

'DON'T PRE-EMPT KING'

# PM: Up to king to lift Sarawak emergency

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**KUCHING:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday said no one should pre-empt Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah's prerogative to lift the emergency in Sarawak.

He said no discussions had been held with the Election Commission on the 12th Sarawak election yet as the state was under an emergency.

"We cannot and should not try to pre-empt the king (to revoke the emergency). Only he has the power to do so," he said at the Petra Jaya Hospital project site here yesterday.

Reports and rumours have suggested the emergency in Sarawak, which began on Aug 2 and is set to end on Feb 2, might be lifted soon. This came after the announcement of the prime minister's first official visit to the state.

Once the emergency ends, the 12th Sarawak state election must be held within 60 days.

According to Clause (3) of Article 21 of the Sarawak Constitution, the state assembly should have been dissolved on June 7, but the clause has no power under paragraph 15(1)(a) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) Ordinance 2021, which suspended the dissolution.

However, Section 2 (2) of the Emergency (Essential Powers) (Sarawak) Ordinance 2021, issued following the Sarawak Emergency Proclamation, states that the king can terminate the proclamation earlier after consulting the Sarawak Yang di-Pertua Negeri.

Ismail Sabri said the aim of his visit was to get a better understanding of the state's development needs and to launch the Keluarga Malaysia concept.

"I have attended a briefing on the state's development by the Sarawak Economic Planning Unit on plans to turn Sarawak into a developed state by 2030. We also want to know how the federal government can help, especially in terms of funding.

"I am aware that there is an urgent need to intensify rural development, including improving water and electricity access, roads and schools.

"We hope to resolve these issues that are affecting people here by the end of the 12th Malaysian Plan."