

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NATION

Covid-19: Current situation		Malaysia										New cases	Total cases	Total deaths	Total recovered		
												2,192	285,761	1,062(+6)	252,623 (+3,414)		
(As at 7pm Feb 22, 2021)																	
		Perlis	Kedah	Penang	Perak	Selangor	Kelantan	Terengganu	Pahang	N.Sembilan	Melaka	Johor	Sabah	Sarawak	FT K. Lumpur	FT Putrajaya	FT Labuan
		+4	+26	+135	+148	+910	+28	+4	+7	+64	+14	+211	+110	+221	+303	+7	0
Asean+		Indonesia	Philippines	Japan	Myanmar	China	S. Korea	Singapore	Thailand	Vietnam	Cambodia	Brunei	Laos				
Confirmed cases		1,288,833	563,456	424,507	141,750	89,842	87,324	59,879	25,504	2,383	568	185	45				
Deaths		34,691	12,094	7,417	3,196	4,636	1,562	29	83	35	0	3	0				
Recovered		1,096,994	522,874	398,921	131,282	84,805	77,887	59,731	24,361	1,702	475	178	41				
Global Top 10		US	India	Brazil	Russia	UK	France	Spain	Italy	Turkey	Germany						
Confirmed cases		28,765,423	11,005,850	10,168,174	4,177,330	4,115,509	3,605,181	3,133,122	2,809,246	2,638,422	2,394,515						
Deaths		511,133	156,418	246,560	83,630	120,580	84,306	67,101	95,718	28,060	68,443						
Recovered		18,973,190	10,699,410	9,095,483	3,726,388	2,494,218	247,127	2,497,956	2,324,633	2,523,760	2,198,000						

Vaccine passport offers hope

Such a facility can allow travel but there are concerns

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PETALING JAYA: As Covid-19 vaccinations start to roll out in many countries, including Malaysia which will start soon, talk of a "vaccine passport" is gaining pace.

Such a "Covid-19 passport" would allow borders to reopen, with international travel able to resume after a long hiatus caused by the pandemic.

Tourism industry players have given the idea a thumbs up although they have also voiced some concerns about such a passport.

Malaysian Association of Tour and Travel Agents (MATTA) president Datuk Tan Kok Liang said a vaccine passport or certificate could be a good start for the travel industry in the short to medium term.

"It should be able to facilitate and restore confidence in travel. However, there needs to be reciprocated arrangements with other countries," he said.

Several countries such as Iceland, Sweden, Estonia, Poland and Denmark are implementing vaccine passports as proof of an individual's vaccination status in a bid to reopen international travel.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba had earlier said talks were being held on how to issue "Covid-19 passports" to those who have received the Covid-19 vaccine.

He cited the example of the Saudi Arabian government that issued a "yellow book" certification for those who had been immunised against Covid-19 and were visiting the country.

MATTA's Tan said there were opinions that vaccinations should not be made a mandatory condition for travellers as there were a number of people who could not be vaccinated, such as children, and therefore there should be options that require travellers to merely be Covid-19 negative.

"More importantly, travellers must be responsible and respect health and safety rules," he added.

Malaysian Tourism Council president and Malaysian Inbound Tourism chief executive Uzaidi Udani believes that a vaccine passport would be essential for the opening of borders but voiced concerns that the country could be left behind compared to others in

the region.

"Industry players want to make sure that tourists are healthy before they come in. It could be the best answer," he said.

He noted that the MySejahtera application could be made mandatory for use by travellers in the country.

He, however, hoped that Malaysia would keep up with other countries as the whole rollout here was expected to be only completed early next year.

"I am afraid we may lose out if not enough of our citizens are vaccinated.

"Other governments may prefer to only allow their citizens into countries that have moved quickly (with vaccinations)."

Uzaidi said that some of his counterparts in China have even begun to inquire if Malaysia would be open to tourists by September, which he said was a golden month for tourists from that country.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin had previously said that in 2019, the tourism industry contributed 15.9% or RM240.2bil to the gross domestic product (GDP), with the labour force recorded at 3.6 million people.