

Malaysians in UK happy to meet PM

By Zaharah Othman - May 12, 2022 @ 9:30am



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob meeting Malaysians at the Hari Raya luncheon in London on Tuesday. BERNAMA PIC

LONDON: PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob met Malaysians working and studying in the United Kingdom at a Hari Raya luncheon at The Dorchester Hotel here on Tuesday.

He later left for Washington DC to attend the Special Asean-US Summit.

Although it was a brief meeting organised by the Malaysian High Commission, Ismail Sabri was able to spend time chatting and getting to know Malaysians, especially those who had been living abroad for a long time.

Accompanied by Malaysian High Commissioner Zakri Jaafar and his wife, Aini Abdul Rahman, Ismail Sabri was taken from table to table to meet eager guests.

However, many could not wait for their turn and Ismail Sabri obliged them by being pulled here and there to be photographed.

Among those keen on meeting Ismail Sabri was Ed Adeeb, a name well known among followers of the Malaysian Quarantine Support Group (MQSG) on Facebook.

He and other founders of the group answer questions and try to solve problems facing Malaysians and non-Malaysians who wish to travel in or out of Malaysia.

Adeeb came from Birmingham with a little gift — a tote bag, mouse pad and mask embossed with the MQSG logo: Supporting Global Community — to present to Ismail Sabri.

He and his team had forsaken sleep and family time to deal, in different time zones, issues relating to travel, standard operating procedures, travel permits for non-Malaysian spouses and children and, more recently, issues on the MySejahtera application.

MQSG members ensure that the information and support given were in line with that from the National Security Council, Health Ministry and National Disaster Management Council.

"Hence, only when major issues arise will we contact the policymakers directly, such as (former health minister) Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba and the prime minister, when the first Movement Control Order was imposed in March 2020, and since 2021, with Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin."

Adeeb wanted to meet Ismail Sabri to thank him for the assistance rendered when he was senior minister (security) during the first MCO.

"I was privileged enough to be able to communicate with him directly when we had so many difficulties in terms of standardising the SOP for citizens coming in to Malaysia and leaving Malaysia, at that time."

Adeeb's phone doesn't stop buzzing for queries about MySejahtera and other issues from travellers, more so now when the borders are open.

Among the 250 guests were students from universities in the United Kingdom. Brexit, compounded by the Covid-19 pandemic, have made life financially difficult for many of them.

United Kingdom & Eire Council for Malaysian Students chairman Nicole Siaw and her friends chatted with Ismail Sabri, voicing their concerns about the dire straits some students were in.

"If the allowances are not increased soon, it will be difficult, even with part-time jobs.

"We are hoping that the government does something to solve this problem and bring this to the attention of departments to take action as soon as possible."

During the one hour greet-and- meet, Ismail Sabri took pictures with guests.

He had earlier visited the Pahang Royal Weave exhibition, part of the London Craft Week from May 9 to 15, at the Malaysian High Commission.

He was granted an audience with Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunjku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah, who briefed him about the exquisite designs of *tenun* Pahang.