



Halal

AN IDEAL RESOURCE FOR SHARI'AH COMPLIANT BUSINESS AND LIFESTYLE



Thailand's Grand Ambition

With stronger national coordination and expanding halal capabilities, Thailand positions itself as a regional gateway, using Grand Halal Bangkok 2026 to showcase its growing industries, certification strength and global ambitions in the halal economy. - **P08-10**



Ensuring halal amid trade pact

The Malaysia-US Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) strengthens bilateral cooperation while maintaining Malaysia's strict halal framework. - **p05**

A showcase of excellence

MIHAS 2025 returned under the theme "Pinnacle of Halal Excellence", focusing on trade outcomes and innovation. - **p14-15**



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@Halal says ...

Where We Hold Firm



Alaysia deepens its economic partnerships, the recently concluded Malaysia-US Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) has revived an important and familiar debate: Can we expand trade without compromising

halal integrity?

compromising halal integrity?

The government's answer is clear – we can, and we must.

Malaysia's halal ecosystem has earned global respect precisely because it has never been shaped by external demands.

It was built through meticulous processes, grounded in Islamic scholarship, and decades of regulatory refinement. At its centre stands JAKIM – recognised worldwide not merely as a regulator, but as a guardian of trust. That trust is the real strength behind Malaysia's halal leadership, and no trade pact should ever dilute it.

This is why Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz's reassurance during the ASEAN Summit 2025 mattered. His reminder that "Malaysia's halal standards are determined by Malaysia, certified by JAKIM and safeguarded by Muslims in this country" reaffirms a non-negotiable principle: Our halal framework is not something to be adjusted for convenience or foreign pressure.

There is no denying that the ART agreement opens economic doors. Streamlined procedures, reciprocal market access and regulatory collaboration can boost Malaysia's competitiveness in a world where trade blocs are tightening. But economic value must never supersede halal assurance.

The burden of proof remains squarely on foreign certifiers, and Malaysia's rigorous audit-based recognition system stands as the firewall that shields consumers from ambiguity.

As global demand for halal products accelerates, more countries will seek entry into Malaysia's market – and into Malaysia's circle of trust. The way forward is not to retreat from trade, but to ensure all engagement takes place on Malaysia's terms, with our principles intact.

Our halal ecosystem has long served as a global benchmark. Protecting it is both a strategic advantage and a religious responsibility.

The ART may signal new opportunities – but the standard-bearer of Malaysia's halal assurance must remain unwaveringly rooted in our institutions and values.

In trade, we may compromise. In halal, we do not. And that must remain Malaysia's unshakeable position.



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Malaysia and New Zealand renewed their halal cooperation at the ASEAN Summit 2025 for new market opportunities across ASEAN.



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Celebrating modest elegance

IN2MOTIONFEST 2025 is Indonesia's largest platform for modest fashion, emphasising its role as a global leader in modest fashion.

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The 'WOW' factor in Matanog

- The WOW Matanog Special Economic Zone-Bangsamoro Halal Park marks a major step toward economic renewal in Matanog.
- The project aims to transform a conflict-affected municipality into a halal-driven growth hub.
- Multiple MoUs were signed with Malaysian, Chinese, and local partners to support long-term development.

MATANOG, a municipality in Maguindanao del Norte, Philippines, has long been associated with conflict and limited economic opportunities. For many in the region, development has been gradual and fragile.

However, this event signalled a turning point. The event drew attention not only for its formal proceedings but for the sense of collective purpose it generated. Leaders, investors, and community members gathered to witness the start of a programme that could shift Matanog's trajectory from a history of instability toward economic opportunity.

The "WOW" in the project, stand for "Woman of War", symbolising resilience, determination, and community agency in this transformative moment. For many participants, the ceremony and seminar were tangible demonstrations that development was moving from concept to action. Women and youth actively engaged in the sessions, while local businesses explored halal certification opportunities.

PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION

The International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART) at the International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM) was honoured to receive an official invitation from the Iranun Development Council (IDC) in the Philippines to participate in this remarkable event.

The IDC, in partnership with the Matanog Development Bangsamoro Incorporated (MDBI), successfully concluded a series of activities at the Marayag Pavilion, Marayag Lake, to support the development of the halal industry within the Iranun Corridor.

