

[Updated] Sarawak govt grants unrecorded leave for Deepavali celebration by Hindu civil servants

By Iylia Marsya Iskandar - November 9, 2023 @ 8:37pm

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sarawak state government has agreed to provide unrecorded leave on Monday (Nov 13) to all Hindu civil servants who will be celebrating Deepavali.

In a circular dated today by the Sarawak state chief secretary Datuk Amar Mohamad Abu Bakar Marzuki sighted by the New Straits Times, the approval of the application of unrecorded leave however falls on the head of departments.

He said the move was to improve the decision of a 1978 circular memorandum to enable Hindu civil servants to apply for unrecorded leave the following day when Deepavali falls on Sunday.

"The Sarawak Government once issued a Joint Circular Memorandum No.39 dated Oct 26, 1978 to provide unrecorded leave to Sarawak civil servants who adhere to the Hindu religion to celebrate Deepavali Day for one (1) day if Deepavali Day falls on a working day.

"The Sarawak Government has agreed to improve the Deepavali Day unrecorded leave in accordance with the Joint Circular Memorandum No.39 dated Oct 26, 1978 as follows:

"If Deepavali falls on a working day, civil servants can apply for unrecorded leave on that day; or if Deepavali falls on a Sunday, the officer can apply for unrecorded leave the next working day.

"In relation to that, since Deepavali Day 2023 falls on Sunday, Nov 12, then officials who adhere to Hinduism can apply for leave from their head of departments," he said.

This is following the NST's report on Wednesday of a Hindu doctor stationed on the periphery of Sarawak expressing concern over the differential treatment they are subjected to, given that they will be unable to return to the Peninsula in time to celebrate Deepavali with their families.

The doctor also raised concern that more doctors might reject offers in Sarawak due to the double standards and would contribute more towards the understaffing issue.