

**WELCOME ADDRESS BY ENTERPRISE SINGAPORE
EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN LEE CHUAN TECK
AT THE JOHOR-SINGAPORE SPECIAL ECONOMIC ZONE (JS-
SEZ) 2ND JOINT INVESTMENT FORUM
MARINA BAY SANDS CONVENTION CENTRE, SINGAPORE
ON 14 OCTOBER 2025, 1400HRS**

Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Trade and Industry, Gan Kim
Yong

Minister of Investment, Trade and Industry, Yang Berhormat Senator
Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz

Chief Minister of Johor, Yang Amat Berhormat Dato' Onn Hafiz Ghazi

Distinguished guests,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Good afternoon.

Introduction

1. Welcome to the second Johor-Singapore Special Economic Zone (JS-SEZ) Joint Investment Forum. Thank you to our friends and partners from Malaysia and beyond who have travelled here and joined us today.

2. Johor and Singapore are natural partners – linked not just by the two land crossings, but by history, family and economic ties. On average, about 500,000 people commute between Johor and Singapore daily. On this deep relationship, Malaysia and Singapore launched the JS-SEZ in January this year.

3. The JS-SEZ makes sense at different levels. At the geopolitical level, it is a firm rejection of the zero-sum contestation that is becoming more prevalent globally. The SEZ presents a win-win proposition for both Malaysia and Singapore.

4. At the economic level, the SEZ builds on our complementary strengths: Johor's abundance in talent and resources; Singapore's capital and global connectivity to present a compelling destination for global investments. Since the signing of the agreement in January, the Singapore economic agencies and our Malaysian counterparts have received over 1,000 enquiries across sectors like manufacturing, logistics, data centres and others.

Singapore remains committed to supporting companies' growth in JS-SEZ

5. We are at an early stage of the journey. But much has been done.

6. First, we have started to jointly promote the region. The EDB and Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA) recently led two joint missions, drawing strong interest and positive feedback from businesses and investors keen to explore new opportunities and partnerships in the region.

7. Second, we continue to enhance the ease of doing business in the SEZ. Malaysia's Invest Malaysia Facilitation Centre – Johor (IMFC-J) plays a critical role as a single window, coordinating and facilitating simultaneous permit applications across multiple government agencies—including various permits for engineering, planning and other purposes. This streamlined approach has already helped some companies reduce approval timelines from the usual six months to just two months. Looking ahead, the joint project office will continue to work closely with the IMFC-J to identify high-potential sectors and facilitate companies' entry in the JS-SEZ.

8. Third, we are also developing a strong pipeline of skilled, industry-ready talent on both sides of the Causeway. Partnerships between Singapore Institutes of Higher Learning (IHLs) and Malaysian institutions aim to equip students and professionals with in-demand skills aligned to industry needs. For example, Singapore Polytechnic launched the Enabling Platform Partnership in July this year, bringing together trainers from both countries to develop training, upskilling, and reskilling programmes.

Amplifying support and enabling growth through industry partners

9. The Governments cannot do this by ourselves. We are grateful for the support of the trade associations and chambers of commerce. For example, the Singapore Business Federation, Singapore Logistics Association, and Singapore Manufacturing Federation, have taken the lead in organising multiple mission trips to Johor to provide businesses with firsthand insights into the operating environment and opportunities. Banks like UOB and OCBC have also organised seminars for their clients. Through these, companies strengthen their networks, gain market insights and uncover new business opportunities.

Conclusion

10. Beyond all these efforts, I know many companies are also exploring partnerships on their own. Today's forum offers yet another opportunity to do so. I wish all of you fruitful discussions and many successful ventures in the JS-SEZ in the days to come. Thank you.

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