

# PM MEETS OPPOSITION TO CALM TENSIONS

Ismail Sabri and three leaders discuss ways to improve people's wellbeing

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday sat with Pakatan Harapan (PH) leaders to calm the political temperature, while discussing ways to improve the people's wellbeing and to emerge from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ismail Sabri said he had called for the meeting at his office in Putrajaya following the king's advice for the political temperature to be brought down.

Pursuant to His Majesty's decree, Ismail Sabri said a meeting and discussion was held with opposition leader and PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim,

Parti Amanah Negara president Mohamad Sabu and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng.

"The more than hour-long meeting focused on the agenda of the people's interest to find the best points of similarities to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic, safeguard lives and to be safe from the virus' threat, while finding ways to free people from the grip of economic issues that came about due to job and income losses," he said in a statement.

"Mutual agreements were reached in empowering the functions of Parliament as a responsible and constructive institution, checks and balances of the executive's governance for more transparency, and to fulfil the people's wishes.

"The opposition leaders and I also agreed and understood the utmost importance of having an independent judiciary, institutional reforms as well as good governance to ensure a conducive environment for the people and the country in the context of 'Malaysian Family' (Keluarga Malaysia)."

Anwar issued a joint statement with Mohamad and Lim and expressed how their aspirations in

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob with (from left) Parti Amanah Negara president Mohamad Sabu, opposition leader and PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and DAP secretary-general Lim Guan Eng in Putrajaya yesterday. PIC COURTESY OF PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

many matters were similar to that of the prime minister.

Anwar said he was not offered a cabinet position by Ismail Sabri.

He said he had no interest in being part of the cabinet, adding that the matter did not arise among PH leaders.

"We are not here to demand positions. Our issue is to address Covid-19 and the people's welfare."

Anwar praised Ismail Sabri for being open to meeting with him, describing it as a shift from Umno's policy of "No Anwar, No DAP".

"I extend my gratitude to Ismail Sabri as he is from Umno and today (yesterday), he sat for a meeting with me and DAP.

"I joked that it looked like the

'No Anwar, No DAP' stance had changed.

"This is the spirit of cooperation as decreed by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong."

He said the meeting was a good starting point for the opposition and the government to find more effective proposals to overcome Covid-19 issues as well as troubles faced by the poor and unemployed.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Lim had highlighted economic issues, including the bank moratorium, while Mohamad touched on the need for new approaches to fight Covid-19 to replace present ineffective ways.

"We have given our assurance that if pro-rakyat programmes as well as more effective Covid-19

measures are in place, we will not have a problem in guaranteeing that the situation will be under control.

"There will be more committee-level meetings chaired by our representatives centring on what we can agree upon and steps that should be taken so that the position of the prime minister and the country will be stable.

"We want the political climate to be peaceful."

Asked what PH's position would be should there be a vote on the government's legitimacy in the next parliamentary session, Anwar said they would not complicate matters if the amicable situation remained and pro-rakyat programmes were established.