

# PM: RESTORE CROSS-BORDER VALUE CHAINS

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Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines grouping must put in place fresh and bold strategies, says Ismail Sabri

## KUALA LUMPUR

**M**EMBERS of the Brunei-Indonesia-Malaysia-Philippines East Asean Growth Area (BIMP-EAGA) should look for every opportunity to restore cross-border value chains, many of which have become fragmented since the closure of international borders following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri, in his speech at the 14th BIMP-EAGA Summit yesterday, said Malaysia had been do-

ing its part to make this happen as it valued BIMP-EAGA as an important platform to enable balanced and inclusive regional development.

"Reflecting on this commitment, sub-regional cooperation under BIMP-EAGA has been further mainstreamed and prioritised under the recently launched 12th Malaysia Plan 2021-2025," he said.

Pursuant to the plan, Ismail Sabri said the cooperation under BIMP-EAGA would focus on increasing cross-border economic activities and strengthening value chains.

It would also focus on creating liveable towns and cities, improving infrastructure accessibility and connectivity, as well as enhancing collaboration and coordination between stakeholders.

"Measures will continue to be undertaken to improve infrastructure accessibility and connectivity by accelerating the implementation of priority infrastructure projects in BIMP-EAGA.

"This includes the Pan Borneo Highway, border townships, and customs, immigration, quarantine and security facilities," he said.

In order for BIMP-EAGA to achieve a sustained and resilient post-pandemic recovery, Ismail Sabri stressed that participating countries must put in place fresh and bold strategies through a "whole of nation" approach while maintaining regional cooperation.

Citing tourism, he said in reviving the struggling industry, member countries should explore the possibility of having a standardised approach which permits vaccinated individuals to travel freely and safely across borders with minimal quarantine or complicated processes.

On green initiatives, Ismail Sabri said Malaysia would be working with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Local Governments for Sustainability in developing Green City Action Plans (GCAP). He said the country would develop at least two GCAP under the 12th Malaysia Plan for BIMP-EAGA member cities as its contribution towards accelerating the implementation of green cities.

On BIMP-EAGA and South Korea Cooperation Fund, Ismail

Sabri said he was confident that it would contribute meaningfully to advancing collaborations in maritime connectivity; trade and investment; tourism; human resource development; and maritime safety and environment.

To further enhance cooperation with South Korea, he was also looking forward to the early finalisation of the BIMP-EAGA-South Korea Framework of Cooperation and its plan of action.

Chaired by Indonesia, the BIMP-EAGA summit was attended by representatives of member countries, as well as ADB and the BIMP-EAGA Facilitation Centre.

It was held at the sidelines of the three-day virtual 38th and 39th Asean Summits and Related Summits, which began on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Brunei. **Bernama**