

PM: Poor must gain from growth

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A wealthier Johor must care for people's welfare too, says Anwar

JOHOR BARU: Johor, whose economic growth is expected to exceed that of other states in the next one to two years, is set to become the most economically developed in the country, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the robust growth comes in the wake of two high-impact projects, namely the Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) and the Special Financial Zone (SFZ) in Forest City.

"These two initiatives will help speed up Johor's economic growth," he told reporters after attending the Madani Aidilfitri 2024 celebration, which kicked off at Angsana Johor Baru Mall yesterday.

Malaysia and Singapore signed an MOU to set up the JS-SEZ on Jan 11, almost three months after the 10th Singapore-Malaysia Leaders' Retreat in October where the Prime Minister and his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong agreed to jointly develop the economic zone.

In his speech at the event, Anwar emphasised the need to ensure the people's welfare is taken care of as Johor moves towards developing its economy.

"I had a meeting with the Menteri Besar (Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi) earlier where I was told there are fewer than 2,000 people in the hardcore poor category in the state.

"I am sure we will be able to solve this in a short amount of time and put a full stop to the

hardcore poor category."

Anwar pointed out that focus should also be given to plugging flood problems faced by Johoreans.

"The JS-SEZ and SFZ in Forest City are good indicators that the state is seeing major economic development.

"However, we cannot see economic development while also having major floods. I hope those involved in government projects can make sure that everything runs swiftly to ease the people's burden," he said.

Earlier, Anwar chaired a special development meeting with the Menteri Besar and several Cabinet ministers.

"We discussed suggestions to make JS-SEZ a reality, including improving cross-border movement, strengthening the business ecosystem and efforts to attract new investments," he said, adding the meeting also touched on the setting up of Invest Malaysia Facilitation Centre.

Anwar said that problems faced by Malaysians who travel to Singapore for work daily were also raised.

"We are looking into new approaches to ease cross-border travel between Johor and Singapore," he said.

Also present were Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Abdul Aziz, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, former deputy prime minister Tun Musa Hitam, Johor MPs and assemblymen.