

What a nightmare, bosses group says on travel rules

By **Hakimie Amrie Hisamudin** - March 6, 2021 12:03 PM



The Malaysian Employers Federation said the 14-day quarantine requirement for travellers to Sarawak was 'too restrictive'.

PETALING JAYA: The Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) has complained that variations between states in the fixing of travel rules are disconcerting for business travellers.

“It would be a nightmare” for international businessmen needing to travel to the peninsula, Sabah and Sarawak, said MEF executive director Shamsuddin Bardan in a comment on a government announcement regarding swab tests and quarantine periods affecting the different regions.

Speaking to FMT, he called for the standardisation of the rules.

Senior minister for security Ismail Sabri Yaakob recently said travellers to Sabah, Labuan and Sarawak must undergo swab tests three days before departure.



Shamsuddin Bardan.

Those entering Sarawak will be quarantined for 14 days, but there is no quarantine rule for Sabah and Labuan.

Travellers to Peninsular Malaysia from Sabah, Labuan and Sarawak do not have to take swab tests and will not be quarantined.

Shamsuddin said that travel rules should be based on scientific facts and data on the current Covid-19 situation.

He added that the 14-day quarantine requirement for travellers was “too restrictive”.

“The requirement will slow down efforts to help businesses recover as most business personnel will not travel to Sarawak for the time being, preferring to wait for the restriction to be lifted,” he said.

Shaun Cheah, executive director of the Malaysian International Chamber of Commerce and Industry, agreed that the variations in travel requirements could cause a hassle, but he said businesses were highly adaptable.

“As long as the government opens interstate travel, it is good for business,” he told FMT.

Cheah said a bigger issue that businesses were trying to deal with concerned conflicts in regulations set by Putrajaya, state governments and local councils.

“For example, the international trade and industry ministry might give a licence for a company to operate a factory but the state government would allow the factory to be built only in a particular location.



Shaun Cheah.

“However, when the factory has been built at the agreed location, the local council might refuse to issue an operating licence.”

He said such contradictions were causing unhappiness among foreign investors.

Cheah suggested that the government engage with stakeholders before announcing new standard operating procedures or policies.