

Thailand-Malaysia land border entry SOPs guarantee public health

03- 27- 2022 05:01 PM



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SONGKHLA: The reopening of two Thailand-Malaysia land border gates on April 1 will comply with standard operating procedures (SOPs) to ensure that the safety and health of tourists and locals are always protected.

Deputy Governor of Songkhla province, Amphon Pongsuwan, said the two border gates of Sadao (Songkhla province)-Bukit Kayu Hitam (Kedah) and Wang Prachan (Satun)-Wang Kelian (Perlis) will be reopened to tourists fully vaccinated with Covid-19 vaccine, starting from April 1.

He said all tourists who will be coming through the land border gate under the 'Test & Go' programme will have to apply online for the 'Thailand Pass' at least seven days before travel.

Under the "Test & Go" programme, travellers also need to book a designated hotel in advance, as well as perform an RT-PCR test on the first day of arrival and a self-antigen test on the fifth day. He added that they will have to purchase medical insurance with a minimum coverage of US\$20,000.

"Tourists who enter Thailand through the Sadao entrance can bring private vehicles from Malaysia.

"These conditions are important because public health is our priority," he said when contacted by Bernama.

Beginning April 1, Amphon said international travellers who are fully vaccinated do not need to include the Covid-19 test, 72 hours before travelling to Thailand.

Apart from that, the land border gate of Hatyai International Airport is also scheduled to receive international tourists starting April 1.

In 2019, Thailand recorded almost 40 million visitors, including 4.1 million visitors from Malaysia.

To boost the tourism industry, especially in the southern region, Tourism and Sports Minister Phiphat Ratchakitprakarn said Thailand is working closely with the relevant authorities to reopen all land border gates with Malaysia by May 1.

Phiphat said the ministry will propose to the Covid-19 Situation Administration Center (CCSA) to reopen more gateways between the two countries.

During the official visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob to Thailand on February 25, Malaysia and Thailand in principle agreed to implement quarantine-free air, land and sea travel through the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) and the 'Test & Go' scheme. - Bernama