

Raya visits may turn M'sia into next Brazil or India, warns Dr M

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged Malaysians to exercise patience and not visit each other over the Hari Raya holidays to stem the spread of Covid-19.

In a video message posted on his Facebook page, he said staying at home during the start of the pandemic last year worked and it was only after the Sabah election last September did things get worse.

"We must take the situation seriously. If we don't exercise caution, we can become like Brazil or India, where there are more than 100,000 cases a day and people can't seek treatment. People are left (to die). This can happen in Malaysia," said Mahathir.

The Langkawi MP, a former medical doctor, said he felt compelled to issue this message because he was informed that the Covid-19 situation now is very serious.

"There are situations where one person led to 2,000 being infected and of that 2,000, there were 20 who died. This can happen if we don't follow the rules," he said.

Now that there are new variants of the Covid-19 virus, it is even more difficult to battle the pandemic.

Mahathir said he was unable to go to the mosque nor visit food stalls this Ramadan because people don't keep their distance.

"My apologies. I cannot go to prayer because of too many well-wishers. I appreciate their concern, but they get too close. It's the same when I go to the bazaar. People want to take photos.

"I know it is difficult but we have to keep our distance. We have to stay disciplined. That's the only thing that can help us - we need to stop infecting others and protect ourselves," he said.

The government is allowing house visits during the first day of Hari Raya only (May 13). The maximum number of people allowed to gather, including the host family, is 15.

However, inter-district and inter-state travel throughout the country is banned, except for work, medical, and emergency purposes until June 10.

Aidilfitri-related prayers in mosques are allowed with strict physical distancing and a cap on the maximum number of participants.

Malaysia has been grappling with overloaded hospitals after another resurgence of Covid-19 case numbers since mid-March.

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