

Health Ministry to be consulted on possible SOP relaxation for international tourists, says PM

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PUTRAJAYA: The Health Ministry's (MOH) views will be sought on possible "slight relaxation" of SOPs to allow the country's borders to be opened to international tourists, says Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

The Prime Minister said the country's borders have remained closed since March 2020 due to concerns over Covid-19 infections.

"We have seen countries relaxing their SOP for international tourists. Maybe this can be considered for Malaysia.

"If the two doses of vaccines and booster jabs exercise is completed, maybe we can consider relaxing the SOP a bit.

"But all this will depend on views from the Health Ministry," he said at a gathering with staff from the Prime Minister's Department on Tuesday (Jan 25).

He pointed out that Malaysia had to be careful about reopening its borders, as Covid-19 cases in other countries were still high.

The Prime Minister acknowledged that its strict policies have effects, including on the tourism industry, which depend on domestic tourists to revive their businesses.

"So if more people have received their vaccine booster shots, maybe we can consider relaxing the SOP.

"If we can open our borders, the economy will also improve, But as I have mentioned, this will depend on the views of MOH," he added.