

Non-citizen spouses, children can now enter M'sia to apply for long-term pass

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COVID-19 | Due to Covid-19, the government had locked the country's borders and only recently allowed Malaysian citizens and those with a long term social visit pass to enter.

Many Malaysians with non-citizen spouses and children were separated from their loved ones due to the lockdown, especially those who do not possess long term pass to cross the border.

However, this is about to change as the government today decided to loosen the restriction.

According to Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob, the Special Ministerial Committee on Covid-19 had discussed the appeals received from Malaysians whose spouses and children were barred from entering the country.

"Some of them do not have a long term (social visit) pass, and the requirement for them to apply for one is that they must do it in the country. So, if they are not allowed in, it would be impossible for them to apply for the pass.

"And thus, we made the decision that our citizens who have spouses or children outside, the family members can enter Malaysia with the pass.

"But, the condition is that they must make the application as soon as they pass immigration. If not, they are not allowed to be here," he added.

According to the senior minister in charge of the security cluster, the committee has also decided to allow Malaysians who have emergencies overseas to leave the country.

However, these are limited to serious cases like those who have sick family members, and they have to apply for permission from the Immigration Department.

Foreigners allowed to pray in mosques starting Sept 1

Meanwhile, Ismail also announced that Muslim foreigners in the country would be allowed to join congregational prayers at mosques beginning Sept 1.

Previously, under the series of movement control orders imposed to curb the spread of Covid-19, the government had barred all foreign nationals from entering mosques. An exception was later given to diplomats.

"So the committee has agreed to allow foreigners who work in our country to join congregational prayers at mosques starting this Sept 1.

"However, they must also register themselves upon entering the mosques. And the mosque management can determine how many to allow inside.

"This is up to the mosque committee. But on our part, in general, we allow foreigners to go to mosques. And they must adhere to all the standard operating procedures on Covid-19 prevention," Ismail said.

Besides foreigners, the government is also easing another restriction at the religious premises.

Ismail said individuals who visit mosques for prayers would no longer be obligated to bring their own praying mats.

However, all of them are still required to wear face masks at all times.

"We still encourage people to bring their own praying mats. And since we have relaxed the rule on praying mats, we cannot compromise the people's safety, so face masks are mandatory.

"There is no compromise on the use of face masks," he said.

Ismail added that mosques are also encouraged to sell face masks at entrances so that visitors who want to pray can purchase them there.

They can also provide single-use paper cover for the people to use as a prayer mat as a safety precaution.

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