

RAFIDAH AZIZ

- **Malaysia's longest serving Minister of International Trade and Industry**
- **Chairman of AirAsia X**



Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz was born in Selama, Perak in 1943. She obtained her BA in Economics and Masters in Economics from the University of Malaya. She taught at the Faculty of Economics from 1966 to 1976, until she began her career as a simultaneously participating in the politics on the Nation. She was appointed as a Senator in 1974, and subsequently served as a Member of Parliament for 35 years, from 1978 to 2013. She is the most dynamic lady that Malaysia has to date. Confident, dynamic and passionate, she is known for her quick, direct and articulate responses. She is Malaysia's longest serving Minister of International Trade and Industry, having been in the position for 21 years from 1987 - 2008. She had previously served as Deputy Finance Minister between 1976 to 1980, Minister of Public Enterprises from 1980 to 1987.

Much admired by her peers and colleagues, she is regarded as an authority on trade and industry. During her tenure as the Minister of International Trade and Industry, for 21 years, she has contributed significantly to the development of the country's economy. With her sound knowledge of economic matters, she worked tirelessly to position and to promote Malaysia as the most favoured destination for foreign direct investment. Many well-known Global Companies have set up manufacturing and related activities in Malaysia. Many have established research and development facilities, as well as regional production and export hubs in Malaysia.

On the domestic front, Tan Sri Rafidah strives to create opportunities for local enterprises to excel in their businesses. Specialized Agencies such as SMIDEC now known as SME Corp, and MATRADE or Malaysian External Trade Corporation, were set up to assist Enterprises, both local and foreign, to grow and diversify, and to go across borders. The establishment of SMIDEC was in recognition of the need for a specialised agency to further promote the development of Small and Medium Industries (SMIs) in the manufacturing and related sectors, through the provision of advisory services, fiscal and financial assistance, infrastructural facilities, market access and other support programmes. Malaysian SMEs have greatly benefited from the trade policies implemented during her tenure. Through her concerted efforts and passion in promoting Malaysia's trade, many businesses have emerged from small medium enterprises to large corporations with offices in the international market. She is much respected by her peers, and her candour is a breath of fresh air in the political arena. The local media dubbed her as 'Rapid Fire Rafidah' and love her for her forthright opinion and wit. Her expertise, visionary outlook and confidence, have been a source of inspiration to many entrepreneurs and Malaysians.

Known as the Malaysian "Iron Lady", she is in her element and holds centre court when it comes to tackling trade negotiations or promoting the attributes of Brand Malaysia. Malaysia is very proud to have this very outstanding and illustrious daughter who has stamped her mark in the world. Indeed, Rafidah is a well-known personality; one of the rare women whose intellectual prowess is undoubted. Over the years, her career development and political participation has given impact to Malaysia economics development and trade, and the country's industrialization. She is known not only among Malaysians but also internationally for her forthrightness and her ability to stand tall with her male counterparts.

YB Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz continues to have her finger on the pulse on international trade and regional and global economic developments. She now serves as the Chairman of AirAsia X, Pinewoods Iskandar Malaysia Studios, Megasteel and Supemax Corporation, and Advisor to the Sarawak Government on the Renewable Energy Corridor. She is also Adjunct Professor at the College of Business of the University Utara Malaysia.



At the age of 73, Tan Sri Rafidah Aziz has a new-found hobby and she is now a certified scuba diver.