AUTHOR: BY CINDY YEAP SECTION: HOME PAGE: 1,7,8 PRINTED SIZE: 1905.00cmï¿½ REGION: KL
MARKET: Malaysia PHOTO: Full Color ASR: MYR 19,802.00 ITEM ID: MY0065710567

24 SEP, 2025

United Plantations is The Edge BRC's Company of the Year 2025

The Edge CEO Morning Brief, Malaysia

PATRICK GOH/THE EDGE

Grand winner: United Plantations group CEO Datuk Carl Bek-Nielsen with the winning trophy, after receiving the award from Sultan Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, who is on his right. Pictured with them are (*from left*) Mercedes-Benz Cars Malaysia president and CEO Amanda Zhang, The Edge Media Group publisher and CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat, chairman Tan Sri Tong Kooi Ong, and OCBC Bank Malaysia CEO Tan Chor Sen.

United Plantations is The Edge BRC's Company of the Year 2025

BY CINDY YEAP
theedgemalaysia.com

KUALA LUMPUR (Sept 23): United Plantations Bhd (KL:UTDPLT) was named Company of the Year for 2025 at the 16th iteration of The Edge Billion Ringgit Club (BRC) awards.

Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah Alhaj Ibni Almarhum Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah Alhaj graced the gala dinner and awards ceremony at the St Regis Hotel on Tuesday, accompanied by the Tengku Permaisuri of Selangor, Tengku Permaisuri Hajah Norashikin.

A total of 53 awards were presented to 39 companies, including for corporate responsibility (CR).

"I am told these awards are truly merit-based, based on transparent and trusted criteria and financial numbers. I find this positive and enlightening," Sultan Sharafuddin said in his speech, adding that he was "happy" to present the awards. In congratulating the winners, the sultan said: "May you continue to grow and be more successful in the years to come."

In his welcome address, Tan Sri Tong Kooi Ong, chairman of The Edge Media Group, said the desire to "make sure that companies that win awards at BRC must truly be deserving of recognition" was the "most important goal" when the awards were created in 2010.

"And this is evident by the exceptional success of the companies that have previously won The Edge BRC Company of The Year award. The stock prices for all the past winners have outperformed the overall stock market except for one, by 70% on average, over a period of three years. This is a remarkable fact.

"In simple English, on more than nine out of 10 occasions, a company that is named The Edge BRC Company of the Year goes on to see its stock prices outperform the FBM KL Composite Index by more than 70% over a period of three years — based on the past 15 years of data. Investors on Bursa Malaysia should take note. This is why we think Corporate Malaysia covet *The Edge* awards. We mean business," Tong said, noting that the chosen criteria are derived from publicly available data and audited for transparency.

"I am aware that some people would deem it too simple. Many people equate complexity with intelligence, when in fact the opposite is often true. Or to quote Einstein, 'if you can't explain it simply, you don't understand it well enough'. My personal experience is that it is often much harder to keep things simple, clear, transparent and unbiased. To me, transparency demands courage, clarity requires discipline. Our awards are therefore based on simple, transparent, verifiable financial numbers," Tong elaborated.

CONTINUES ON PAGE 8

Provided for client's internal research purposes only. May not be further copied, distributed, sold or published in any form without the prior consent of the copyright owner.

FROM PAGE 7

He also explained the reason to spur and celebrate excellence: "If Corporate Malaysia does well, so will our capital markets. And as businesses grow and expand and invest, it creates more jobs and opportunities, raises wages and gives Malaysians a higher standard of living. This is the goal of all societies and nations. It is also the reason for the existence of *The Edge* — to enable this," Tong added.

He also quoted Amanda Zhang, CEO and president of Mercedes-Benz Cars Malaysia and head of region, Mercedes-Benz Cars SEA II, who said: "Success itself begins with a winning attitude."

In saying "making money is not the sole purpose in life", Tong also acknowledged Tan Chor Sen, CEO of OCBC Bank Malaysia, the main partner since the award's inauguration in 2010, who said: "Corporate Malaysia must remain attentive to the importance of blending corporate responsibility with financial performance so that we are always doing well by doing good".

There were 185 The Edge BRC members this year, just below the all-time high of 188 companies last year with at least RM1 billion market capitalisation.

This year's 185 BRC members command a market cap of RM1.64 trillion or close to 90% of the combined market cap of all Bursa Malaysia-listed companies as at March 28, 2025.

Celebrating success

"Our warmest congratulations to this year's winners. We look forward to celebrating your well-earned success. For those who didn't make the list this year, we encourage reflection on progress — especially in the areas of people, profit, and planet. If you've improved from last year, that is a win in itself. When this mindset becomes a habit, greater achievements will surely follow," OCBC's Tan said.

"As the founding partner of The Edge Billion Ringgit Club Awards, our message is clear: true success is built on consistency, resilience and a long-term view. These awards honour companies that demonstrate excellence not just in financial performance, but also in leadership, governance and sustainable growth. We hope the recognition inspires Corporate Malaysia to continue striving for smart, responsible progress that benefits both the economy and society. We applaud the winners for their grit, guts and gumption — qualities that define enduring success," Tan added.

Mercedes-Benz's Zhang also applauded the winners and BRC members not on this year's winners list, noting that "reaching the billion-ringgit mark is an achievement in itself".

