

PM arrives in Thailand for official visit

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BANGKOK: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob(*pix*) has arrived in Thailand for a three-day official visit to elevate bilateral ties and strengthen the people-to-people movement.

Upon arrival at Military Air Terminal 2 at 8.15 pm (local time) from Phnom Penh, Cambodia, the prime minister was received by Thai Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Don Pramudwinai, representing the Thai government.

Also present was the Malaysian Ambassador to Thailand Datuk Jojie Samuel.

Ismail Sabri is making his maiden visit to Bangkok as prime minister, at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister Prayuth Chan o-cha.

It is part of his familiarisation tour of Southeast Asia after he was appointed as the prime minister in August 2021.

The proposed reopening of borders, vaccination certificate recognition and cooperation in vaccine research and development (R&D) are among the topics up for discussion during Ismail Sabri's official visit.

Besides that, Ismail Sabri and his Thai counterpart Prayuth will also discuss infrastructure projects at the Malaysia-Thailand borders as well as ties and economic cooperation between the two countries.

The prime minister will be accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah, Senior International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali and Deputy Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Jalaluddin Alias.

The official programme will begin on Friday and Ismail Sabri's delegation will fully observe the health protocols set by the Thai government throughout the visit.

On Friday, the prime minister is scheduled to attend a Keluarga Malaysia gathering involving about 100 Malaysians in Thailand.

Later, Ismail Sabri is scheduled to witness the signing of memorandums of understanding between Pharmaniaga Research Centre Sdn Bhd and Bio-Innova Co Ltd; and Pharmaniaga LifeScience Sdn Bhd and BioNet-Asia; and a licensed manufacturer agreement between Covid Medicare Support Ins (CMSI) and Acquest Healthcare Stem Cell Research & Development Co Ltd.

He is scheduled to attend a hi-tea gathering with members of the Malaysia-Thailand Chamber of Commerce to share experiences and discuss business issues in Thailand.

Later, he will attend an official welcoming ceremony at Government House and a restricted meeting between the two prime ministers, before holding a joint press conference and attend an official dinner to be hosted by Prayuth at Government House.

Malaysia and Thailand have established diplomatic ties for 65 years, since Malaysia gained independence in 1957.

Thailand remains as Malaysia's sixth biggest trading partner in the world and the second largest in ASEAN. Malaysia is Thailand's fourth largest trading partner in the world.

Two-way trade between Malaysia and Thailand increased by 23 per cent to RM97.97 billion in 2021 from RM79.63 billion in 2020.-*Bernama*