

Covid-19: Test travelers from China before allowing entry to Malaysia, says MMA

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PETALING JAYA: Travelers coming to Malaysia from China should be tested for Covid-19 before being allowed to enter the country, says the Malaysian Medical Association (MMA).

In a statement on Wednesday (Jan 4), the MMA urged the government to take all necessary precautions to prevent a surge of Covid-19 cases in the country.

Below is the MMA statement in full;

The Malaysian Medical Association urges the Health Ministry to take all necessary measures to prevent a surge in Covid-19 cases in the country; including testing of travelers from China when Malaysia opens its borders to the country on Jan 8. Even if the dominant Covid-19 variants in China have already been detected in Malaysia, all precautions should be taken to prevent a surge.

For now, as China is experiencing a rise in Covid-19 cases, apart from current preventive measures, the government of Malaysia should make it a requirement that only fully vaccinated travelers from China with a negative RT PCR test result be allowed entry into Malaysia and upon arrival at the entry point or within 24 hours, undergo professional RTK Antigen screening for Covid-19. The same should also be done for travelers from other countries experiencing a significant rise in Covid-19 cases.

Although precautionary measures are being taken by the Health Ministry to prepare for the possibility of a surge, we feel more needs to be done to prevent imported cases of Covid-19. We are concerned that with the shortages in manpower at our public healthcare facilities, the healthcare system can still be overwhelmed if cases requiring hospitalisation and ICU admission start to surge. Perhaps, as an additional precaution, the government can look at a gradual opening to visitors from China and relax restrictions when the Covid-19 situation there improves significantly.

We acknowledge that Malaysia will definitely stand to benefit economically from tourism with the high numbers of travelers expected from China, but it must be ensured that public health and safety remain our highest priority.

Don't fear, take precautions

We take note of the concerns among the public over the move to allow travelers from China into the country at this time and wish to remind the public that Covid-19 has been in the country for 3 years and we have much better control over it now. What is important is that we take all available preventive measures against Covid-19 and that is to go for your booster shot when it is due and wear face masks when in crowded enclosed spaces. Also, adopt and maintain a healthy lifestyle as it strengthens your defence against infectious diseases.

Dr Muruga Raj Rajathurai
President, Malaysian Medical Association