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Three homegrown M&E players announce RM520mil expansion in Penang

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THREE large local companies (LLCs), namely Greatech Technology Berhad (Greatech), Pentamaster Corporation Berhad (Pentamaster) and UWC Berhad (UWC), will invest a total of RM520 million in their expansion projects in Penang.

Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow today witnessed the official purchase of land by the three renowned companies in the equipment manufacturing supply chain from the Penang Development Corporation (PDC) at the PDC headquarters in Bayan Baru.

Chow, who is also the PDC chairman, said they have collectively taken up 35 acres in Batu Kawan Industrial Park and would commence their projects in the first quarter of 2022 which are expected to create up to 1,300 new job opportunities for local talent.



Chow says Penang is on the right trajectory to transform into a global front-to-backend equipment manufacturing hub.

“The decision of these three companies to reinvest in Penang demonstrates their continued confidence in our state’s robust industrial ecosystem.

“I’m glad that today, Penang not only has a solid reputation as a preferred location for MNCs (multinational corporations), but it is also known as an entrepreneurial state that provides a conducive environment for homegrown companies to scale and thrive.

“I’m hopeful that the continuous growth of the LLCs will translate into more business opportunities and cultivate knowledge transfer to the local SMEs (small medium enterprises), allowing them to be nurtured and more LLCs to be established in Penang,” Chow said in his speech at the investment announcement ceremony of Greotech, Pentamaster and UWC in Penang.

Chow added that Penang’s domestic direct investment (DDI) climbed to a decade high of RM3.6 billion in 2020, representing 20% of the state’s total direct investment.



Chow (fourth from left) together with (from left) Chuah, Loo, Mohd Bazid, Ooi, Ng, Muhd Ghaddaffi and Lee at the Investment Announcement ceremony.

He also said in the first half of 2021, local companies contributed RM700 million of direct investments, equivalent to 54% of the total direct investments in Penang.

Chow continued: "Penang has recorded RM10.3 billion of approved manufacturing investments in machinery and equipment (M&E) during the period from 2016 to June 2021, representing 56% of Malaysia's total in the said industry. Notably, investments from M&E reached a record high in 2020 with RM5.7 billion, contributing over 80% of the country's total in M&E.

"I am very proud that these Penang homegrown companies' capabilities in providing cutting edge engineering solutions and cost-effective equipment are being acknowledged by the global technology frontiers.

"With the flourishing development in the M&E industry in Penang, I am confident that Penang is on the right trajectory to transform into a global front-to-backend equipment manufacturing hub."

Chow also expressed his appreciation to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (Mida), InvestPenang and PDC for their synergistic efforts in engaging investors and facilitating project implementations.



Ooi (right) and Mohd Bazid (left) showing the land purchase agreement. With them is Chow.

Greatech independent non-executive chairman Ooi Hooi Kiang said with a total built-up area of 265,000sq ft, the new facility in Batu Kawan would house high-value designing and assembly activities for new products that cater for the emerging industries, namely life science and semiconductor.

“We target to complete the construction by Q3 2022. The new facility will create 500 new jobs, of which 300 will be engineers and the remaining 200 will be assembly workers and machinists. In all, Greatech will have a total of 1,300 employees,” Ooi said.



Chuah (right) and Mohd Bazid (left) with their land purchase document, witnessed by Chow.

Pentamaster executive chairman Chuah Choon Bin said they have been steadily growing their business for over 30 years since the company's inception in 1991.

“We strongly believe in the economic opportunities in Penang, which have allowed SMEs to step up and step out.

“With a RM120 million investment, this 500,000sq ft state-of-the-art facility will bring out total built-up area to 750,000sq ft.

“This expansion will be supported by 300 engineers to accommodate our automation solutions for the medical industry, factories and warehouses as well as test farm for wafer burn-in, optical sensor testing and contract manufacturing of equipment,” Chuah said.



Ng (right) and Mohd Bazid (left) showing land purchase agreement. Looking on is Chow.

UWC executive director and Group chief executive officer Datuk Ng Chai Eng said over a period of three years, UWC would be investing RM200 million in the expansion project.

“We’ve been continuously expanding our facilities and capacities to cater to the strong growth of our customers in the semiconductor and life science industries.

“I am delighted that our expansion project will create 300 engineering positions and 200 technician vacancies for the local talent,” Ng said.

Also present at the ceremony were Chief Minister of Penang special investment adviser Datuk Seri Lee Kah Choon, PDC chief executive officer Datuk Mohd Bazid Abd Kahar, InvestPenang CEO Datuk Loo Lee Lian and Mida Penang director Muhd Ghaddaffi Sardar.

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