

## **Ministry monitoring impact of relaxed travel restrictions - Health DG**

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COVID-19 | The Health Ministry is monitoring the impact of relaxing travel restrictions on the country's daily rate of Covid-19 cases.

According to Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, based on the current infectivity rate, they are expecting the number of daily cases to be between 845 and 1,700 cases for the next two weeks.

"We will monitor for the two weeks, see the progress in the number of daily cases. If the number of cases goes as we expect, then we can revive our economy.

"However, if there is a spike in positive cases, then we need to rethink the strategy," he told reporters during the press conference in Putrajaya earlier today.

Noor Hisham was responding to a request for the ministry's projection in the

number of positive cases after Putrajaya made a decision last week to lift all travel restrictions except for areas that are under the enhanced movement control order (MCO).

On Saturday, Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced new standard operating procedures (SOP) for movement control measures in the country.

The new guidelines saw inter-district and interstate travel no longer prohibited, with an exception for areas under an enhanced MCO.

The decision was made when Malaysia's daily number of cases are still in the range of three to four digits. It also means that individuals from places that recorded a high number of Covid-19 cases are free to travel to other areas, including the green zones (which have zero cases within 14 days).

Noor Hisham said all travellers are advised to practice the Health Ministry's advice in preventing coronavirus infection.

"Now we see that some relaxation has been given. We can travel, but make sure that we are not exposed to positive cases. Avoid getting infected.

"This is what we want to advise all those who travel inter-district or interstate,"

he said.

Meanwhile, asked on the conditional MCO which was implemented on almost all states in the country during the third wave of the pandemic, Noor Hisham said the order has achieved its intended purpose.

He said the country had no choice other than to opt for a conditional MCO, as opposed to the previous full MCO, due to economic factors.

"What conditional MCO has done is that it avoided exponential surge and brought down the R-nought from 2.2 to 0.96.

"It has averted a very exponential surge of cases."

The top health official reiterated his reminder that it is up to the public to bring down the infectivity rate further by complying to the SOP.

During the same presser, Noor Hisham also refuted claims by a tabloid that Covid-19 vaccines made by China poses danger to its consumers.

He said China has the experience in making vaccines, which were pre-qualified by the World Health Organization (WHO) including for polio, influenza, and

Hepatitis A.

"The claim that vaccines from China are not effective and such is not true. The information is untrue at all.

"China has produced vaccines under the WHO before, and they have experience in making vaccines.

"What they are doing now is a different vaccine, a new one. And it needs to undergo clinical trials," he said.

Noor Hisham was responding to a tabloid, which was distributed for free to several residential areas in the Klang Valley, including in Puchong and Petaling Jaya.

One of its articles featured quotes by one Dr Yang LiMeng, who claimed that China had never been successful in producing vaccines.

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