

Thailand aims to become a leading global halal hub

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Thailand, a predominantly Buddhist nation, is making significant strides to establish itself as a top global halal hub. In July 2024, the Thai government launched the Halal Industry Action Plan to promote and expand the country's halal product sector. A key player in this initiative is the Halal Science Centre, which plays a vital role in ensuring the standardization of halal food products.

According to government data released in February 2024, Thailand is home to approximately 15,000 halal-certified companies, 166,000 halal-certified products, and 3,500 halal-certified restaurants. Within Southeast Asia, Thailand ranks as the third-largest exporter to the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) nations, following Malaysia and Indonesia.

To further cement its position in the halal market, Thailand established the Halal Department in 2023. This department was created to promote the nation as ASEAN's leading halal hub. Additionally, the National Halal Industry Committee, chaired by the Prime Minister, was formed to oversee policy communication and implementation. Strengthening diplomatic ties with Saudi Arabia has also contributed to Thailand's growing influence in the halal industry.

In 2024, the government launched the Thai Halal Industry Centre to streamline business operations by integrating cooperation among 12 government entities related to halal affairs. This initiative aims to provide a one-stop service to support businesses and expedite processes.

The National Halal Industry Committee has also devised a strategic plan for 2024-2027, targeting a 1.2 per cent increase in the country's industrial GDP equivalent to 55 billion baht. The plan focuses on five key sectors: halal food, fashion, pharmaceuticals, cocoa and related products, and halal services, including tourism.

Thailand is gaining recognition as a Muslim-friendly destination. According to the Mastercard-Crescentrating Global Muslim Travel Index, Thailand ranks fifth among non-OIC destinations, following Singapore, the UK, Taiwan, and Hong Kong.

Halal food, as defined by Islamic law, must be free from any prohibited ingredients and produced under strict hygiene and manufacturing standards. With the global Muslim population expected to exceed 2 billion by 2030, demand for halal-certified products is expected to rise significantly. Additionally, the growing consumer preference for halal-certified vegan and health-conscious products is further fueling market expansion.

To reinforce its position in the halal market, Thailand will host MEGA HALAL Bangkok 2025, a major exhibition organized by the Islamic Committee of Thailand, ComAsia, and Worldex G.E.C. The event, scheduled for July 2025, aims to enhance Thailand's status as a gateway and leading halal hub in Asia, connecting businesses with a global Muslim population of over 2 billion.

Nikom Lertmallikaporn, Chairman of Worldex G.E.C. mentioned in the press statement that the halal industry's growth has been driven by strong collaboration between Muslim communities, non-Muslim Thai entrepreneurs, and Islamic organisations. Their combined efforts have significantly contributed to Thailand's domestic economy.

With continued government support and private-sector collaboration, Thailand is well on its way to becoming a dominant player in the global halal industry.

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