

# Seeds sowed for their good

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## Farmers' problems are the government's too, says Ismail Sabri

**SEKINCHAN:** The government is aware of the problems being faced by farmers following an increase in the price of fertiliser and pesticides, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

The Finance Ministry, he said, has been instructed to resolve the issue, while providing the necessary aid to alleviate their burden.

"We discussed the issue in a Cabinet meeting and we understand that when the price of pesticides is high, when the price of fertilisers is high, the overall cost will be high too, and this will reduce the net income of farmers.

"Trust me, the people's problems and the farmers' problems, are the government's problems, too. We will not let farmers shoulder those burdens alone," he said at the launch of the new IS21 Padi Seed variety here yesterday.

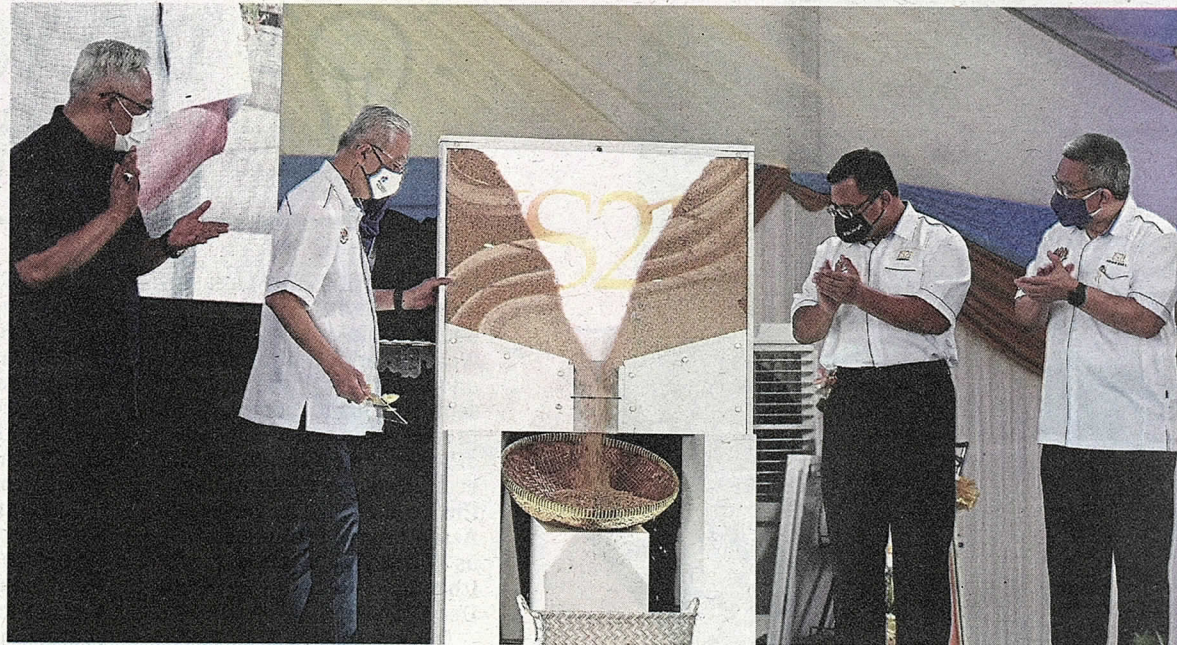
Ismail Sabri said the price increase came about because fertilisers and pesticides are imported.

Meanwhile, he said the government would always strive to improve the productivity of padi, including by introducing the latest technologies.

"However, the responsibility should not be shouldered by the government and farmers alone, as it needs a joint effort," he added.

Ismail Sabri called on more local researchers from various fields to collaborate on agro-food innovations.

He also said the government is always ready to face global chal-



**Boosting rice yields:** Ismail Sabri launching the new IS21 padi seed in Sekinchan. — Bernama

lenges and introduced various initiatives, including the 12th Malaysia Plan (12MP).

The main goal is to become a high-technology and high-income nation with the Research, Development, Commercialisation and Innovation (RDCI) programme having been identified as one of the main thrusts of the 12MP, he added.

He said the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry (Mosti) has a vital role to play in formulating RDCI strategies.

Meanwhile, Ismail Sabri said the introduction of the IS21 padi seed is the result of Mosti's high-impact project, undertaken by the Malaysian Nuclear Agency (MNA).

Apart from having a high level of resistance to unpredictable weather and crop diseases, the IS21 seed also provides high yield and will increase income.

The seed can produce nine tonnes of rice per hectare if managed according to the government's guidelines, he added.

"The cost of cultivation can also be reduced by 10% - 20% through the use of less fertiliser and pesticides. Crop yield can also increase 40% - 67%, depending on the area and farmers' cultivation practices," he said.

The initiative, he said, was part of government efforts to increase food security and reduce dependency on imported rice.

He said Budget 2022 allocated RM1.53bil in subsidies and incentives for padi farmers. — Bernama