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Record exhibitors at SEA's largest furniture event

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF), which is the largest furniture trade show in South-East Asia, is off to a great start with a record number of 714 exhibitors from 15 countries.

The four-day event, from March 1 to 4, was officiated by Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre here yesterday.

"The furniture industry is the most dynamic downstream activity in the timber value chain.

"As such, it will remain the key driver of timber industry growth. It is also one of the most successful stories of Malaysian SMEs (small and medium enterprises)," said Johari in his opening speech.

He said the fair is expected to bring in US\$1.3bil (RM6.2bil) in sales.

"Trade shows such as MIFF play a vital role in facilitating trade and reaching out to new markets. Under the National Agri Commodity Policy 2030, the export value of timber and timber products is targeted to hit RM28bil by 2025 and RM32.8bil by 2030," he said.

Johari noted that there had been a downward trend for international trade in timber and timber products by 13.2%.

"This is largely due to a weakening in housing demand in the United States, which is the biggest



Trade show tour: Johari and Tan (second right) attending the launch of MIFF at Mitec in Kuala Lumpur. — IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star

buyer of Malaysian furniture and accounts for over half of the country's furniture exports.

"Despite these challenging times, there are always opportunities for us to grab.

"Malaysian furniture companies must remain competitive and capitalise on future trends to target the right consumer groups.

"We must tap on ecommerce platforms as an exciting new track for business growth to extend our reach to consumers in faraway markets," he said.

MIFF chairman Datuk Dr Tan Chin Huat said this is the 30th

anniversary for MIFF since its inception in 1995.

"This year is another record year for MIFF; we have expanded from 15 to 17 exhibition halls, and there is a 6% increase in exhibitors from last year," he said.

Tan said the fair showcases Malaysian furniture and dynamic skills of furniture makers.

"Malaysian furniture makers have grown from local companies to become global exporters.

"Over the next four days, we expect to welcome 20,000 visitors from all over the world."

Guests who took a tour of the

exhibition were Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation deputy chief executive officer Abu Bakar Yusof, Forest Research Institute Malaysia's Forest Products Division director Dr Wan Tarmeze Wan Ariffin and Malaysian Timber Industry Board chairman Datuk Larry Sng Wei Shien, Malaysian Timber Council deputy chief executive officer Mokhtar Mohd Yaacob, Muar Furniture Association president Steve Ong, Star Media Group chief business officer Lydia Wang, and FEM Mediahaus director Virginia Lim.