

Malaysia inks landmark TPPA

The STAR - 5/2/16 (pg. 8).



Historic moment: Mustapa signing the TPPA trade deal at the SkyCity Convention Centre in Auckland, New Zealand. — EPA

It joins 11 other nations in signing pact

AUCKLAND: Malaysia and 11 other countries have inked the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) which is set to expand markets, reduce tariffs and promote freer trade.

International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed signed the comprehensive trade pact on behalf of Malaysia at a ceremony here yesterday.

Datuk J. Jayasiri, Malaysia's chief negotiator for the TPPA who has been in the thick of negotiations from the start, was also present at the historic event here in New Zealand.

Bernama learnt that the ceremony at the SkyCity Convention Centre in downtown Auckland started at 9am local time (2pm Malaysian time) with a colourful cultural performance followed by a ministerial meeting before the signing.

The 12 countries in the TPPA are New Zealand, Australia, Chile, Mexico, Japan, Peru, Canada, Vietnam, United States, Singapore, Brunei and Malaysia.

The signing of the TPPA, which will represent nearly 40% of global gross domestic product (GDP) worth US\$30tril (RM126tril), comes

after five years and 19 rounds of tough negotiations.

Malaysia joined the TPPA in the third round of negotiations in October 2010.

The country's inclusion in the trade pact is expected to boost Malaysia's GDP by US\$107bil (RM449.5bil) to US\$211bil (RM886.5bil) from 2018 to 2027.

Investments are projected to increase by US\$136bil (RM571bil) to US\$239bil (RM1 trillion) over the same period, largely due to higher investment growth in textiles, construction and distributive trade.

The TPPA is aimed at promoting economic integration to liberalise trade and investment as well as spur economic growth and social benefits.

More than 90% of the economic gains will be due to lower non-tariff measures.

The trade pact is also expected to create new opportunities for workers and businesses, contribute to raising living standards of 800 million people, benefit consumers, reduce poverty and promote sustainable growth. — *Bernama*

Mustapa: TPPA brings greater market access for businesses

AUCKLAND: Businesses in Malaysia, including small and medium scale enterprises, are looking forward to greater market access opportunities under the newly signed Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), Minister of International and Industry Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said here.

He said the textile, electrical and electronics, palm oil and rubber industries were also among the sectors keen to exploit opportunities arising from an expanded market and lower tariffs under the new pact.

"We believe market access is very important for Malaysia, especially with countries we don't have free trade agreements with such as the United States, Canada, Mexico and Peru.

"Market access is indeed one of the reasons we are in the TPPA," he said at a joint press conference after signing the landmark trade pact on behalf of Malaysia with 11 other signatories yesterday.

Besides market access, the TPPA was also about tariffs, standards transparency, govern-

ance and cooperation, which included development of the small and medium enterprises, he said.

The 11 other countries have two years to ratify the agreement before it comes into force in 2018.

"We have taken unprecedented steps by going to Parliament although it is not required under our laws. The purpose was to promote greater debate and discussion, and of course to get a better buy-in from various stakeholders," Mustafa added.

The agreement was overwhelmingly approved by both the Lower House and Upper House on Jan 27 and Jan 28 respectively.

Mustapa reiterated that Malaysia was probably the only country among the 12 nations that had received Parliament's approval and ratification.

But challenges remain as Malaysia needs to amend 26 laws and regulations on labour and intellectual property rights to meet the requirements of the TPPA. — *Bernama*