

SPECIAL FINANCE ZONE

PM to unveil incentives for Johor-Singapore SFZ in 2025 Budget

JOHOR BARU: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is expected to announce several incentives, including tax exemptions, for the Johor-Singapore Special Finance Zone (SFZ) during the tabling of the 2025 Budget scheduled for October.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said these incentives were among the government's efforts to attract investors, especially for those in the halal industry.

He said this was one of the matters raised by Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi to attract investors to the state following the establishment of the SFZ.

He said the exemptions would be discussed at a cabinet meeting in October.

"I will 'whisper' the requests from the Johor menteri besar into the prime minister's ears," he said after the launch of the Halal on Track programme at the Persada International Convention Centre here yesterday.

Earlier, Onn Hafiz, in his speech, said the incentives were expected to be finalised by the prime minister in September.

He hoped the tax exemptions would be approved to encourage more industries to invest and operate in the halal park in the SFZ and the Special Economy Zone (SEZ). He asked for infrastructure and roads in both zones to be given priority by the federal government and improved.

Onn Hafiz said further incentives under the Halmas-designat-

ed halal parks offered to natal industry players and logistics operators would attract more investors.

Halmas is an accreditation given to halal park operators that comply with requirements stipulated by the Halal Development Corporation (HDC).

Zahid, who is Malaysian Halal Council chairman, said Malaysia aimed to lead the global halal market through the Halal Industry Development Council.

He said the global halal market was expected to be worth US\$5 trillion by 2030.

Zahid said Anwar had emphasised the need for innovation in the halal industry, with a focus on sustainability.

The "Greening Halal Business"

initiative, in partnership with international organisations, aimed to help Malaysian halal businesses adopt greener practices.

Zahid called on stakeholders, including the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim), HDC, state Islamic councils and industry players to work together to keep the country at the forefront of the global halal market.

On another matter, Zahid called on the Transport Ministry to ensure containers from Israel-based shipping companies do not dock at ports in the country.

He said Malaysia did not have direct diplomatic and business relations with the Zionist regime.

"I have mentioned. We do not have diplomatic relations, in-

cluding direct business relations, with Israel. This issue is very close to the hearts of Malaysians. We can't compromise on this.

"I hope the ministry will carry out further monitoring so that this does not happen again."

On Sunday, Zahid called for the expedition of the probe into the alleged docking of a container from Israeli shipping company Zim at a port in Iskandar Puteri.

He said the port and Customs authorities should act immediately as the country's rules had been violated.

On Saturday, Kota Iskandar assemblyman Datuk Pandak Ahmad said he was surprised to receive complaints claiming that the port was accepting containers from Israel.