The event gathered key officials, including Chief Minister Abdulraof A. Macacua, Governor Datu Tucao O. Mastura, Congresswoman Bai Dimple I. Mastura, and IDC Chairperson Mayor Cahar P. Ibay.

PIONEERING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The WMSEZ-BHP programme stands as a pioneering private economic development initiative in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM). The WMSEZ-BHP programme stands as a pioneering private economic development initiative in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

It was created to drive sustainable, inclusive growth through strategic economic zones that strengthen the local



**MOHD HAFIZD
MAHAMAD
MAIFIAH**



**YUMI ZUHANI
HAS-YUN HASHIM**



**WAN SYIBRAH
HANISAH WAN
SULAIMAN**

International Institute for Halal Research and Training (INHART)
International Islamic University Malaysia (IIUM)
Municipality of Matanog, Maguindanao del Norte, Philippines.
On Nov 10-11, the WOW Matanog Special Economic Zone-Bangsamoro Halal Park (WMSEZ-BHP) Development Conference and groundbreaking ceremony for the project site took place, marking a significant step in the Bangsamoro community's development.

halal ecosystem. This innovative park is envisioned to attract both domestic and international investments, generate employment opportunities, and stimulate economic growth across the region.

Organised by the MDBI, the programme offers a crucial platform for WMSEZ-BHP to highlight its progress while strengthening Bangsamoro's halal positioning through its established and emerging economic zones.

By establishing a clear framework for infrastructure, skills development, and market access, WMSEZ-BHP provides the community with a practical pathway to participate in economic activities previously limited.

Day 1: Groundbreaking ceremony and MoU signings

The opening session began with speeches by MDBI President Mohammad Zahaire Bansil Guro, and Zohria S. Bansil-Guro, Mayor of the Municipality of Matanog, Maguindanao del Norte. Hon. Abdulraof A. Macacua, Chief Minister of BARMM, officiated the programme, emphasising its significance for regional development.

The programme continued with the groundbreaking ceremony for the "WOW Matanog Special Economic Zone," marking a key milestone in establishing the Bangsamoro Halal Park. This initiative is envisioned to become a key catalyst for the growth of the halal industry, trade expansion, and socio-economic development throughout the region.

The event brought together international and local investors, BARMM officials, and representatives from the provincial government of Maguindanao del Norte, led by Governor Datu Tucao O. Mastura. The Local Government of Matanog, under Mayor Zohria Bansil Guro, warmly welcomed the delegation and reiterated its strong commitment to supporting the initiative.



Figure 1. Groundbreaking ceremony of the WOW-Matanog Special Economic Zone, attended by local leaders, community representatives, and project stakeholders.

Dato' Jack Yap, co-founder and EVP of MDBI, outlined the initiative's development plan, emphasising that now is the time to take decisive action. He highlighted the need for collaborative commitment from both local community members and investors to develop the physical and human capital required to advance the mission.

This was followed by a brief lecture from Atty Sukarno A. Abas, Executive Director of the Bangsamoro Economic Zone Authority (BEZA), who provided further insights into the various incentives, operational frameworks, and regional benefits available to prospective investors.



Figure 2 : Guests officiating the groundbreaking gimmick, marking the beginning of a new chapter for the project.

A key activity was the signing of Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with local and international partners, including entities from Malaysia and China. INHART, IIUM, proudly signed a MoU with the Iranun Development Council (IDC).

This collaboration reflects a shared commitment to advancing halal research, education, and community development, with a special focus on empowering the Iranun community through halalan toyyiban initiatives. Through this MoU, INHART and IDC underscore the commitment to fostering international collaboration and working together to promote knowledge exchange, collaborative projects, and sustainable growth guided by the principles of integrated halal development.



Figure 3: A meaningful partnership begins—INHART and Iranun Development Council Sign MoU to empower the Iranun community through halalan toyyiban initiatives.

Day 2: Halal Seminar

On the second day, INHART proudly conducted a short halal seminar, actively engaging participants from the local community. Guided by the inspiring theme, "Transforming the Narrative: From War Zone to Economic Zone," the seminar highlighted the immense potential of the halal industry to drive development and sustainable economic empowerment in the Bangsamoro region.

INHART was honoured to contribute to this impactful initiative by sharing knowledge and best practices for building a Halalan Toyyiban ecosystem that promotes prosperity, inclusivity, and resilience.

