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More talks with Singapore on proposed economic zone

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JOHOR BARU: Johor and Singapore are currently discussing a proposal for a special economic zone (SEZ) within Iskandar Malaysia.

Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi, who is leading a state delegation on a three-day working visit to the island republic, said he had met Singapore Development Minister Desmond Lee.

"Our discussion focused a lot on how Johor can improve its cooperation with Singapore for the benefit of the people of both sides and also regarding the proposed Johor-Singapore SEZ in Iskandar Malaysia. "We also discussed preparations for the

16th Malaysia-Singapore Ministerial Joint Committee Meeting for Iskandar Malaysia to be held in Singapore," he said in a Facebook post here yesterday.

The delegation had been on the working visit since Wednesday.

On May 29, Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli said that the Malaysian government was looking at making Johor a special economic zone alongside Singapore.

He said that the Malaysian government had had discussions with Singapore on the matter but this had yet to be formalised.

"We hope to bring up this matter at the next Ministerial Joint Committee meeting between the Federal Government, Johor and Singapore," he said.

Universiti Teknologi Malaysia Azman

Hashim International Business School Associate Professor Dr L. Nanthakumar said it was a good move to have the SEZ within Iskandar Malaysia.

Both Johor and Singapore, he added, depended on one another, which would help boost economic development.

"Over the past two years, Johor has done remarkably well in attracting investments especially from across the Causeway.

"This trend can continue by having the SEZ with Singapore," he said.

The Menteri Besar's proactive measures in addressing congestion issues at the two land borders and making it easier for investors had made Johor more attractive as an investment destination, added Nanthakumar.