

Asean GDP expected to reach RM18.39 trillion by 2020

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KULAI: With the imminent establishment of the Asean Economic Community (AEC) by year-end, the region's economic growth as measured by gross domestic product (GDP) is forecast to reach US\$4.7 trillion (RM18.39 trillion) by 2020.

International Trade and Industry Deputy Minister Datuk Lee Chee Leong said collectively, Asean is now the seventh largest economy in the world with a combined GDP estimated at US\$2.4 trillion.

"Asean's real GDP growth in 2014 stood at 4.6% and it is projected to accelerate to 4.9% this year and above 5% next year," he said at the opening of Beyonics iPark@Indahpura Campus.

Lee added that AEC would be formed during the upcoming 27th Asean Summit, to be held in Kuala Lumpur later this month.

"The AEC seeks to create a single market and production base in Asean, offering enormous opportunities for companies based in the region of 620 million people," he said, urging investors to view Malaysia as their gateway to the

growing Asean market.

Lee also said that investment in the electrical and electronic (E&E) industry in Malaysia registered a growth of 13.6% from the approved investment of RM9.8bil in 2013 to RM11.1bil last year.

"The recent Budget 2016 announcement placed strong emphasis on the role of the manufacturing sector, particularly the E&E, machinery and equipment (M&E), aerospace and medical devices industries.

"Malaysia provides a strong base for the development of the E&E industry, especially in the semicon-

ductor, consumer electronics, home appliances, industrial electronics and related supporting industries," he said.

He added that the M&E industry in the country is moving up the value chain and shifting its focus on high technology, high value-added and specialised M&E.

"One of the targeted sectors under M&E is robotic and factory equipment," he said, adding that investment in this industry saw a healthy 26% growth last year and exports for M&E also grew 11% last year.

Lee also welcomed the invest-

ment made by Beyonics, which is a leading manufacturer of high technology electronic products, precision plastics and metal component.

Beyonics chief executive officer Michael Ng said the 2.68ha plant would be its largest among four other campuses in Kota Tinggi, Changshu in China as well as Marsiling and Tuas in Singapore.

"We invested some RM100mil to build this new campus, of which the products will be distributed worldwide including to the US, Europe, UK and Asia, especially Japan," he said.