

## Ismail Sabri to use Bahasa Malaysia for official speeches internationally, says Foreign Minister

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob will begin using Bahasa Malaysia officially for his speeches while on the international stage, says Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah.

"The Prime Minister has decided that he will deliver his speeches in Bahasa Malaysia during the Asean Summit and the United Nations General Assembly later this year," the Foreign Minister told reporters at a press conference at Parliament's media centre on Thursday (March 24).

He added that Ismail will also begin using Bahasa Malaysia during official meetings when on a working visit to Qatar and UAE next week.

The Asean Summit is scheduled to take place this coming November while the UN General Assembly is usually held in the third week of September.

On Wednesday (March 23), Ismail said that he will propose to Asean leaders on the use of Bahasa Malaysia as Asean's second language, in efforts to elevate the mother tongue at the international level.

Last month, Ismail also said that Bahasa Malaysia will be used at official government functions abroad only when English is not the host country's national language.

Asean nations such as Cambodia, Indonesia and Thailand use their national language as the official language.

Ismail began using Bahasa Malaysia during his recent visit to Cambodia.

Meanwhile, Saifuddin said that he is in talks with several other ministries such as the Education and Tourism Ministries to appoint language and cultural attaches based abroad.

"It will be a concerted effort and talks will also be held with the Public Services Department (JPA) to reinstall the special allowance for officers who pick up a third language," he said, adding that allocation for the proposal will be included in Budget 2023.

The Foreign Minister acknowledged that while most attaches are competent in at least two languages such as Bahasa Malaysia and English, there is still a lack in other major languages.

He said that Wisma Putra officers will be encouraged to learn Arab, Mandarin, French, Russian and Spanish, which are among the main languages spoken at the UN.

He also said there was a need to train more official interpreters to carry out translations of Bahasa Malaysia.

He said there were translators for the Thai and Arab languages but there is still a lack of translators for other languages.