

# PM: War against Covid-19 not over

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**BERA:** Malaysians have been cautioned against abusing the freedom of movement following the reopening of the economic sector and the easing of movement restrictions.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said this was because the war against Covid-19 was far from over.

He said although vaccination against the coronavirus had reduced the daily cases from 24,000 to around 4,000 cases, the people must not let their guard down.

"When the government eased the country's border restrictions and opened businesses, we promised we would not close them again or implement the Movement Control Order (MCO).

"However, if the number of new cases, including the Omicron variant, shows an increase, then it may be difficult for us to maintain the situation.

"We may consider taking measures to close the affected areas or villages. To ensure the MCO is not implemented, everyone has a responsibility to adhere to the standard operating procedures.

"We may be successful in bringing down the number of cases, but we are still not safe," he said in his speech when opening the Bera Umno division meeting at the Bera Convention hall here yesterday.

Ismail Sabri, who is the Umno vice-president and Bera division chairman, said Malaysians should not become complacent like in some countries, which assumed they were almost winning the war but saw a spike in cases when the people did not adhere to the SOP.

"There were countries that did not make it mandatory to wear face masks resulting in an increase in daily cases, including deaths. We cannot afford to be too relaxed."

Earlier, in a televised speech when opening the virtual National Unity Congress, Ismail Sabri said different political beliefs, at times, could cause division even in a model nation for race relations like Malaysia, where diverse ethnic and religious communities lived in goodwill and harmony.

While politics should be a platform for unity, he said, it could also do the opposite and become a source of division.

The congress, organised by the Al-Azhar Alumni Malaysia, was attended by 1,000 people, including from Egypt.

"Personal interests and political standings can sow seeds of enmity that can bring divisions in Keluarga Malaysia (Malaysian Family).

"This is a big challenge that needs to be faced not just by leaders but also Keluarga Malaysia to ensure that national stability is safeguarded.

"If the country is not stable,

external and internal parties would take advantage of the situation and threaten the unity forged so far."

In **Kuala Lumpur**, Ismail Sabri said the payment for Phase 3 of the Covid-19 Special Assistance (BKC) of RM300 will be made from tomorrow involving an allocation of RM1.2 billion to 3.8 million households in the poor and B40 categories.

He said the disbursement of Phase 3 payment would complete the BKC initiative involving a total of RM4.6 billion undertaken by the government to alleviate the burden of the people, according to a Bernama report.

Payments for Phases 1 and 2 of BKC were completed in September and November with an allocation of RM3.4 billion which benefitted 10 million people.



*Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob*