

Tight schedule awaits PM Ismail Sabri when meeting President Biden, Asean leaders

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Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah said Ismail Sabri will join Biden, US Vice President Kamala Harris and other Asean leaders at the two-day Asean-US Special Summit, here, starting Thursday (Friday in Malaysia). - Bernama pic

WASHINGTON DC: A tight schedule awaits Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob when he arrives here Tuesday (Wednesday in Malaysia), ahead of a high-level meeting with United States President Joe Biden and Asean leaders.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah said Ismail Sabri will join Biden, US Vice President Kamala Harris and other Asean leaders at the two-day Asean-US Special Summit, here, starting Thursday (Friday in Malaysia).

All the Asean leaders are scheduled to participate in the special summit, except from the Philippines and Myanmar.

"I was made to understand that Myanmar's representative was not invited while Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte will not be attending due to the ongoing general election in the country," Saifuddin told Malaysian media here.

It was reported that the Myanmar junta chief Senior General Min Aung Hliang was not invited following the Feb 1 coup in that country last year.

Biden will host a dinner for the Asean leaders at the White House on Thursday (Friday in Malaysia).

He is scheduled to exchange views on regional and global issues with Asean leaders at the US Department of State on Friday (Saturday in Malaysia).

Saifuddin said this is the second Asean-US Special Summit hosted by a US president, the first being the one hosted by then-president Barack Obama, who welcomed Asean leaders in 2016.

This special summit also marks the 45th anniversary of the Asean-US dialogue relationship, said Saifuddin.

He said Harris will also hold discussions with Asean leaders on a wide range of issues including health, maritime cooperation, climate change and clean energy on Friday (Saturday in Malaysia) at the State Department.

"The prime minister will stress Asean's centrality in the Asean-US cooperation at the summit," he said.

Saifuddin said Asean leaders are expected to bring to the meeting table, among others, the region's interests in trade, economy and technology.

The special summit is expected to issue a Joint Vision Statement which would underscore the commitment and aspiration to enhance Asean-US partnership in the interests of enduring peace, stability, security and shared prosperity for all at the end of the high-level meeting.

Asean, the southeast Asian bloc, consists of Brunei, Cambodia Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philipines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam.

Saifuddin said Ismail Sabri will also meet with US Secretary of Commerce Gina Raimondo and US Trade Representative Ambassador Katherine Tai here Thursday (Friday in Malaysia).

The prime minister will also take the opportunity to meet American captains of industries as well as US-Asean Business Council and Chamber of Commerce here Thursday.

Ismail Sabri is slated to meet the Malaysian diaspora in a Hari Raya Aidilfitri Keluarga Malaysia gathering here on Wednesday (Thursday in Malaysia). – BERNAMA