



International Trade and Industry Minister **Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed** presenting the **Ministry of International Trade and Industry Trophy** to Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd chief executive officer **Datuk Zohari Sulaiman** at the Annual Productivity & Innovation Conference and Exposition 2016 in Putrajaya recently. With him are Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) director-general **Datuk Mohd Razali Hussain** (left) and MPC chairman **Tan Sri Azman Hashim** (right).

LIGHTING THE SPARK OF INGENUITY

INDIGENOUS IDEAS: Employees' contributions to boost company productivity recognised at APIC

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COMPANIES have benefited from innovative inventions and processes produced by employees to reduce cost and improve workflow. Recently, those that the staff had successfully produced outstanding cost-saving measures were recognised at the Annual Productivity & Innovation Conference and Exposition (APIC) 2016, organised by the Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC) at Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

APIC is a prime event to showcase outstanding achievements from various industries.

The APIC 2016 theme was "From Ideas to Reality" and it highlighted the importance of productivity, which translates ideas into practice in order to achieve good production rates, more income and a high standard of living.

International Trade and Industry Minister **Datuk Seri Mustapa Mo-**

hamed, MPC chairman **Tan Sri Azman Hashim** and MPC director-general **Datuk Mohd Razali Hussain** were present.

Rapid Rail Sdn Bhd won the grand prize, which was the Ministry of International Trade and Industry Trophy.

The company runs the three rail services in Kuala Lumpur under Prasarana Malaysia Bhd, which are the light rail transit (LRT) Ampang and Kelana Jaya lines, and the monorail service.

Rapid Rail chief executive officer **Datuk Zohari Sulaiman** said the team's winning invention was a test bench for fans that cooled the motors of trains. It helped the company to save RM1.3 million in costs last year.

"Linear induction motors move the LRT trains. Without the cooling fan, the motors will sustain heat and fail. The fans work 18 hours a day, therefore, they have to undergo periodic maintenance."

The test bench was meant to gauge whether the fans were able to operate smoothly. There were commercial test benches sold by suppliers but they cost up to RM5 million each.

Zohari said before the invention of the company's test bench, the cooling fans needed to be tested on the trains.

"It is time consuming as the fans need to be reinstalled after test, and there are many fans to cool down the motors."

The company's test bench was invented by a team of six mechanics and engineers, and it had reduced the checking and testing time from eight

hours to one per fan, thus minimising downtime, improving train performance, increasing productivity and lowering the operating cost.

The test was done during a train overhaul. Inspections were carried out every three months or six months, or once a year.

Zohari said the award would serve as a morale booster for the team and an inspiration to come up with more inventions.

Rapid Rail had joined the Innovative and Creative Circle group for the past 10 years.

"The innovative groups need to be nurtured and given encouragement, especially the junior staff who are always excited to invent," he said, adding that a synergy of ideas from all employees could generate a brilliant solution.

Hence, Rapid Rail frequently conducted brainstorming sessions, where theories were explored to generate practical solutions.

"We also have internal competitions before the best team is selected for regional and national events."

HP Malaysia Manufacturing Sdn Bhd won the MPC Chairman's Trophy for the highest cost-saving achievement.

HP Malaysia Manufacturing operations excellence site leader **See Hong Peng** said it was the first time her company had joined the competition.

"The key challenge in our operation is human dependence on workload. We are working towards the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0)."

"We have to keep up with the evo-



KPJ executive director **Aminudin Dawam** (centre) and his team after winning the MPC Director-General's Trophy. (Inset) **See Hong Peng** and **Nur Azfarina Anuar** of HP Malaysia Manufacturing Sdn Bhd with the MPC Chairman's Trophy.

lution of manufacturing. It is important to embrace the future of smart manufacturing to drive productivity and efficiency. This paves the way to upskill our people to do more value-added work, and move into the next level of job scope with better wages.

"This is in tandem with the government's initiatives to attract local workforce into our organisation."

She said on July 14, her company had opened a new facility in Batu Kawan, Penang, which employed a 100 per cent local workforce.

She said the MPC's Team Excellence Convention was a good platform for the company to benchmark with the best practices of other companies.

Another winner was KPJ Healthcare Bhd (KPJ), which won the MPC Director-General's Trophy for active participation in the Team Excellence Convention.

KPJ executive director **Aminudin Dawam** said the healthcare provider had been participating in the event since 1995, and this year, it sent 18 teams from 25 hospitals.

"We have a culture of continuous improvement. Every year, we encourage our workers to come up with innovative projects."

Aminudin said one of the projects that contributed to cost savings was **Vigo** — a system to calculate the amount of gauze needed in operating theatres of the group's hospitals.

He said KPJ faced challenges in finding time to carry out its projects.

"Some take more than one year. Team members have to sacrifice their time after work to complete the project."

Aminudin said he was overwhelmed by MPC's honour and hope the success would continue in the future.