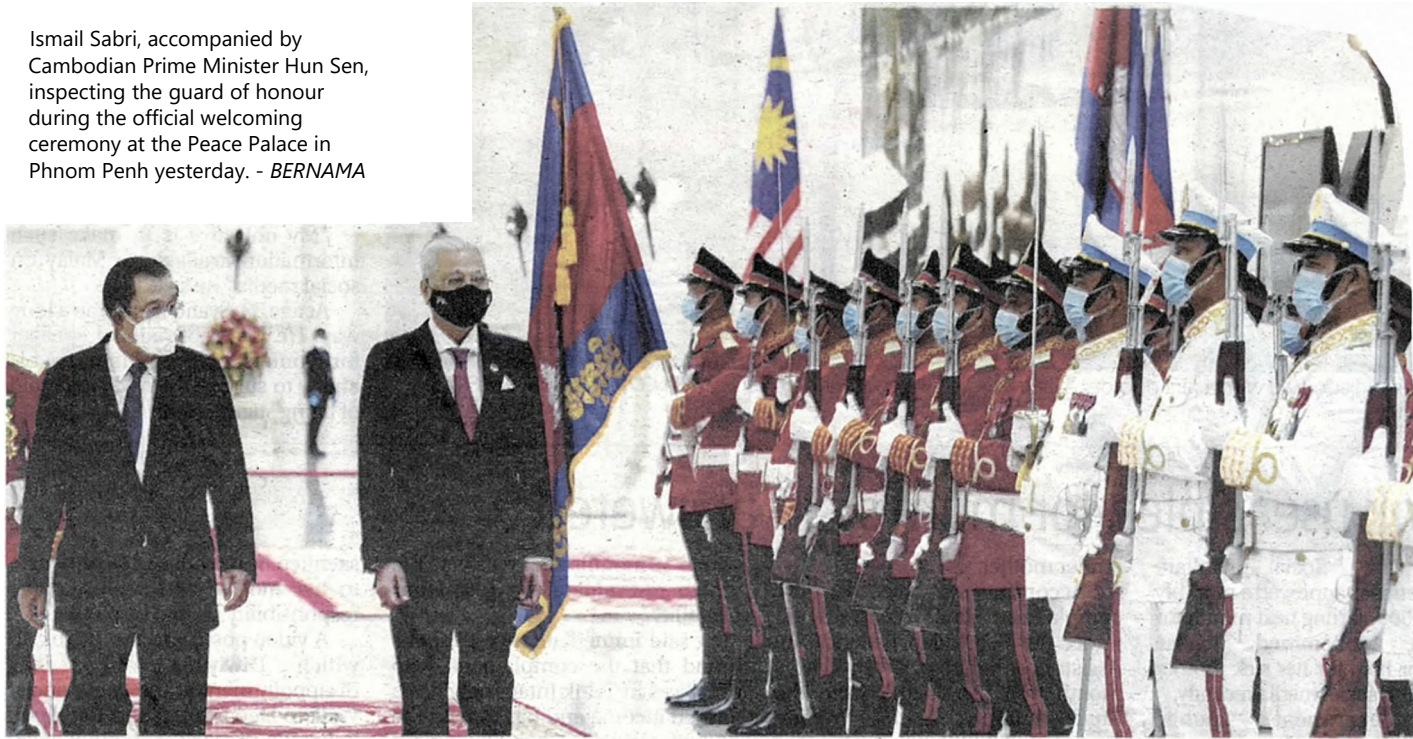


Ismail Sabri, accompanied by Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, inspecting the guard of honour during the official welcoming ceremony at the Peace Palace in Phnom Penh yesterday. - *BERNAMA*



## Borders to be opened soon, PM assures, M'sians in Cambodia

**PHNOM PENH:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob assured Malaysians in Cambodia that the country will soon open its borders that would ease the process of travelling, especially for those residing overseas.

He said the Omicron variant has delayed the country's plan to move into the endemic stage, eventually delaying the process of opening the borders as well.

"We almost announced that Malaysia has entered the endemic stage but in December 2021 the Omicron variant, which is a super spreader was detected. However, Omicron is not as bad as Delta. It spreads quickly but is not as dangerous as Delta," he said at the dinner with Keluarga Malaysia in Cambodia on Wednesday night.

Ismail Sabri said Malaysians will eventually need to learn to live with Covid-19.

"We have to accept it as any other disease such as dengue," he said.

In recent days, Malaysia's Covid-19 cases hover around 27,000 daily, however a majority of the cases are of category one and two, thanks to the high vaccination rate in the country.

"I know a lot of you are eager to come back home. I understand some of you have not gone back home for almost two years.

"So we will start opening our borders to the whole world soon and you can return to Malaysia," said Ismail Sabri.

There are about 5,000 Malaysians living in Cambodia, and 2,000 of them are in the capital Phnom Penh.

Ismail Sabri said the opening of the country's borders is important because many have been affected by the closure since the Covid-19 pandemic hit, especially those in

the tourism sector.

"As such, we will reopen it. Restrictions on people's movement have a huge impact on everyone," he added.

Earlier, on his arrival, Ismail Sabri said further discussion would be held with the Cambodian government on giving educational assistance and employment opportunities to the Champa Malay Muslim community.

He said the areas identified include technical education and vocational training which could create highly skilled manpower among the 800,000 Champa Malay community in the Asean member country.

"We may even be able to offer individuals from the community jobs in Malaysia. The Malay community in Malaysia will continue to help Champa Muslims in Cambodia," he added. - Bernama