

**Economy on firm footing**  
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**By S. ISTA KYRA**

INCREASED PRIVATE INVESTMENTS: 83 projects worth RM199.6 billion have taken off since May

IPOH: MORE than 350,000 jobs will be created by 2020 due to aggressive efforts to boost private investments under the Economic Transformation Plan (ETP).

Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah said 83 entry point projects (EPPs), worth more than RM199.6 billion in committed investments, had taken off since May.

"These projects are expected to contribute RM134 billion to the Gross National Income and create 352,349 jobs by 2020," he said after launching the inaugural 1Malaysia iAwards here on Saturday.

Ahmad Husni said the country needed to build a strong core of world-class entrepreneurs.

"We welcome fresh ideas to take Malaysian companies up the value chain. Our entrepreneurs should take the lead and allow the government to reduce direct involvement in the economy.

"We (the government) have a good plan to take the country to the next level."

He said the next eight years before 2020 were the golden years, and the government would do what it could to keep the economy on firm footing.

Later, Ahmad Husni presented 27 awards to prominent personalities, including Datuk Jimmy Choo and Air Asia chief executive officer Tan Sri Tony Fernandes.

Choo, who is renowned in the international fashion world for his trademark shoe brand, was honoured with the Honorary iCreate award for "achieving the unachievable", while Tony was awarded the Honorary iDiscover award for being the first in breakthrough acts.

Founder and chairman of Sunway Group, Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah, received the Honorary iGive award.

Other awards went to entrepreneurs such as Ipoh-born Winnie Loo, who is A Cut Above Group of Salons & Academy founder and chief creative director, DRB-HICOM Bhd group managing director Datuk Seri Mohd Khamil Jamil, The Haven Sdn Bhd chief executive officer Peter Chan and Ngan Yin Groundnut Factory Sdn Bhd executive chairman Datuk Gan Tack Kong.

1Malaysia iAward founder Jeff Lai said the initiative to organise the awards was to honour the success of businesses, entrepreneurs, brands and talented professionals who had made their mark in the world.

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