



LUNCHEON REMARKS BY

**TENGKU DATUK SERI UTAMA ZAFRUL AZIZ
CHAIRMAN OF MIDA**

FOR



**DATA CENTRE NEXUS 2026
14 SEPTEMBER 2026 | HILTON KUALA LUMPUR**

SALUTATIONS (TBC)

- YBhg. Datuk Sikh Shamsul Ibrahim Sikh Abdul Majid
CEO of Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA);
- Distinguished Guests;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh, Salam Malaysia
MADANI, and a very Good Afternoon.

1. It is a pleasure to join you for lunch today, and to see such strong representation from across Malaysia's data centre ecosystem.
2. Let me also record my thanks to the 23 partners — our Anchor Partners, Banking Partners, operators and technology companies — who helped make Data Centre Nexus 2026 possible. Your support means a great deal.
3. Before I turn to the numbers, allow me one small observation. We call this business “the cloud” — a lovely, weightless word for an industry that, in practice, drinks water like a small town and runs on enough electricity to light one up. **If the cloud had a school report, it would read: excellent at storage, still learning moderation.** Our task this afternoon is to help it grow up.

4. Today's turnout reflects real momentum. **From 2021 to the first half of 2026, Malaysia recorded RM385.7 billion** in data-centre-related investments. That did not happen by chance — it **builds on more than 50 years of semiconductor and technology development** that few countries can match.
5. We are grateful for the confidence investors have placed in Malaysia. But attracting investment is only the first step. **Our next responsibility is to build an industry that is sustainable — and that benefits all Malaysians.**
6. Beyond the headline numbers, MIDA keeps asking one question: **how do we turn this investment into lasting, tangible value for the wider Malaysian economy?**
7. Data centres are a key driver of our digital economy. But their real value lies beyond the data halls themselves. We need to show that the spillover is real and quantifiable.
8. Global hyperscalers are anchoring Malaysia as ASEAN's digital hub. That scale should translate into **thousands of high-value jobs in construction, engineering and technology operations** — and growing opportunities for Malaysian SMEs in facilities management, systems integration and the cloud supply chain.
9. Realising this will take **real investment — in energy security, connectivity, industrial infrastructure, and the circular use of resources** like water.

10. Let me be specific about what ‘gold standard’ looks like elsewhere in the world. In Hamina, Finland, Google converted a decommissioned paper mill into a data centre cooled by seawater from the Baltic¹ — reusing existing infrastructure instead of building from scratch, and recovering waste heat to warm homes nearby. In Odense, Denmark, Meta’s data centre now supplies surplus heat to the city’s district heating network, warming thousands of homes².
11. These are not charity projects. They are proof that **circularity and capacity can grow together. Malaysia should aim as high. And we must move quickly and systematically** – as outlined in our National Industrial Master Plan 2030 and the National Semiconductor Strategy.
12. **Why? Because data centres provide the digital backbone that catalyses other industries** — advanced manufacturing among them. That same backbone **enables AI training, cloud services and chip design** — strengthening Malaysia’s place in the global compute economy. There’s also the geopolitics aspect to all this.
13. Your experience on the ground matters just as much to us. **Tell us where the friction is, so our policies stay practical and responsive to industry and business growth**, as well as to the people we serve.

¹ <https://datacenters.google/locations/hamina-finland/>

² <https://www.ramboll.com/projects/energy/meta-surplus-heat-to-district-heating>

14. That is why we organised the Data Centre Nexus. **Complex challenges are best solved together — government and industry, side by side** — so this sector's rapid growth can benefit Malaysians and our SMEs broadly, not narrowly.
15. Today's discussions, exhibitions and business-matching sessions are designed to turn conversations into commercial opportunities, and short-term deals into long-term partnerships.
16. Capacity-building can take many forms. **Programmes like AWS's re/Start, which has trained local talent for data centre and cloud careers in countries like Ireland and Singapore, are a model worth studying.** Malaysia has the talent. We now need the pipeline to match it.
17. None of this works without discipline on resources. The examples I shared earlier are the standard we should hold ourselves to.
18. In the end, success will not be measured by the size of the investment we attract, but by the value we build around it: **stronger Malaysian businesses, deeper local capabilities, and real opportunities for our people.** Capital owners and facilitators, like banks, must also play their part.
19. With that, thank you to everyone here for being part of this conversation — and my appreciation to the MIDA team, our partners, and everyone who made today's programme possible.

20. **I look forward to seeing today's conversations turn into tomorrow's opportunities for Malaysia.**
21. On that note, Ladies and Gentlemen, enjoy your lunch and have a productive afternoon session. Thank you.