

PM: We won't simply reopen

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'Govt will not allow foreign visitors to enter country arbitrarily'

KUALA LUMPUR: The government will not arbitrarily open the borders to foreign travellers, as permission for entry will depend on the Covid-19 situation in their countries of origin, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

Right now, he said the government only allows those who are fully vaccinated to enter the country, but the borders are still closed to tourists.

"If we were to open the country's borders to foreign travellers, every development (related to Covid-19) in their countries of origin will be taken into consideration.

"In every decision, we will seek the advice and recommendations from the Health Ministry based on its risk assessments.

"We will not arbitrarily open the

borders," Bernama quoted him as saying during question time at the Dewan Negara yesterday.

Ismail Sabri was replying to Senator Datuk Razali Idris on whether the government had a backup crisis management plan if the number of Covid-19 cases spiked again following the spread of new variants if the borders were to be opened.

Ismail Sabri said there were six factors to be considered before foreign travellers could be granted entry to Malaysia.

These are the number of Covid-19 cases recorded in their countries in the past 14 days; the incidence rate per million population; the mortality rate per million population; cumulative mortality rate; recovery index; and the cumulative total of the cases in their countries.

"If the numbers are spiking in their countries, we will probably change our policy from allowing (entry) to not allowing entry. We are flexible in this regard," he said.

However, he added that the permission for entry is subject to the standard operating procedure and other terms and conditions, including undergoing mandatory quarantine at designated locations to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Ismail Sabri said the government is constantly improving the SOP and, starting Aug 12, had been allowing fully vaccinated citizens and foreigners to apply to undergo the mandatory quarantine at home.

"Overall, the government has made various preparations and the decision on SOP relaxation was done cautiously by taking into

account the global development, with the priority on reviving the economy," he added.

Meanwhile, replying to Senator Muhammad Zahid Md Arip on the action by certain countries in allowing entry only to recipients of particular vaccines, Ismail Sabri said the government would try to negotiate with the countries involved to allow entry to Malaysians.

"We cannot control their policies, it's their right. What's important is to negotiate to enable Malaysians who received vaccines other than those allowed in the countries to be granted entry," he said.

Watch the video
[TheStarTV.com](https://www.thestar.com)

