

## Minister: Visit Malaysia 2020 campaign cancelled

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BY JERRY CHOONG



Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said the cancellation of the Visit Malaysia 2020 tourism campaign is with immediate effect. — Picture by Ahmad Zamzahuri

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 — The Visit Malaysia 2020 tourism campaign has been cancelled due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the movement control order issued by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Monday.

Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri said the cancellation is with immediate effect, and will involve the freezing of all over-the-counter and online services for the ministry's Tourism Licensing Division.

"These include the ministry's state offices concerning tourism licensing such as tour guides, tour drivers, tourism training institutes, and the registration of tourism accommodation premises, rated spa centres, and foot massage centres, until March 31," she said in a statement.

In line with statements by the National Security Council and Prime Minister's Office on the movement control order, Nancy said all tourist accommodation will be permitted to operate at a minimum level.

"All guests at said premises must remain in their rooms for the quarantine period, but are allowed to order food through room service. Check-ins at tourist accommodation will also be permitted, but on a small and limited scale.

"For guests forced to extend their stay throughout the movement control order, they may register with tourism accommodation suited to their budgets. However, new domestic tourists seeking to register with premises will not be permitted," she said.

The order was announced by Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin on Monday night, and starts today until March 31. Malaysians will not be permitted to travel abroad during this time, and all foreign nationals or tourists will not be permitted to enter the country as well.

The order will affect all business premises as they will have to shut down, with supermarkets and grocery stores selling daily essentials being exempted. All government and private premises will also be closed during the movement control order, except for essential services such as utilities, telecommunications, transport, banking, health, pharmacies, ports, airports, cleaning and food supplies.

After some initial confusion, new rules under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (Measures Within the Infected Local Areas) Regulations 2020 have been gazetted, limiting movement to special purposes or essential activities such as buying food or seeking healthcare.

Those seeking to travel from one state to another within the two-week period must obtain police permission before doing so.

Nearly 700 people have become infected with Covid-19, the highest number of positive cases in South-east Asia. The virus claimed its first victims yesterday, a 34-year-old man from Johor and a 60-year-old pastor from Sarawak.