

# No to cats and dogs from Sarawak

## Peninsular Malaysia bans import due to outbreak of rabies in Serian

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**PETALING JAYA:** Peninsular Malaysia has banned the entry and import of cats and dogs from Sarawak following an outbreak of rabies in Serian.

The Malaysian Quarantine and Inspection Services Department (Maqis) issued the ban yesterday to prevent the possibility of the outbreak spreading to the peninsula.

"The ban comes into effect immediately and will be in place until Maqis issues further notice.

"We are closely monitoring the

movement of cats and dogs from the state and I urge all parties to abide by our ruling," said Maqis director-general Datuk Mokhtaruddin Husain.

He added that cats and dogs from Peninsular Malaysia were not affected by the ban, meaning the animals could be transported to Sarawak if the necessary permits were obtained.

Three children in Sarawak were reported to have been infected with rabies last week.

They are a seven-year-old girl from Kampung Lebur, Gedong, along with a four-year-old boy and his six-year-old sister

from Kampung Paon, Sungai Rimu in Serian.

Mokhtaruddin said the ban covered the import and movement of cats and dogs from Sarawak to the peninsula.

Among the requirements by Maqis to import cats and dogs into Peninsular Malaysia are that the animals must have identification microchips, health certificates and vaccination records.

The department, which comes under the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry, issues permits for the import and export of animals and plants into Peninsular Malaysia.

Sarawak and Sabah have their own state authority that controls the movement of animals into their respective borders.

Amy Ho, store manager of the Amazing Pets pet shop in Kuching, said they were worried about the effects of the outbreak.

"What we can do now is to make sure we don't get bitten and make sure all the animals are vaccinated," she said, adding that she was waiting for further instructions and guidelines from the authorities.

Denson Kho, who owns Evermore Pets, a pet shop and pet grooming business in Kuching, said he would

only accept pets which had been vaccinated following the outbreak.

"We cannot afford to put the health of the other pets and our groomers at risk," he said.

The organiser of an upcoming international cat show, which will be held in Petaling Jaya on July 15, has decided to decline entries from Sarawak.

Mohd Hafizul Mew Hamid, assistant manager for the Kool Kool CFA International Cat Show, said the exclusion was disappointing as he had hoped the state would soon be declared rabies-free.

"As a cat exhibitor myself, I'm sorry for this outbreak," he added.