

Press Clipping

Jebel Ali is still competitive, says CEO

By Shakir Husain, Staff Reporter

Dubai: Being based at Jafza is cheaper for companies than operating from outside the free zone, chief executive officer Salma Hareb said yesterday.

"Our objective is not to be a leasing company and just come with prices matching the market. What we do is to try to attract investment so our prices are cheaper than the market, yet we provide much more (in terms of) facilities and services," she said.

Asked about complaints by companies that it has become expensive to do business in Dubai because of escalating operating costs and high rentals, she said Jebel Ali was still competitive.

"Jafza is not more expensive than the market, absolutely not. The client would always complain, but we are still 40 per cent less expensive than the market," Salma said.

Currently there are 6,000 companies operating in Jebel Ali.

Ongoing expansion includes development of the South Zone, with the cost of building basic infrastructure put at Dh2 billion.

All the roads and utilities will be completed this year, the Jafza chief said.

Jafza is keen to export its free zone management expertise and is looking at potential locations in the East Asian region, India, Pakistan and Turkey, Salma said.

Jafza International, Dubai's overseas free zone business arm, manages Malaysia's Port Klang Free Zone and has a 40 per cent stake in the Djibouti Free Zone.

The Djibouti venture initially started as a management contract.

"Our involvement all over the world is getting more intense. We now don't just look at management contracts," Salma said.

The first phase of Djibouti Free Zone has been completed and work has started on a new phase of development, Salma said.

Jafza's activities include providing consultancy, drawing business plans and managing day-to-day operations.