

Nation enters 'Transition to Endemic' phase on April 1

> Exit strategy enables return to almost normal life after two-year struggle during pandemic, says PM

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob announced yesterday that Malaysia would enter the "Transition to Endemic" phase and reopen its borders starting April 1.

He said the decision was made after taking into account several factors, conducting the necessary risk assessment, seeking advice from the Health Ministry and scrutinising the recommendations of the Quartet Ministers.

"The 'Transition to Endemic' phase is an exit strategy to enable all of us to return to almost normal life after two years of struggling with Covid-19," he told a special media conference at Parliament building yesterday.

He said the transition phase is just temporary before the country could fully enter the endemic phase, subject to the announcement by the World Health Organisation, Bernama reported.

Malaysia had closed its international borders to foreign travellers since the implementation of the Movement Control Order on March 18,

2020, to curb the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

Ismail Sabri said it has been decided that several matters would take effect from April 1, namely:

- > The wearing of face masks in public places is still compulsory for all individuals;
- > No more limit on operating hours for businesses;

"Owners of business premises can keep to the operating hours stated in their licences. This means that you (the public) can dine in at restaurants even after midnight, especially to have your *sahur* (pre-dawn meal) during the upcoming Ramadan."

> Check-in using MySejahtera is still compulsory but exempted at open and non-crowded spaces. MySJTrace also remains compulsory for indoor places full of guests and visitors;

> Congregational prayers in mosques and surau, as well as mass prayers in non-Muslim houses of worship, can be held without

physical distancing. However, the implementation and final standard operating procedures for mosques and surau will be subject to the decision of state religious authorities and the National Unity Ministry/Unit for Other Religions;

> No more worker-capacity limit based on vaccination status; and

> All individuals are allowed to travel interstate regardless of their vaccination status.

On the reopening of the country's borders, he said this is in line with the plan on entering the Transition to Endemic Phase as well as reviving the overall national economy, especially the tourism industry.

"With the reopening of the country's borders, Malaysians with valid travel documents can now leave and enter the country as usual and are allowed to travel to any country which opens its borders to foreign travellers.

"At the same time, foreign visitors with valid travel documents will be able to move in and out of the country without applying for MyTravelPass, which has been repealed."

He said members of the public only need to download and activate the MySejahtera application and complete the Pre-Departure Form via the Traveller function in the MySejahtera application.