

## **Minister wishes to see more pilgrims performing umrah, haj**

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**Bernamea**

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Idris Ahmad has lauded Saudi Arabia's decision to lift most Covid-19 restrictions in the country.

This included restrictions such as quarantine, rapid antigen testing and physical distancing.

Idris expressed hope that more Malaysians will be able to visit the country as part of their umrah and haj pilgrimages.

"The Saudi Arabian government has certainly assessed various aspects and all health protocols since the Covid-19 outbreak hit the world two years ago before lifting the sanctions, in line with the improving pandemic situation in the country.

"With the lifting of this ban, the Prime Minister's Department hopes that more

Muslims in Malaysia will be able to perform umrah and haj this year and in the times to come,” he said on Facebook.

Idris added that the Malaysian government will always work with Saudi Arabia to do its best for the safety and health of umrah and haj pilgrims.

Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Religious Affairs) Idris Ahmad  
SOPs still apply

Since Feb 14, pilgrims travelling to Saudi Arabia to perform umrah are required to get a Covid-19 booster shot before travelling.

Prior to that, there was a one-month suspension to slow the spread of the Omicron variant into Malaysia.

Apart from requiring booster shots, the person-in-charge from travel agencies are required to monitor pilgrims’ compliance with standard operating procedures throughout the journey starting from international gateways in Malaysia.

Upon return, pilgrims may undergo home quarantine without applying for approval to do so.

However, they may also opt to undergo quarantine at private quarantine stations at their expense.

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