

Azmin: Malaysia remains competitive in attracting investments despite challenging pandemic situation

KUALA LUMPUR (Sept 22): Malaysia remains competitive in attracting investments into the country despite the challenging Covid-19 pandemic situation.

Senior Minister cum International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali said Malaysia's strategic position, conducive business environment and ecosystem, as well as strategic investment-related initiatives, are expected to continue to make Malaysia a preferred destination in the region.

In winding up the debate on the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's royal address in the Dewan Rakyat today, he said the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI) will continue to engage with foreign embassies, foreign chambers of commerce and related parties to strengthen trade and investment relations with foreign investors.

Nevertheless, he said the government acknowledges that the **foreign direct investment (FDI)** outlook remains challenging and competitive as reported by the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).

"The government has not underestimated these reports and has taken aggressive and continuous measures, not just to control the decline in FDI, but also to reinvigorate foreign investments to help in the nation's economic recovery," he said.

Moving forward, Mohamed Azmin said the government will continue to adopt three main approaches in revitalising the nation's economy, including making the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (PICK) a catalyst for the safe and systematic reopening of the economy.

"As of Sept 21, 2021 (yesterday), 93.2% of the local adult population had received [at least] one dose [of the Covid-19 vaccine] and 80.2% had received their second dose, thus achieving the herd immunity target, " he said.

The government will also continue to strengthen the country's economic fundamentals through the implementation of trade and investment policies that are open, transparent and business-friendly.

"This includes the government's ongoing efforts to ratify the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)," he said.

Additionally, Mohamed Azmin said Malaysia will also continue to target high-quality, advanced technology-oriented investments based on the National Investment Aspirations (NIA) which

also focus on long-term sustainability, with emphasis on environmental, social and governance (ESG) elements.

The minister also touched on the utilisation of renewable energy sources as well as emphasis on the use of electric vehicles (EVs), which has been on an uptrend in ASEAN as well as globally.

To support the EV ecosystem in the country, he said MITI is identifying new strategies to promote the EV industry to investors, including discussions with the Ministry of Finance (MoF) during the recent Budget 2022 dialogue.

The strategies include introducing a consumer-focused incentive package to attract investments in the EV ecosystem in addition to strengthening existing incentives for manufacturers of EVs and their components.

"This measure is expected to encourage investments in the production of EVs or their components and infrastructure support, including EV charging stations, as well as to drive consumer demand for EV vehicles," he said.

EVs are expected to replace fossil energy-based vehicles in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to preserve the environment and reduce carbon emissions.

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