

## Face mask, MySejahtera to stay

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Malaysia will begin the process of transitioning to the endemic phase of Covid-19 on April 1, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob. He said the public would still need to wear a face mask in public and MySejahtera would remain in use.

"It is important for me to stress that 'the transition to the endemic phase' is an exit strategy to allow us to return to normalcy after grappling with Covid-19 for two years.

"This phase is temporary and we can only enter the endemic stage if the World Health Organisation (WHO) allows it," Ismail Sabri.

"On a related note, we will reopen the country's borders on the same date. With that, foreign travellers with recognised travel documents can enter Malaysia freely without having to apply for the MyTravel Pass, which will be abolished. All they need to do is to fill in the pre-departure form on the MySejahtera app."

Foreign travellers who have received two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine would not be required to quarantine upon arrival in Malaysia.

They would only need to do a RT-PCR test two days before travelling to Malaysia, followed by a professionally administered RTK-Antigen (professional) test within 24 hours of arrival.

Ismail Sabri said this would allow ease of travel for visitors from other countries that have similarly opened their borders to travellers as well as rejuvenate the tourism industry.

For nations whose borders are still closed like Thailand and Singapore, he said the Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) would remain in place.

Once Malaysia transitions to the endemic phase, Ismail Sabri announced that all restrictions on opening hours for shops and restaurants would be lifted.

Premises would be allowed to open as stipulated by their licences but patrons must scan their MySejahtera app before entering any establishment.

"We are removing the time limit for businesses, meaning if you want to grab a bite after midnight you can do so as long as the premises' licence allows it."

He also said places of worship would no longer have to limit their capacity to 50 per cent and travelling across state lines would be allowed regardless of vaccination status.

"We have decided to remove the one-metre social distancing requirement in mosques and places of worship as well. Previously, we limited it to 50 per cent capacity. However, the final decision rests with the states' Islamic agencies," he added.

For individuals who want to enter the country but are unvaccinated, the prime minister said the Ministry of Health would elaborate further during a press conference Wednesday (today).

Malaysia postponed its transition to the endemic stage planned for last year due to uncertainties surrounding the increase in cases due to the Omicron variant, followed by the devastating floods in eight states in December.