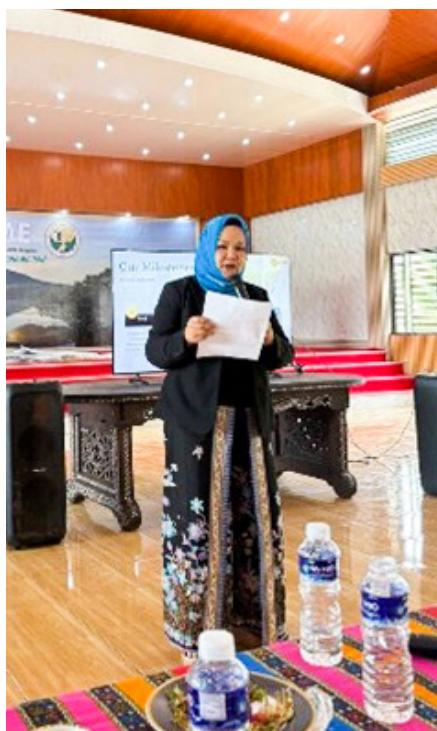


Figure 4 (a) : The Halal Seminar gathered a diverse group of participants, including industry players, investors, key stakeholders, and community representatives. Figure 4 (b): Mayor Zohria Bansil Guro addresses the delegates.

In the welcoming address, Vice-Mayor Sanaira Ibay Ali-Imam highlighted the important role of the halal industry as a driving force for both economic growth

and moral development. The session began with Prof. Yumi Zuhani Has-Yun Hashim, who delivered an insightful overview of the halal ecosystem, outlining its components, governance structure, and the interconnected roles of government agencies, industry players, and certification bodies.

She also discussed the current landscape of the halal industry in Malaysia and globally, emphasising emerging trends, market opportunities, and the growing demand for halal products and services.



Figure 5: The Halal Seminar received overwhelming support from industry players, investors, key stakeholders, and community representatives.

This was followed by Dr Wan Syibrah Hanisah, who conducted a brief halal awareness training session covering the principles of halal and haram, with particular emphasis on identifying and assessing halal raw materials and ingredients for halal products.

The programme concluded with Assoc Prof Dr Mohd Hafidz Mahamad Maifiah, who explained Malaysia's halal certification framework under JAKIM, including processes and key requirements.



Figure 6: Empowering participants with comprehensive knowledge, INHART delivered multiple key topics on the halal industry ecosystem.

Transitioning smoothly from Day 1 to Day 2, the seminar built upon the momentum of the groundbreaking ceremony. Participants not only witnessed

development but also actively learned how to implement halal practices, making the knowledge shared immediately relevant to their own businesses and community initiatives.

EXPERIENCE FROM THE VISIT

The visit has offered valuable insights into the cultural and community landscape, revealing significant potential to develop their own halal industry ecosystem in the region.

Overall, the groundbreaking ceremony symbolised the community's commitment to advancing progress, while the training session showcased their eagerness and readiness to strengthen their competency in halal practices, paving the way for them to market their products more widely.

The concept of "WOW" or "Woman of War" reflects resilience, strength, and determination. It symbolises the community's transformative journey—from overcoming historical challenges to embracing new opportunities for growth and development. Beyond its bold name, the tagline captures the spirit of empowerment, highlighting the role of the community, particularly women, as agents of change in driving social, economic, and cultural progress.

THE WOW MOMENTUM

The WOW Matanog Special Economic Zone-Bangsamoro Halal Park represents a practical step toward economic development and community empowerment in the Bangsamoro region. The initiative, in partnership with local government, investors, and INHART, provides a platform for knowledge transfer, skills development, and infrastructure growth, supporting the gradual development of the local halal industry.

The significance of the programme lies in these concrete actions rather than in ceremonial or symbolic terms. Matanog is not only hosting events but beginning to participate actively in shaping its own economic future.

Through visible engagement, learning opportunities, and collaborative agreements, the community is taking real steps from its past challenges toward a more sustainable and inclusive economic landscape—and this is the essence of the WOW factor. - (h)



The "WOW" in the project, stand for "Woman of War", symbolising resilience, determination, and community agency in this transformative moment.



Figure 7: A serene landscape showcasing the richness of natural resources and untapped potential.