"The pursuit of excellence is an ongoing journey, and we encourage all BRC members to continue pushing boundaries, driving innovation and making a positive impact. It is this business philosophy that has guided Mercedes-Benz for over a century and continues to shape how we deliver vehicles and experiences that stand the test of time," she said.

Concurring that the "excellence is not a single milestone but an ongoing pursuit", ARTELIA managing director Alex Toh said "the BRC Awards remind us that every effort, every step taken with integrity and vision, contributes to building a stronger, more vibrant Malaysia".

"To this year's winners, we extend our heartfelt congratulations — your achievements are an inspiration to Corporate Malaysia. To past winners, even if you did not win this year, your continued excellence and contributions remain invaluable to the business landscape. And to the billion-ringgit companies striving for their first BRC win, we encourage you to keep pushing forward — your journey itself is a mark of resilience and ambition," Toh said.

China Pottery (M) Sdn Bhd's ARTELIA, the official distributor of Noritake fine porcelain in Malaysia, comes in as a supporting partner for The Edge BRC awards this year to "honour organisations and leaders who raise the bar for Corporate Malaysia".

Paying homage to the BRC awards' partners, The Edge Media Group publisher and CEO Datuk Ho Kay Tat said: "I thank our distinguished partners, OCBC Bank Malaysia and Mercedes-Benz Cars Malaysia for their steadfast support in honouring and celebrating Corporate Malaysia's continued excellence and welcome ARTELIA as a partner. Without their ardent support, The Edge BRC awards ceremony and gala dinner would not be Corporate Malaysia's most anticipated and prestigious annual gathering that it has become."

Sultan Sharafuddin, who together with the Sultan of Perak Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah Ibni Almarhum Sultan Azlan Muhibbuddin Shah, launched the book *Behind the Stories* in celebration of the 30th anniversary of *The Edge* last October, also had encouraging words for *The Edge* in his dinner speech: "At a time when so many traditional print media companies have closed or continue to struggle to survive, I am glad to see *The Edge* reaching new heights successfully. Credible and responsible media is necessary for nation building and *The Edge* continues to be the print media of choice for Corporate Malaysia."

About the awards

In its 16th instalment this year, the BRC awards ceremony honouring Corporate Malaysia's best performing and top responsible organisations aims to spur Malaysian companies to be even better at what they do — not just financially, but also as corporate citizens.

Bursa Malaysia-listed companies with at least RM1 billion market capitalisation as at end-March each year are added to the annual The Edge-BRC membership list automatically and are evaluated on growth in profit, return on equity (ROE) and total return to shareholders over a rolling three-year period, plus corporate responsibility (CR) commitments. The billion-ringgit cut-off serves as an aspirational target for dynamic smaller companies.

Results are independently audited by Deloitte Malaysia.

Last year, Gamuda Bhd was Company of the Year. Other previous winners were Mega First Corp Bhd (2023), Frontken Corp Bhd (2022), ViTrox Corp Bhd (2021), Hartalega Holdings Bhd (2020), Press Metal Aluminium Holdings Bhd (2019), Petronas Dagangan Bhd (2018), AirAsia Bhd (2017), Nestlé (M) Bhd (2016), Tenaga Nasional Bhd (2015), Dutch Lady Milk Industries Bhd (2014), DiGi.Com Bhd (2013), Genting Bhd (2012), QL Resources Bhd (2011) and Supermax Corp Bhd (2010).

Past winners of the Value Creator: Malaysia's Outstanding CEO award included the late Tan Sri Teh Hong Piow, chairman of Public Bank Group (2010); CIMB group chairman Datuk Seri Nazir Razak (2010); AMMB Holdings Bhd chairman Tan Sri Azman Hashim (2012); AirAsia group CEO Tan Sri Tony Fernandes (2012); former S P Setia Bhd president and CEO Tan Sri Liew Kee Sin (2013); former Malayan Banking Bhd president and CEO Tan Sri Abdul Wahid Omar (2013); Sunway Group chairman Tan Sri Jeffrey Cheah (2014); Axiata Group Bhd president and group CEO Tan Sri Jamaludin Ibrahim (2014); Khazanah Nasional Bhd managing director Tan Sri Azman Mokhtar (2016); the late Tan Sri G Gnanalingam, Westports Holdings Bhd executive chairman (2017); Dialog Group Bhd executive chairman and co-founder Tan Sri Ngau Boon Keat (2018); QL Resources Bhd executive chairman Chia Song Kun (2019); Maybank president and CEO Datuk Seri Abdul Farid Alias (2021); Batu Kawan Bhd chairman and Kuala Lumpur Kepong Bhd CEO Tan Sri Lee Oi Hian (2022) as well as Public Bank Bhd managing director and CEO Tan Sri Tay Ah Lek (2024).

The Value Creator: Malaysia's Outstanding CEO award was not given out in 2011, 2015, 2020, 2023 and this year.

Details of The Edge BRC members and award winners will be published in a special supplement in the Oct 6 issue of *The Edge Malaysia* weekly, available at newsstands on Saturday, Oct 4.

Click to ASK EDGE
12 Things You Must Know About A Stock

Provided for client's internal research purposes only. May not be further copied, distributed, sold or published in any form without the prior consent of the copyright owner.