

## 'Lockdown' move no longer apt-PM Ismail Sabri (Updated)

09-14-2021 01:45 PM



**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government's decision to reopen more economic sectors was done as the 'lockdown' move is no longer apt and feared to have more implications, including on mental health, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (pix) said.

He said the reopening of the sectors not only can expedite the economic recovery process but would also give the people the opportunity to improve their lives.

"The reopening of 11 economic sectors in states under Phase One of the National Recovery Plan (PPN) is appropriate due to the high vaccination rates (in the states).

"In fact, the decision was made after taking into account the data from the risk assessments conducted by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP)," he said in reply to Datuk Mohd Salim Sharif (BN-Jempol) during question time at the Dewan Rakyat sitting today.

Mohd Salim had wanted to know the reasons for the reopening of 11 economic sectors when the country's daily tally of Covid-19 cases was still worrying.

Ismail Sabri said to date, 74.7 per cent of the country's adult population had been fully vaccinated against Covid-19, while 91.6 per cent had received one dose of the vaccine.

Nevertheless, he said the sectors were reopened with strict standard operating procedures (SOPs), including allowing only fully vaccinated customers in the business premises with only fully vaccinated workers on duty.

A total of 11 types of economic activities in the trade and distribution sectors were allowed to resume operations in Phase One of PPN from Aug 16, including car wash shops, electrical and electronics shops, clothing, fashion and accessories shops, goldsmith shops, barbershops, as well as beauty centres and salons.

When replying to Mohd Salim's supplementary question on whether the decision to reopen the sectors had taken into consideration the risks of Covid-19 infection for the unvaccinated population aged 17 and below, the Prime Minister said the onus is on everyone to maintain discipline and self-control to prevent themselves, their families and their communities from being infected by the coronavirus.

"When we reopen (the economic sectors), we see people began to flock to holiday destinations and some not even wearing face masks. The future of our country, in terms of Covid-19, depends on us. We cannot depend on the vaccine alone. Self-control is very important or all our efforts will be in vain," he said.

Meanwhile, Ismail Sabri said the reopening of the 11 sectors was done according to the data related to Covid-19 clusters of those sectors.

"For instance, many people said that (reopening of) barbershops is dangerous because it involves close contact, but throughout 2020, only one cluster was detected to have involved a barbershop.

"The same goes with car wash shops. Many people said the shops have foreign workers, so it will be easier to get infected but in 2020, there is none (cluster) involving car wash shops.

"These data is the reason we focus on reopening only certain sectors," he said.

In a reply to a supplementary question from Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (PH-Kulim Bandar Baharu) on the appointment of former Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin as chairman of the National Recovery Council (MPN), Ismail Sabri said it was only right as Muhyiddin has been the chair of MPN since its establishment.

"He (Muhyiddin) has been the chair of the council since the day it was established, so that's why we entrusted him to continue with it," he said.- *Bernama*