

**DPM AHMAD ZAHID TO LEAD CABINET COMMITTEE TO EMPOWER HALAL
CERTIFICATION, INDUSTRY
YAB DATO' SERI ANWAR IBRAHIM
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KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 12 — All relevant departments and agencies will be coordinated under a single Cabinet Committee with the aim of empowering Malaysia's halal certification and bringing the country's halal industry to a more competitive level, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today.

He said this Cabinet Committee will be led by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and will be responsible for coordinating the synergy among all parties involved to fully leverage the country's halal ecosystem, thereby creating greater opportunities in the global halal market.

"We do get high scores for halal certification, but I want it to be further elevated, not only as an exemplary model for other countries but also in terms of efficiency, quality research and ability to give prompt approvals.

"Several world leaders that I met, such as from China, Japan, South Korea, Vietnam and Cambodia, have also discussed the halal industry, with them focusing on Malaysia...so it'll be a great loss if we don't give it special attention," he said when opening the GLOBAL HALAL SUMMIT (GHAS) 2023 here.

Also present were Ahmad Zahid, Religious Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Mohd Na'im Mokhtar, and Investment, Trade and Industry Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz.

Given the expected global halal industry market to reach US\$2.4 trillion by 2024, Anwar, who is also the Finance Minister, said he had asked Ahmad Zahid and the Department of Islamic Development Malaysia (Jakim) to focus on strengthening certification and trade promotion aspects to enable Malaysia to lead the highly competitive global halal market.

The Prime Minister stressed that the synergy between halal certification and trade promotion is of utmost importance which demanded all local halal industry players, departments, and relevant agencies to stop the practice of working in silos.

He said that the halal issue is not only related to food and beverages but also extends to other products such as pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, consumer goods, logistics services, medical devices, and contract manufacturing, where the “halal and clean” assessment granted can attract interest from non-Muslim countries.

“So, all of this needs to be coordinated with HDC (Halal Development Corporation Bhd) and MATRADE (Malaysia External Trade Development Corporation) because there is specialisation and synergy with the local industry.

“Or else, we will only introduce and issue halal certificates, but not develop our halal industry,” he said.

In this regard, Anwar urged for every step taken by Jakim in halal certification to align with the development of the local and global industry to ensure the sustainability of the halal industry, hence opening up broader access for Malaysia in the global market.

He also wanted the same opportunities to be given to micro, small, and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs) in the halal industry so that they can compete internationally alongside well-known and established large companies.

“There is a new emphasis on providing space for MSMEs with appropriate assistance. If this is not under Jakim’s purview, it may be under MATRADE or MARA, and that’s why I say coordination is crucial,” he added.

— BERNAMA

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