



BANGKOK: Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob **(pic)** once again gave his assurance to the public that the government will not close the economic and industrial sectors despite the hike in daily Covid-19 cases recorded in the country.

The Prime Minister said that Malaysians needed to live with Covid-19 after two years of fighting the virus.

"Although Covid-19 cases have increased to 30,000, cases in categories four and five are less than one per cent.

"We will not close the economic sector - once we have opened, it will continue to open," he said at the Malaysian Family gathering here on Friday (Feb 25).

About 100 Malaysians, including students, attended the event at a hotel here.

Also present were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, Deputy Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Jalaluddin Alias and Malaysian Ambassador to Thailand Datuk Jojie Samuel.

Ismail Sabri said the high vaccination rate would also enable Malaysia to reopen its international borders soon.

"We will reopen the border soon. Now we are in the process of convincing Malaysians that imported infection cannot be harmful.

"Malaysians who have not returned home for a long time, will be able to return. We will announce when we will reopen (the border)," he said.

He also said that Malaysia has established a land Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) with Singapore.

"The VTL between Malaysia and Brunei is expected to start on March 1 while with Indonesia is also expected soon.

"For Thailand, we will create a VTL.... If possible, we want to reopen (the border) soon," he said.

Ismail Sabri arrived in Bangkok on Thursday (Feb 24) for a three-day official visit at the invitation of Thai Prime Minister, Prayuth Chan o-cha.

An estimated 5,000 to 6,000 Malaysians, either studying or working, live in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces.

However, only 1,018 Malaysians, including 40 students studying at universities around Bangkok, are officially registered with the embassy.

In this regard, Jojie encouraged all Malaysians in Thailand to register with the Malaysian Embassy in Bangkok or the Consulate General of Malaysia in Songkhla.- Bernama