



CLICK FOR FULL SITE (<http://www.themalaymailonline.com>)



MALAYSIA (/MALAYSIA)

Health Ministry may help couple with newborn in UK

By Jasmine Andria

Published: September 28, 2017 07:17 AM GMT+8

SHARE THIS ARTICLE



Baby Amin Mikael at the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, which specialises in the care of ill or premature newborn infants. — Pictures via www.gofundme.com/aminmikael

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 28 — The Malaysian couple struggling with escalating medical costs for their premature newborn in England could heave a sigh of relief with financial assistance originating from here.

The Health Ministry has extended a helping hand to the young couple who are now facing a possible medical bill of more than £100,000 (RM500,000) with the birth of their son 10 weeks earlier than expected during the family's visit to Oxford.

Ministry director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said they were willing to consider the appeal for funds to support the costs of warding their baby in Oxford on "compassionate grounds".

"We do not have the allocation and funds to provide for such cases. Nonetheless, we have discussed this matter with the Finance Ministry and hopefully, her application can be considered on compassionate grounds," he said.

Asked if there would be full or partial financial support, the director-general said that would be at the discretion of the Finance Ministry.

Dr Irina Ishak, 35, who is a surgeon with the ministry, and her husband, Hakam Razak, 36, had flown to Oxford to visit her sister after obtaining clearance from their obstetrician.





She was in her eight month of pregnancy when baby Amin Mikael arrived prematurely on Aug 3.

Amin was admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. It was learnt the infant was fed through a tube and was experiencing breathing complications.

On Aug 17, the couple were forced to resort to crowdfunding (www.gofundme.com) seeking to raise £50,000 (RM288,833) to cover medical expenses until the infant is discharged by the middle of next month.

Since the infant's birth, the young couple struggled to keep up with the high costs as visitors to the United Kingdom are charged 150 per cent more than the standard NHS tariff. NHS England is an executive non-departmental public body of the Department of Health.

They were forking up to £2,000 (RM11,355) daily.

As of 6.45pm yesterday, 819 people donated a collective amount of £37,152 (RM210,462.60), and the figure continues to increase as well-wishers continue to donate.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president Dr Ravindran R. Naidu said premature birthing could not be predicted and it was common for expectant mothers to fly before their eighth month.

He said doctors would have conducted the necessary medical examinations before providing clearance for air travel. For those travelling 30 days before their due date, there are risks.



Amin was admitted to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) of John Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford. It was learnt the infant was fed through a tube and was experiencing breathing complications.

"Before travelling, doctors will check the condition of the baby and the mother, which includes examining the position of the baby before giving them official clearance. Unless the mother has experienced pains while travelling beforehand, then it is advisable to refrain from flying.

"Pregnant mothers who intend to fly after eight months must present a letter of clearance from the doctor to the airline.

"However, there is no way to predict if a woman will have a premature birthing. The condition depends on the individual as each mother is different. For all we know, she could have had a premature birth regardless if she was overseas or not," he said.

Former MMA president Dr Ashok Zachariah Philip echoed the opinion, saying there were no medical complications for pregnant mothers who intended to travel.

"The only risk is going into labour early, but that itself is a rare case. Just make sure to have clearance from your doctor.

"Depending on the airline, they usually set specific rules for travelling pregnant mothers," he said.

SHARE THIS ARTICLE

