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Malaysian firms Bateriku, Respond.io named to Forbes Asia's 100 to Watch

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian companies Bateriku and Respond.io have made it onto Forbes Asia's 100 to Watch 2026 list, which spotlights promising small companies and startups across the Asia-Pacific region.
Based in Shah Alam, Bateriku, founded in 2014 and led by chief executive officer Azarol Faizi Zakaria Ansari, was selected under the consumer technology category.

The company provides on-demand car battery replacement and roadside assistance through its app, website and hotline.

Bateriku connects stranded motorists to a network of 1,000 mechanics, 2,000 partner repair shops and tow truck operators across 270 locations in Malaysia.

In 2023, it expanded into Indonesia and a year later raised US$7.4mil in a series B round from investors including Kumpulan Wang Persaraan (Diperbadankan) (KWAP), Gobi Partners and VentureTECH.

Meanwhile, Kuala Lumpur-based Respond.io was named under the enterprise technology category. Founded in 2017 and led by CEO Gerardo Salandra, the company provides software that brings communication channels including WhatsApp, Instagram, TikTok, email and voice calls into a single inbox for customer service and sales teams.

Its platform also incorporates artificial intelligence (AI) tools that can answer simple queries, organise customer data and route more complex conversations to human workers.

Respond.io said it processes more than two billion messages every quarter for 10,000 businesses across 180 countries.
In June, it raised US$62.5mil in a series B round from investors including Camber Partners and Endeavor Catalyst.

The two Malaysian companies are among 100 businesses from 16 countries and territories featured in the sixth annual list.

Forbes Asia editorial director Rana Wehbe Watson said the sixth annual 100 to Watch list continues to highlight startups and small businesses leading the region's next wave of innovation, largely driven by AI.

AI-driven innovation was a dominant theme this year, with close to a quarter of the companies comprising enterprise technology firms offering AI-related services. Robotics was another growing segment, with 10 companies making the list.

"Some are providing enterprise technology to help SMEs embed automation into their operations, while others are developing cutting-edge robotics to transform sectors such as eldercare and scientific research.

"Reflecting investor confidence, the 100 companies on the list have raised a combined total of over US$2.4bil in funding to date, including almost US$1bil in 2026," Rana said in a statement.

To qualify for consideration, companies must be headquartered in the Asia-Pacific region, privately owned and for-profit, with annual revenue of no more than US$50mil and total funding of no more than US$100mil as of Aug 15.

Forbes Asia said the companies were evaluated based on factors including their contribution to their industries and regions, market fit, business model, innovation, track record of revenue growth and ability to attract funding.

For the full list of companies featured in Forbes Asia's 100 to Watch 2026, visit www.forbes.com/100toWatch.