

## **M'sia, S'pore work on recognising vaccine certificates**

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Malaysia and Singapore have reaffirmed their commitment to work together towards recognising each other's Covid-19 vaccine certificates, with a view towards facilitating cross-border travel in the future.

Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein and his visiting Singaporean counterpart Vivian Balakrishnan said this in a joint statement today.

They said both countries will also continue to make progress on their respective national vaccination programmes to vaccinate long-term residents, including Malaysians residing in Singapore and Singaporeans residing in Malaysia.

The ministers stated that the two countries will progressively restore cross-border travel for other groups of travellers in addition to the Reciprocal Green Lane (RGL) and the Periodic Commuting Arrangement (PCA).

They will take into account the Covid-19 situation in both countries, and ensure

public health and safety of the residents in Singapore and Malaysia.

“The operational details of the Reciprocal Recognition of Vaccine Certificate between Malaysia and Singapore, including the detailed requirements, health protocols, and application process involved for entry and exit into Malaysia and Singapore will be further deliberated and finalised by both parties,” the statement added.

The ministers met in Putrajaya today to discuss issues of common interest to the two countries, as well as regional and international issues.

Meanwhile, during a press conference following the meeting, Balakrishnan said cross-border travel between the two countries for compassionate reasons will be allowed starting next month.

“We are going to try to get some details operationalised next month (April),” he said.

Currently, Malaysians working in Singapore who wish to return to the country for compassionate reasons have to put in an appeal.

On the RGL travel arrangement with Malaysia, which is suspended, Balakrishnan

said it might resume from May onwards.

He also extended Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's invitation to Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin to make an official visit to the island republic in the near future.

As the vaccination programme is being rolled out in both countries, he said by the time the two prime ministers meet, both countries hope to make some significant announcement regarding cross-border travel.

“This will allow those of us with family members on both sides to meet again, it will allow businesses to resume and hopefully, allow safe tourism in due time, and we can look forward to a more busy causeway and airport,” he added.

Meanwhile, Hishammuddin said in terms of policies, both countries have come to some understanding regarding cross-border travel.

However, he said all the stakeholders including related ministries and the Johor government need to be coordinated to facilitate the implementation of the initiatives.

“But I’m happy to report, as far as the two foreign ministers are concerned, we

have come to some agreements on moving positively forward,” he added.

Balakrishnan is on a two-day working visit to Malaysia starting today, which is part of his regional tour that includes Brunei and Indonesia.

Following the meeting with Hishammuddin, he was scheduled to call on Muhyiddin at Perdana Putra at 2.30pm.

Balakrishnan is also scheduled to hold meetings with senior ministers – International Trade and Industry Minister Azmin Ali and Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob – as well as Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

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