

## **Govt to reduce Covid-19 SOPs to only 10, says defence minister**

**Malaysiakini**

**14 September 2021**

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The government is planning to reduce the number of standard operating procedures (SOP) in the National Recovery Plan (NRP) from 181 to only 10 soon.

According to Senior Minister (Defence) Hishammuddin Hussein, the change is expected to take place before the country's transition to the endemic phase, set to take place in October.

"I, along with three other ministers, will also refine efforts towards streamlining the existing SOPs, so that these are better understood by the rakyat, industries and those who carry out enforcement.

"At the moment, there are 181 SOPs under all four phases of the NRP. In streamlining the SOPs, the goal is to reduce these to only 10.

"The effort to streamline the SOPs that have been used for over a year will

certainly take some time, but the government is committed to settling this before the transition into the endemic phase,” he said at a special press conference at the Parliament media room today.

He added that the announcement of these 10 SOPs is expected to be made by Prime Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob within the next two to three weeks.

The decision was made during the Covid-19 Quartet Ministers Meeting earlier today.

Hishammuddin chaired the meeting, which was also attended by Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Finance Minister Tengku Zafrul Abdul Aziz and Communications and Multimedia Minister Annuar Musa, who were also at the press conference.

Also present was Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

### **Interstate travel**

Asked about the relaxation of SOPs for interstate travel, the Sembrong MP said that although it has been discussed, any decision would have to take the economy, public health and the people's well-being into consideration.

“It doesn’t have to do with just us allowing interstate travel, we have to look at sectors, risks and its effects on the economy, its effects on health and most importantly, its effect on (the rakyat’s) well-being,” he added.

According to Hishammuddin, the implementation of the SOPs will take three aspects into account - congested areas, narrow areas and close contacts (3S).

The people were previously confined to their homes for a prolonged period to curb Covid-19, which led to detriments to their mental health.

### **Additional relaxation for tourists, gyms**

The government is also looking into providing additional flexibilities, including more tourism activities than the ones listed in the travel bubble initiative.

It is looking into adding more destinations under the initiative, such as non-island tourist spots.

Hishammuddin said that the government is also looking into the reopening of gyms.

“However, before any relaxation is announced, the government, via the Health

Ministry, will assess the level of risk of Covid-19 transmissions by applying the 3S principles.

“If it meets the set conditions and criteria, the government is ready to allow its implementation.

“Details will be discussed in the next Covid-19 Quartet Ministers Meeting,” he added.

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