

PM Ismail Sabri meets delegation of Bahasa Melayu advocates

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (middle) BERNAMApix

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today held a meeting with a delegation that is championing efforts to enhance the status of Bahasa Melayu.

The meeting, which lasted more than an hour at Parliament building, was attended by Senate president Tan Sri Dr Rais Yatim, Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka chairman Datuk Seri Prof Dr Awang Sariyan and Federation of National Writers Association of Malaysia Chief 1 Datuk Zainal Abidin Borhan.

Also present were Malaysian National News Agency chairman Senator Datuk Ras Adiba Radzi and Han Culture Association chairman Datuk Goh Hin San.

Rais told reporters after the meeting that among the matters discussed was the usage of Bahasa Melayu at official functions overseas.

"It was agreed that efforts would be intensified to maintain Bahasa Melayu as a language of diplomacy.

"For example, if Vietnam (government) people such as their prime minister come and use Vietnamese, then our prime minister should use Bahasa Melayu. It is the same if our prime minister visits an Arab country, as there will be interpreters for our delegation. But if it is to a European country using English, then there is a choice to use either English or Bahasa Melayu," he added.

Rais said it was also suggested that radio announcers and television hosts be given training to ensure they could speak Bahasa Melayu eloquently.

He also called for more efforts to translate important books of knowledge into Bahasa Melayu for the benefit of Malaysians.

"Efforts to uphold Bahasa Melayu like the National Language Month should also be widened. We hope these suggestions will be brought to the Cabinet for approval and the prime minister will make an important announcement on Bahasa Melayu later," he said.

The prime minister said last month that Malaysia would use Bahasa Melayu in all official events it is involved in, including at meetings and conferences overseas, as part of efforts to uplift the status of the national language. — *Bernama*