

PM outlines initiatives to strengthen use of BM

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday outlined several initiatives to strengthen the use of Bahasa Malaysia in the country and elevate the position of the national language at the international stage.

“To my knowledge, there are no restrictions imposed on our ministers in using Bahasa Malaysia when attending events abroad.

“Therefore, I have instructed all cabinet members to use Bahasa Malaysia when attending conferences or bilateral meetings abroad,” he told the Dewan Negara.

Ismail Sabri said ministers, however, must inform early and make arrangements with our mission office or the embassy at the respective countries that they would be visiting.

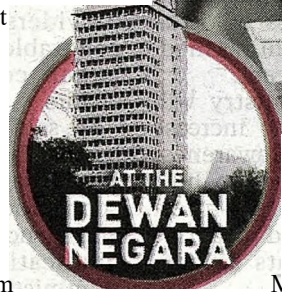
“This is to enable our embassy to inform the organiser of the event and make arrangements, such as preparing translators.”

To a suggestion from Senator Zurainah Musa for Malaysia to streamline the use of Bahasa Malaysia among leaders from Asean countries, Ismail Sabri said he would discuss the matter with his Asean counterparts.

“*Insyallah*, I will raise the matter and discuss it with Asean leaders, especially those who are already using Bahasa Malaysia. I will discuss with them to make Bahasa Malaysia as the second



Students answering questions in the Bahasa Melayu Paper 1 of Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia in Kuala Lumpur recently. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob says he will be discussing with Asean leaders to make Bahasa Malaysia as the second language in Asean. FILE PIC



language in Asean,” he said.

The government, through the Foreign Ministry, said Ismail Sabri, would also set-up a language and culture unit at all Malaysian embassies abroad in its effort to uphold Bahasa Malaysia.

“In fact, there will also be a culture and language attache at all our embassies abroad,” he said.

He had also instructed the ministry to organise Bahasa Malaysia classes at all Malaysian embassies for diplomats posted abroad and their family members, especially their children who are accompanying them during their posting.

“We realise there are children

of diplomats who are not that fluent in Bahasa Malaysia.

“This is because they spent most of their time growing up attending international schools since their parents are affected by cross-posting exercises (did not return to Malaysia before being deployed to their next posting).

“As a start, these Bahasa Malaysia classes will be held for diplomats and their children before it is expanded to Malaysians who are residing abroad.

“This is to ensure that they remain fluent in our national language,” he said.

On the domestic level, Ismail Sabri said the proposal to amend the Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka (DBP) Act 1959 was to enable the

government agency (DBP) to take action against violations of Bahasa Malaysia at the district, state and federal levels.

“There are places and locations being named as if we are in other countries. And the existing by-laws did not allocate the power to municipal or city councils to change the names.

“Through the proposed amendments, we want to enable the DBP to enforce and take any action against violations in the use of names (of locations),” he said.

Ismail Sabri said he had also instructed the Higher Education Ministry to make Bahasa Malaysia a compulsory subject for foreign students studying at universities in Malaysia.