

Interstate travel inches closer

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Ban to be lifted once 90% of adult population inoculated, says Ismail Sabri

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PETALING JAYA: The public's movement will not be restricted forever as Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob gives his assurance that an announcement on allowing interstate travel will be immediately announced once 90% of the adult population is fully vaccinated.

"On Wednesday, it was 85.5%. Today, I believe it has reached 86% or 87%. Within the next four to five days, (this number) will increase again.

"So the time for interstate travel is inching closer. I will announce the lifting of interstate travel when the vaccination rate reaches 90%," the Prime Minister said during an

exclusive interview with national broadcasters yesterday.

Ismail Sabri also acknowledged the impact the movement control orders have had on the tourism sector.

"So long as interstate travel is not allowed, the tourism sector will be impacted.

"I am sure many people want to 'balik kampung'. There are some who have not seen their parents for more than a year. There are also those whose parents are not well," he said.

"I understand how they feel as my late mother would cry when I did not go home for a week or two.

"But because of health and safety, we had to restrict the movement of the people," Ismail Sabri added.

He also said the MyTravelPass application system to leave the country would be abolished once 90% of the adult population have received both doses.

"We will allow Malaysians to leave the country without the need to apply for the MyTravelPass. This will happen soon," he said.

Separately, Ismail Sabri said he was also in discussion with the Finance Minister to look into helping the micro-entrepreneurs who have had to shut down their businesses due to the pandemic.

"The government will look into offering aid or capital to help them to restart their businesses.

"Right now, we are still discussing the mechanism in terms of repayment, a moratorium on paying the

principal or interest.

"We will also review the percentage of interest for them to enjoy the facility and restart all over again," he said.

On another matter, the Prime Minister said Malaysia would not compromise its sovereignty and took the issue of national security seriously.

He said they had blocked the entry of undocumented migrants by strengthening Ops Benteng.

"I consider Ops Benteng a success to prevent illegals from encroaching our borders and the spread of the infection to the people," he said.

Ismail Sabri added that during his stint as Defence Minister, border control was his main focus in which

he had increased the border checkpoints especially in Sabah and Sarawak to 19.

With the South China Sea also seen as a contentious issue, the Prime Minister said Malaysia would stand firm if there were threats to the area.

"This has been stressed during our meetings with national representatives as well as at international forums," he said.

Ismail Sabri also called on Malaysians to unite as a family and to set aside religious, racial and political differences.

"I want us to live like a family. Forget our differences and strive to work together to develop Malaysia and bring the country forward," he said.