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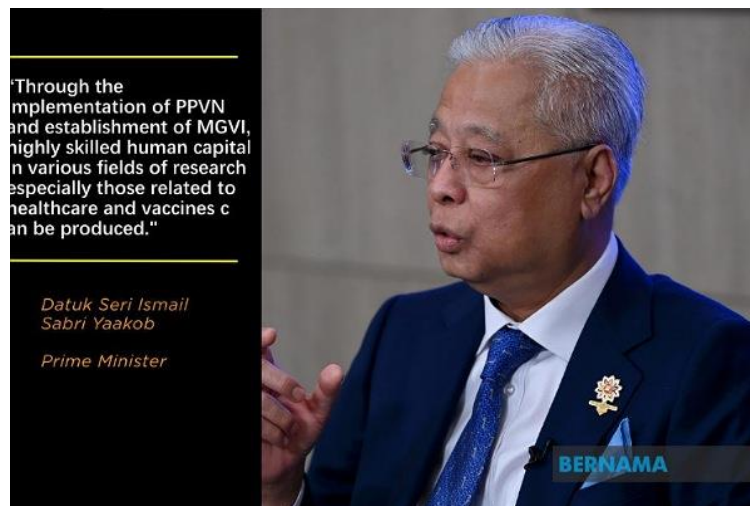
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Ismail launches National Vaccine Development Roadmap, Genome and Vaccine Institute

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BANGI: Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today launched the National Vaccine Development Roadmap (PPVN) and Malaysian Genome and Vaccine Institute (MGVI) in an effort to turn the country into a hub for vaccine production and boost confidence in vaccine use.

The prime minister said that through PPVN and MGVI, Malaysia could produce its own vaccines that are of quality, effective and safe in accordance with the conditions set by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA).

"Although R&D and vaccine production require heavy investment, such efforts have the potential to bring long-term returns for Keluarga Malaysia (Malaysian Family) in the form of cost savings in treating diseases and investments by multinational companies in Malaysia.

"Through the implementation of PPVN and establishment of MGVI, highly skilled human capital in various fields of research especially those related to healthcare and vaccines can be produced," he said at the launch ceremony at the Malaysian Genome Institute (MGI) here.

Also present were Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba and Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

More job opportunities can be created for Keluarga Malaysia to help increase the number of skilled workers and enhance the standard of living and health of the people," he added.

Ismail Sabri said PPVN would not be focusing solely on Covid-19 and its role would be expanded to include development of vaccines for other diseases, including head and neck cancer by the Cancer Research Centre.

He said three projects are ready to be implemented through PPVN, with the first involving the production of two types of Covid-19 using inactivated virus and mRNA developed by the Institute for Medical Research (IMR).

He said for this purpose, the fund extended by the government involved research allocations to the Health Ministry (MoH) and SUKUK Prihatin (Covid-19 research allocation special aid) totalling RM3.5 million.

The second project, entitled Development of Mucosal/Oral/Subunit Vaccines Against Cholera, Tuberculosis and Covid-19, is on cholera vaccine developed in collaboration with Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM) and Asian Institute of Medicine, Science and Technology (AIMST), with the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation (MOSTI) also funding it to the tune of RM10.5 million using the Strategic Research Fund (SRF), he said.

"The third project is on Pre-clinical Evaluation of a Therapeutic Cancer Vaccine for the Treatment of Head and Neck Cancer by Cancer Research Malaysia (CRM) at a cost of RM3 million financed by MOSTI.

"However, as there is no facility yet to conduct the first in human clinical trial in Malaysia, CRM will conduct the clinical trial from February 2022 until March 2023 in the United Kingdom," he said.