

## PM Ismail Sabri vows Sabah will catch up with rest of country under 'Keluarga Malaysia'

By Julia Chan

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaacob launches the Keluarga Malaysia aspiration roadshow in Kota Kinabalu May 20, 2022. — Bernama pic

KOTA KINABALU, May 20 — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaacob said today he wishes to close the development gap between Sabah and other states in Peninsular Malaysia, in line with his administration's "Keluarga Malaysia" or "Malaysian Family" aspirations.

He said that it is among his hopes that the federal government can contribute to the development of Sabah and Sarawak in the same extent as in other states.

"The government is working on closing the gap between Semenanjung and Sabah and we believed the toll-free Pan Borneo highway is a game-changer that can change the landscape of Sabah within five years," he said in his speech during the launching of the Keluarga Malaysia aspiration roadshow here.

He outlined several measures which have been announced as efforts from the federal government to assist Sabahans.

Among them was a RM1.02 billion budget to upgrade 113 dilapidated schools in Sabah to be carried out by the Works Department for the Education Department.

"We are committed to investing in our children's education," he said.

He also mentioned the Trilateral Cooperation Agreement between Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines which will be reviewed to strengthen defence and security in Sabah's waters.

"To ensure the 'no wrong door policy' is implemented accordingly, the renewal of the long term visit pass of spouses to citizens and the temporary work visit pass was no longer limited to the original office where the file was opened as it could be renewed at any Immigration Office.

"I would also like to share good news for the residents of Pegalungan in Nabawan who no longer need to travel over 100km to Keningau to obtain the Malaysia-Indonesia Border Crossing Pass," he said.

Starting May 1, the Pagalungan Immigration control post would function to oversee transborder movements and issuance of passes.

"We are always concerned with the people's issues, most recently those concerning the high fares of airlines and delayed flights during festive seasons.

"We will have discussions with the parties involved so our 'Malaysian Family' need not worry about flying back to their hometown during future festive occasions," he said.

Ismail Sabri, who has been here since yesterday afternoon, said that Putrajaya is also keen on resolving matters relating to the Malaysia Agreement 1963 which has been affecting state and federal relations for some time.

"In the spirit of Keluarga Malaysia, we hope that any issues and outstanding demands can be discussed amiable and considered with good faith," he said.