



Motorcyclists entering Singapore via the Woodlands checkpoint.

Singapore to stop accepting MCTD next year

SINGAPORE: Malaysians entering Singapore by way of the Malaysian Collective Travel Document (MCTD) can only do so until end of this year.

The Republic's Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) announced in a statement yesterday that the MCTD will no longer be accepted from Jan 1, 2021.

"This is to strengthen the security and

efficiency of immigration clearance at Singapore's checkpoints," it said.

The MCTD is a travel document issued by the Immigration Department of Malaysia to groups of between five and 20 Malaysian nationals, in lieu of passports.

ICA said the MCTD poses security concerns as it facilitates the sharing of one travel document by multiple unrelated

travellers. Collective travel documents of other countries will likewise, not be accepted.

The authority noted that as it moves towards greater use of automation and multimodal biometrics for clearance, the MCTD poses operational setbacks as it requires manual data entry of all traveller's details, which results in longer clearance time.

"MCTD holders are also unable to use our automated lanes," it said.

Malaysian travellers currently issued with the MCTD are advised to apply for passports.

The Immigration Department of Malaysia has been notified and will work with the ICA on the implementation. - Bernama

States urged to protect Sungai Muda waterway

► 'Conduct patrols and periodic drone surveillance along riverbanks'

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GEORGE TOWN: The Penang and Kedah governments have been urged to take steps to protect the Sungai Muda waterway, a primary source of raw water for the two states.

Penang Water Holdings Authority (PBAPP) chief executive officer Datuk Jaseni Maidinsa said it was essential to ensure there was a 30m buffer zone for the 203km stretch of waterway.

Recently, several dump sites with plastic, electronic and industrial waste from households and factories were found about 30m from the river.

The dump sites are located near Sungai Petani, an industrial township where illegal plastic processing factories were found last year.

On a visit to the area, National Water Services Commission chairman Charles Santiago said the river must be monitored, protected and preserved to maintain security of the water supply for millions of people and thousands of businesses in the two states.

In a statement issued yesterday, Jaseni suggested patrols and periodic drone surveillance be carried out along the riverbanks.

"We should also have signages to inform

land owners about the need to preserve the area," he said.

In response to the discovery of the dump sites, authorities were already monitoring the quality of the raw water daily.

"Our central laboratory in Sungai Dua is on high alert, and we will continue to sample and test the raw water that comes in daily," he said.

PBAPP is also commissioning independent tests to verify claims of heavy metals found in the water.

Santiago said those who intentionally pollute the river must be brought to justice.

In another development, state environment committee chairman Phee Boon Poh claimed that the recent haze in Penang was caused by the burning of rubbish at the dump sites.

Thaipusam chariot procession begins today

KUALA LUMPUR: The silver chariot procession carrying the statue of Hindu deity Lord Murugan will start from Sri Maha Mariamman Temple, Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, at 10pm today and is expected to reach Batu Caves at 3pm tomorrow.

Kuala Lumpur Traffic Investigation and Enforcement Department chief ACP Zulkefly Yahya said road closures along the procession route will be carried out in stages and reopened after it passes.

"The procession will pass Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, Jalan Sultan, Jalan Pudu, Jalan Tun Perak, Jalan Leboh Ampang, Jalan Ampang, Jalan Munshi Abdullah, Jalan Dang Wangi, Jalan Raja Laut,

Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Perhentian, Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Ipoh Batu 5 before reaching the Sri Subramaniam Temple in Batu Caves.

The chariot will then make its return journey beginning 4pm on Sunday from Batu Caves and is expected to arrive back at Sri Maha Mariamman Temple on Jalan Tun H.S. Lee at 5am on Monday," Zulkefly said in a statement.

According to him, the return journey would pass Jalan Ipoh Batu 5, Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Perhentian, Jalan Tun Razak, Jalan Ipoh, Jalan Raja Laut, Jalan Dang Wangi, Jalan Munshi Abdullah, Jalan Ampang, Jalan Leboh Ampang, Jalan Tun Perak, Jalan Sultan, Jalan Hang

Kasturi and Jalan Hang Lekir.

Motorists are advised not to use the roads mentioned to avoid getting stuck in traffic.

Meanwhile, police have issued a warning against those who provoke or incite with intention to cause chaos during Thaipusam and the procession.

"Based on past experience, we have found there are people who commit offences such as making noise and drinking alcohol in the open.

"We will not hesitate to take stern action against them in accordance with the provisions of the law," said Sentul police chief ACP S. Shanmugamoorthy Chinniah. - Bernama

From the portals

NIZAR REJECTS POST-DATED CHEQUE FROM PAS LEADER

A DAY after it was revealed that bankruptcy proceedings would be initiated against Perak PAS commissioner Razman Zakaria, the doorbell of the Ipoh-based legal firm hired by Mohammad Nizar Jamaluddin rang, Malaysiakini reported.

"Around 11.30am, several men came to my office. I was wondering who they were, they turned out to be representatives of Razman, who wanted to submit a cheque to my client.

"However, I saw that it was not a current cheque but a post-dated cheque dated Feb 10, 2020," lawyer Mohd Fitri Asumi said.

According to him, Nizar, who is Perak Amanah deputy chairman, instructed him not to accept the cheque.

RACISTS BLAME CHINESE FOR VIRUS, SAYS MASING

BLAMING Chinese nationals for the 2019 novel coronavirus outbreak smacks of racism, said Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister James Masing.

The outspoken politician questioned whether the world blamed Africans for spreading HIV or Ebola when the deadly diseases were traced to Africa.

Masing's outburst comes as social media was abuzz over photos of Chinese folk eating exotic food like bat soup and live rats, suggesting that their penchant for such fare is to blame for the coronavirus outbreak that has killed close to 500 people in the country.

"We did not hear (of) Africans (being) humiliated because of HIV," said Masing.

"Please do not label the Chinese with the coronavirus because a virus knows no place or race."