

Putrajaya reverses home quarantine for returnees under M'sia-S'pore scheme

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COVID-19 | Putrajaya has walked back the easing of allowing home quarantine for Malaysians workers returning for short-term home leave in Malaysia under a special arrangement between Malaysia and Singapore.

This is after a Malaysian travelling home under the bilateral arrangement, referred to as “Periodic Commuting Arrangement”, was infected with Covid-19.

“The patient has since been isolated and given treatment.

“As such, those travelling under the PCA will no longer be allowed to quarantine at home but would instead have to be kept in quarantine centres,” Health Minister Adham Baba was quoted as saying by The Star.

Under previous rules published by Malaysia's Immigration Department, Malaysians working in Singapore who return for short-term leave to Malaysia

under the PCA scheme may self-isolate themselves, pending the results of their polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

The guideline adds: "If tested negative, travellers are required to visit the nearest government health facility to be exempted from the 14-day Home Surveillance Order (HSO)".

Adham said the returnees must now be isolated at designated centres at their own cost.

However, he did not say whether there will be any changes to the policy of allowing quarantine exemption once they test negative.

This is a special provision under the PCA. Ordinary returnees are required to be quarantined for 14 days, even if they test negative.

The report said a 35-year-old Malaysian man travelling from Singapore to Malaysia on Aug 29 under the PCA scheme was confirmed to have been infected with Covid-19 on Sept 2.

Returning under the PCA scheme can only be done every 90 days.

In a statement later, Adham clarified that isolation at quarantine stations pending test results is only for non-Johor residents.

"While waiting for the Covid-19 PCR test, they need to undergo home quarantine (for individuals residing in Johor) and at quarantine stations (for individuals residing outside of Johor).

He also reiterated the existing procedure that Malaysians returning to Malaysia for short leave from Singapore under the PCA will get a quarantine exemption once their PCR test results return as negative.

He added that anyone who eventually returns to their country of work after the short leave will also need to undergo a seven-day quarantine.

Apart from the PCA scheme, Malaysia and Singapore also have the Reciprocal Green Lane (RGL) scheme, which is for any nationality residing in Singapore who needs to make single-entry essential travel, including for business and official purposes, in Malaysia and vice-versa.

Adham said since the PCA and RGL arrangements started on Aug 17, more than 3,000 people have entered Malaysia under the schemes.

"About 815 individuals entered Malaysia under the RGL while another 2,647 under the PCA," he said.

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