



11 NOV, 2024

FOREST CITY DUTY-FREE ISLAND STATUS STARTS ON FRIDAY

New Straits Times, Malaysia



Page 1 of 2

FIFTH SUCH 'ISLAND' IN COUNTRY

FOREST CITY DUTY-FREE ISLAND STATUS STARTS ON FRIDAY

This will allow visitors to buy tax-free goods there and consume them outside zone

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FOREST City will fully operate as a duty-free zone from Nov 15, allowing visitors to buy tax-exempt alcoholic beverages and cigarettes and consume them outside the island.

Previously, duty-free items bought on the island had to be consumed within its grounds.

Under the law, customers can buy up to three crates of beer, five litres of liquor and three cartons of cigarettes at duty-free prices.

Gazetted as a duty-free island in September, Forest City is the fifth such island in the country and the only one accessible by land.

The tax exemption scheme will be implemented in two phases, as the newly built artificial intelligence-powered Customs complex goes fully operational.

The first phase, beginning on Friday, will focus on hotel guests staying at least 48 hours.

Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi said that with the Forest City Special Economic Zone (FC-SEZ) incentives, expected to be inked by the federal government



Menteri Besar Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi (second from left) signing a plaque during the launch of Forest City's Customs Department complex in Iskandar Puteri yesterday. With him are Customs director-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin (left) and Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd executive director Datuk Daing A. Malek Daing A. Rahaman (third from left). NSTP PIC BY ISKANDAR ISHAK

and its Singaporean counterpart on Dec 9, it was vital to have high-quality infrastructure and services in the duty-free island and in the state.

He said Forest City's duty-free status was expected to attract more tourists, significantly boosting tourism and balancing the differences between peak and off-peak seasons.

"The duty-free status would drive business and economic development, strengthening the tourism industry chain," he said at the launch of Forest City's Customs Department complex yesterday.

Present were Customs director-general Datuk Anis Rizana Mohd Zainudin, Country Garden Pacificview Sdn Bhd executive directors Datuk Md Othman Yusof and Datuk Daing A. Malek Daing A.

Rahaman and state Investment, Trade, Consumer Affairs and Human Resources Committee chairman Lee Ting Han.

Onn Hafiz said Johor must be equipped with top-tier facilities to support the FC-SEZ and drive economic growth.

He said investments in modern technology, efficient transport and seamless Customs operations would ensure Forest City remained competitive on the global stage, contributing significantly to Johor's economic advancement and Malaysia's tourism appeal.

Meanwhile, Anis said the Customs complex, fitted with the latest technology, would allow enforcement officers to enhance security measures, and monitor and zero in on smuggling attempts.

Customs officers stationed at the complex will have access to closed-circuit television (CCTV) cameras installed along the commercial street and parking areas.

"With the CCTV footage, Customs enforcers can efficiently monitor and respond to any smuggling attempts," she said.

The 48-hour identification and verification system will initially be limited to Forest City's hotel management.

In the second phase, expected to begin in the first quarter of 2025, the existing system will be reinforced with the use of quick response codes, visitor tracking, the expansion of the 48-hour monitoring system and extension of duty-free privileges to high-, medium- and low-value goods.



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SUMMARIES

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