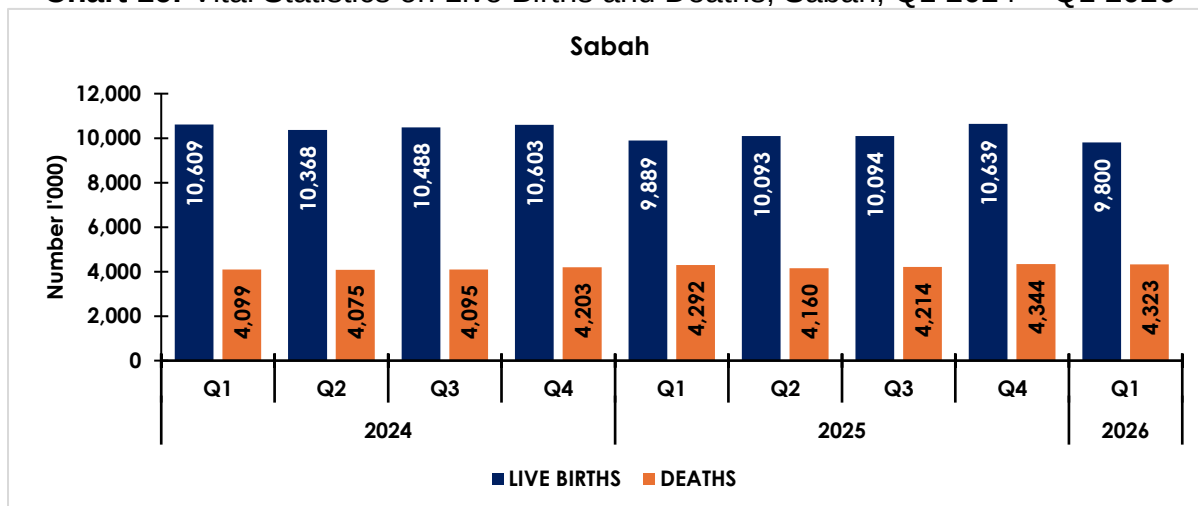


Chart 17: Supply of Residential Units, Sabah, Q1 2024 – Q1 2026

