

# Close Malaysia-Singapore ties very important: PM

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► 'More active multi-level engagements and much stronger cooperation the way forward for both nations'

**SINGAPORE:** As close, immediate neighbours, the deep relationship between Malaysia and Singapore is of immense importance to both sides, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

"More active multi-level engagements and a much stronger cooperation are certainly the way forward for our two countries," he said at a joint press conference with his Singapore counterpart Lee Hsien Loong yesterday.

"This is crucial for our cooperation in undertaking effective and meaningful (economic) recovery efforts so that our countries will come out stronger following the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic."

Ismail Sabri is on an official visit to Singapore at the invitation of Lee.

He noted that yesterday both countries marked another significant milestone in their cooperation, with the reopening of their borders through the launching of a land Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL).

Ismail Sabri crossed the Causeway in the morning and was received by Lee at the Woodlands checkpoint.

Ismail Sabri said he had spoken with his counterpart on additional



Ismail Sabri and Lee during the launch of the land Vaccinated Travel Lane yesterday. – BERNAMAPIX

measures that both will undertake in regard to cross-border travel between Malaysia and Singapore, Bernama reported.

Both have agreed to include all categories of travellers under the VTL, subject to health requirements determined by both countries.

They also agreed to expand VTL to include additional bus service routes via the Second Link, trains operated by Keretapi Tanah Melayu and gradually, private vehicles such as motorcycles and cars.

"We acknowledge that the

reopening of borders is important to reactivate cross-border social and economic activities that will benefit the people of both countries," Ismail Sabri said.

"We hope that by doing this, it would provide the opportunity for more people on both sides of the Causeway who have been away from their families due to the pandemic, to be reunited with their loved ones."

Both leaders also discussed cross-border travel by air between Singapore and destinations in Malaysia like Penang, Langkawi,

Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

Ismail Sabri and Lee had a four-eyed meeting at the Istana in the afternoon.

During the discussion, Ismail Sabri said they agreed on the need to resume work on existing bilateral mechanisms.

Ismail Sabri revealed that he and Lee also agreed that the work on other mechanisms at the ministerial and official levels should resume as soon as possible.

They also discussed the situation in Myanmar.