

# Biden hosts Asean leaders at White House

WASHINGTON DC: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob and other Asean leaders were hosted by US President Joe Biden at the White House on Thursday.

The US leader met with the leaders from Asean for a two-day Asean-US Special Summit.

For Malaysia, the historic meeting is seen as the starting point of bringing a positive impact to the diplomatic, trade and economic relations between both sides.

Ismail Sabri emphasised Asean-US cooperation and hoped that the special summit would be the strategic cornerstone for Asean and the United States to study and explore pragmatic cooperation to strengthen existing ties.

The Prime Minister also joined Biden and Asean leaders for a group photo at the White House grounds.

They then proceeded to an official dinner hosted by Biden at the White House on Thursday, Bernama reported.

Other Asean leaders at the event were Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah of Brunei, Indonesian President Joko Widodo, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore, Cambodia's Prime Minister Hun Sen, Thai Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha, Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh and Laos Prime



**One for the album:** Biden taking a group photo with (from left) Asean Secretary-General Lim Jock Hoi and Asean leaders Pham, Prayut, Hun Sen, Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, Widodo, Lee, Dr Phankham, Ismail Sabri and Locsin Jr (Philippines Foreign Secretary). — Bernama

Minister Dr Phankham Viphavanh.

The Philippines, which just held its general election, was represented by Foreign Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.

There was no representative from Myanmar which is under junta rule following the Feb 1, 2021, coup.

The Biden administration has made it a top priority to serve as a strong and reliable partner in

the region.

In the previous virtual Asean-US Summit held last October, Biden announced US\$102mil (RM448.6mil) in a new initiative to expand its engagement with the 10-member grouping.

It covers Covid-19 recovery, health, security, climate change, stimulating broad-based economic growth and deepening people-to-people ties.

This is the second time such a summit with South-East Asian leaders was hosted by a US president.

In February 2016, then president Barack Obama welcomed Asean leaders in Sunnylands, California.