

PM: Brunei visit 'a great success'

> Matters discussed included implementation of VTL and mutual acceptance of vaccination certificates

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN: The implementation of the air and land Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) as well as recognition of the digital vaccination certificates on the MySejahtera and BruHealth apps were the two main items decided during Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's two-day official visit to Brunei, that started on Monday.

The agreement, reached as the result of a discussion between Ismail Sabri and the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, will be a relief to the people of both countries and help revive the economies of the two nations.

There are currently more than 25,000 Malaysians living in Brunei, comprising

professionals, students and those working there as well as Sarawakians, especially in the border areas, who commute to Brunei.

Some of them have not returned to Malaysia for two years following the closure of the country's borders due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Describing his first official visit to Brunei as a great success, Ismail Sabri said a proposal was also made for the implementation of four flights a week between Brunei and Malaysia when the VTL is implemented, Bernama reported.

"My first official visit to Brunei Darussalam went well. This visit was very successful," Ismail Sabri told a media conference at the end of his

visit before leaving for Malaysia.

There were also discussions on measures to enhance economic cooperation, including trade and investment between both countries.

"Malaysia and Brunei have a lot of potential in this field," he said, adding that bilateral trade increased by 70.4% to RM8.03 billion last year.

He said border area trade was also significant, with a value of RM832.4 million last year.

"Apart from the participation of Petronas and several Malaysian companies in Malaysia-Brunei economic ties, I believe cooperation in the field of small and medium enterprises, as well as Sabah-Brunei and Sarawak-Brunei cooperation have the potential to be enhanced."

Both countries agreed that the first meeting of the Joint Land Boundary Committee be expedited, as agreed in 2011 at the senior official level.

The two leaders also spoke on the proposed

Trans-Borneo Highway linking both countries, and several regional issues, including the situation in Myanmar as well as matters concerning the South China Sea.

The long-standing diplomatic relationship between Malaysia and Brunei opens up opportunities for cooperation in various fields including trade, health, defence and tourism.

The relationship continues through the Annual Leaders' Consultation, which provides an important platform to discuss issues of mutual interest.

This year, Malaysia will host the 24th Annual Leaders' Consultation in Kuala Lumpur, and Ismail Sabri welcomed Brunei's participation in the event.

He added that all agreements reached during his visit to Brunei reflected a strong commitment between the two parties towards improving relations to a higher and stronger level.