

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### Kedah Rubber City to create 15,000 jobs by 2025, says PM Ismail Sabri



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today launched Malaysia's first dedicated rubber eco industrial park, Kedah Rubber City (KRC), which houses a potential to create 15,000 jobs by 2025 through RM10 billion projected investments. -NSTP/Luqman Hakim Zubir

**PADANG TERAP:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today launched Malaysia's first dedicated rubber eco industrial park, Kedah Rubber City (KRC), which houses a potential to create 15,000 jobs by 2025 through RM10 billion projected investments.

He said the national strategic project located on a 500ha piece of land in Padang Terap would see a huge economic spill over besides boosting the rubber small holders income through consistent demand for natural rubbers.

"KRC is set to attract potential investment valued at RM10 billion and creating 15,000 jobs by 2025, thus creating various spill over for the local community.

"Although it is only launched today, KRC has to date successfully attracted RM4 billion investment pledge which is set to create close to 7,000 jobs for the people," he said at the launching ceremony here today.

Present were Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Muhammad Sanusi Md Nor, Minister in the Prime Minister Department (Economy), Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Rural Development Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) chief executive Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John.

Earlier, Ismail Sabri had chaired the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) 28th Council Meeting which was also attended by Sanusi, Perlis Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Azlan Man, Perak Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Saarani Mohamad and Penang Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow.

Ismail Sabri said he was delighted that the project would directly benefit rubber smallholders in Kedah, most of whom were still living in poverty.

"Although Kedah is one of the key rubber producers in the country, our rubber industry mostly still focusing on low value-added activities with limited marketing channels.

"This has led to many rubber smallholders are still low-income earners and living in poverty," he said.

Ismail Sabri said KRC would help improve their income by ensuring a consistent demand for natural rubbers while stabilising the market price through optimising value-added by products besides creating jobs for the local population.

He added that the NCIA would be collaborating with the Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) to nurture and develop local rubber smallholders under the KRC project, which would potentially benefit 73,642 rubber smallholders in Kedah, including 11,190 smallholders from Padang Terap.

The KRC is one of the Federal government's national strategic projects implemented via NCIA with the aim of making it a leader in the development of Malaysia's rubber industry, as well as a global hub for high-value rubber industry.

Phase 1 of the project comprising 200ha of land had been completed at a cost of RM417.5 million funded by the federal government and KRC is ready to welcome the arrival of investors.

Pioneering the investment in KRC are Hong Seng Industries Sdn Bhd, which plans to build one of the world's largest nitrile butadiene latex (NBL) plants in the industrial park starting this year, and LTS Logistics Sdn Bhd, which would establish an integrated logistics ecosystem in KRC comprising a logistics hub, container depot and warehouse.

Ismail Sabri said the Phase 2 of the project was scheduled to commence in 2023.

He added that KRC would also leverage on its strategic location along the "Rubber Belt" area of the Malaysia-Thailand border and within the Indonesia-Malaysia-Thailand Growth

Triangle (IMT-GT), and serve as a rubber product innovation centre to support downstream and upstream activities for the sector.

He added that the finance ministry was offering a special incentive package for KRC to attract more investments into the high-impact project.

"The strong cooperation between the federal and the state government in undertaking high impact projects such as KRC will help to maintain the recovery and economic growth momentum in Kedah and the northern corridor at large, in line with the 'Keluarga Malaysia' vision for Prosperity,

Inclusiveness and Sustainable," he said.