

## **Langkawi all set to receive tourists from Sept 16**

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Langkawi is generally ready to receive the arrival of tourists when the resort island reopens under the tourism bubble programme from Sept 16.

Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) chief executive officer Nasaruddin Abdul Muttalib said nearly all tourism products on the island were expected to be open to tourists, subject to the standard operating procedures (SOP) set by the National Security Council (NSC).

He said that Lada, together with the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, had submitted a suitable SOP proposal for approval by the NSC to ensure the reopening would go smoothly.

“We will open all tourism products, in terms of hotels, business premises, eateries and other activities such as water sports. Each product requires its own SOP, and we leave it to the NSC to decide on it.

“We hope the NSC will issue the SOP soon so as to facilitate the public to make plans before coming to Langkawi and tourism operators in Langkawi will also be prepared,” he said when contacted by Bernama today.

He was asked to comment on the announcement by Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob yesterday regarding Langkawi being picked for the pioneer project of the tourism bubble programme from Sept 16.

Nasaruddin said that Lada, in collaboration with the Langkawi Tourism Academy, had been holding courses for the past few weeks on SOP compliance for all industry segments that are closely linked to the tourism sector in Langkawi.

According to him, a total of 1,238 industry players attended the courses, where they were evaluated and given a Certificate of Compliance with the Covid-19 Standard Operating Procedure that is recognised by the NSC as well as the Kedah State Health Department.

He explained that this way tourists would be able to identify and select the tourism products comprising hotels, business premises, eateries recreational centres or sports activities knowing that they practised the stipulated SOPs.

Meanwhile, Nasaruddin said they are expecting at least 5,000 visitors to

Langkawi daily from Sept 16, either via the ferry services in Kuala Kedah here and Kuala Perlis, Perlis as well as via flights.

“We also expect to have specific SOPs at the ferry terminals and airport, so visitors are asked to plan their journey to avoid congestion, make bookings for tickets and tourism products in Langkawi via online,” he said.

Meanwhile, Kedah Tourism, Arts and Culture Committee chairperson Mohd Firdaus Ahmad hoped that the reopening of the tourism sector in Langkawi would help the island’s tourism industry recover from the crisis that it has faced for nearly two years.

He said the aspect of SOP compliance must always be prioritised to avoid Langkawi becoming like Phuket in Thailand and Bali in Indonesia, which reopened earlier but have since been closed following a resurgence in Covid-19 cases.

- Bernama

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