

KERATAN AKHBAR

TARIKH : 2 SEPTEMBER 2021

AKHBAR : THE STAR

Let's have bigger bubble, says tourism industry leader

By MOHD FARHAAN SHAH
farhaan@thestar.com.my

JOHOR BARU: With Langkawi being considered for the tourism bubble pilot project, there have been calls to widen its scope.

Malaysian Tourist Guides Council president Jimmy Leong urged the government to expand the tourism bubble to island resorts in other parts of the country.

He said the state government was supportive of the matter, which was raised during an online meeting with the Tourism, Arts and Culture

Ministry recently.

"Johor has many beautiful islands off the coast of Mersing," he said.

"Mentri Besar Datuk Hasni Mohammad, together with state tourism, youth and sports committee chairman Datuk Onn Hafiz Ghazi, have been playing a very proactive role in making sure that those staying and living in islands around Mersing have been vaccinated.

"This is important as it will help the state to meet requirements under the tourism bubble SOP (standard operating procedure) to

accept domestic tourists or even foreign visitors, in particular from Singapore, once the borders reopen," he said.

Leong, who is also Johor Tourist Guides Association chairman, said during the online meeting the ministry held with various stakeholders, they discussed the strict SOP to be adopted in line with the tourism bubble.

The SOP included limiting travelers to Langkawi to those who are fully vaccinated.

"This also applies to the islanders, especially workers in the tourism

industry such as at restaurants and hotels," he said.

Leong expressed confidence that the pilot project should go ahead as planned even with Malaysia still recording high daily cases of Covid-19.

"As Langkawi is an island, it is easier for the authorities to monitor the movement of people under the tourism bubble.

"If we do not start now, then when?

"The tourism industry has been badly hurt by the pandemic," he added.