



PETALING JAYA: As Muslims across the country begin their Ramadan fast today, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob conveyed his well-wishes and reminded Malaysians to always abide by Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP). He said many Muslims want to return to their hometowns to celebrate Ramadan as they were largely prevented from doing so when interstate travels were banned at the height of the Covid-19 pandemic last year.

"We have given some leeway, but face masks are still compulsory and must be worn in public spaces. Do not let your guard down," said Ismail Sabri in a statement yesterday.

Interstate travel was initially banned when the movement control order was implemented in March 2020. It was briefly lifted later in June that year.

Due to a surge in Covid-19 cases, the ban on interstate travel was reintroduced in January last year and it was only lifted in October.

Ismail Sabri said last month that interstate travel would be allowed regardless of a person's vaccination status.

In conveying his well-wishes to those fasting, he said as Malaysia moved into the endemic phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, people could slowly return to their normal lives.

"In this year's Ramadan, Muslims can fulfil their fardhu and terawih prayers in congregation, as well as celebrate fasting programmes, subject to the ruling of the state religious authority," Ismail Sabri said.

He also said the Ramadan month was an opportunity for Muslims to perform self-reflection and to be charitable.

"At the same time, it is also important for Muslims to improve relations not just with the Creator, but also among mankind.

"Once again, I wish a Happy Ramadan and Blessed Fasting to all Muslims," he said.

Meanwhile, Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong said the holy month this year would be extra special with the country's transition to an endemic phase, the reopening of borders and the relaxation of SOP.

In his greeting to Muslims, Dr Wee, who is the Transport Minister, said: "Happy Ramadan to all Muslims. With the transition to an endemic phase, reopening of borders, and relaxation of SOP, I'm sure the arrival of Ramadan this time will be much more heartfelt compared to two years ago.

"May this holy month bring blessings to all," said Dr Wee, who is also MCA president, in a Facebook post yesterday.