Fourth Viet-S’pore township launched

Hai Phong industrial park will house 150,000 residents

By Zakir Hussain

HANOI: The fourth Vietnam-Singapore industrial township was launched yesterday with the prime ministers of both countries marking the occasion.

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony in Hai Phong, 90km east of Hanoi, Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung expressed appreciation for the contributions Singapore businesses have made to his country’s progress.

He said he hoped that the Hai Phong Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP) would “serve as a growth engine” and “make active contributions to ensuring social stability”.

Hai Phong is Vietnam’s third-largest city, located in the country’s northern economic zone.

The Hai Phong VSIP, which includes a riverfront township and clean industrial zone, is being developed by a joint venture whose largest shareholders are Vietnam’s Becamex IDC Corporation and Singapore’s Sembcorp Industries.

The park will have a commercial belt, shopping malls, schools, community spaces, markets and medical centres, as well as green spaces. It aims to house 150,000 residents by 2020.

The area’s top local official, Hai Phong People’s Committee chairman Nguyen Van Thanh, said the park will “create thousands of jobs for the local people” and develop the city significantly.

There are three other VSIPs, set up in 1996, 2006 and 2007, in different parts of Vietnam.

Also attending the Hai Phong ground-breaking was Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, who described the four VSIPs as a concrete symbol of Singapore’s cooperation with Vietnam.

He said their success was due in large part to the strong support they had received from the central and provincial governments, in particular Mr Dung.

“The success of VSIP Hai Phong depends ever more critically on the support of the Vietnamese government, to provide good infrastructure, clear rules and favourable incentives to encourage investments,” he said, adding that he was confident the park would have strong backing.

The VSIPs, he noted, had attracted investments worth more than US$2.5 billion (S$3.4 billion) and house 380 companies from more than 20 countries.

Mr Lee also expressed gratitude for the Vietnamese Prime Minister’s assurance that Vietnam would welcome investors.

“Singapore is happy to partner Vietnam to further its development,” he said.

He hoped that the Vietnamese government would support the ventures and facilitate the operations of Singaporean companies, big and small, which are eager to participate in Vietnam’s growth.

Yesterday, 11 companies signed agreements with the VSIP Hai Phong company to set up shop in the development.

One of them is Singapore-based pre-school education provider Modern Montessori International, which plans to operate a pre-school centre in the park in about five years’ time.

Its chairman and chief executive, Dr T. Chandroo, said he had been motivated to invest in Vietnam as its people placed heavy emphasis on education and many were eager for their children to pick up English.

Nanyang Technological University’s Environment and Water Research Institute, meanwhile, will work with VSIP Hai Phong to share knowledge in areas such as waste water, flooding and drainage management, and mitigating the environmental impact of the development on the Cam river which runs through the township.

Yesterday, Mr Lee also called on Vietnam’s President, Mr Nguyen Minh Triet.

Today, he travels to World Heritage site Ha Long Bay for an update on developments there. He will also meet Singaporeans living in Hanoi.

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