

“Please do not twist facts”: Netizens chide Education Minister after claiming rise in imported cases not due to travellers entering S’pore

The Online Citizen, 26 January 2021

Education Minister Lawrence Wong said on Monday (25 January) that the recent hike in imported COVID-19 cases in the country is not due to more travellers entering Singapore, but rather due to higher infection rates of the coronavirus across other countries in the world.

“We have not increased (the number of) travellers coming into Singapore,” Mr Wong said at a dialogue organised by the Institute of Policy Studies focused on a post-pandemic Singapore.

“Why have the numbers gone up? It’s simply because the prevalence rate, the incidence rate, of the disease is much higher now. The virus is raging in countries everywhere,” he added.

Mr Wong, who is co-chair of the Government’s COVID-19 task force, said this in response to a question raised by an audience who wanted to know how the Republic plans to sustain its trade and economy while still striking a balance in the risk of imported cases amid the increase in cases worldwide.

Singapore recorded 44 new COVID-19 cases on Monday and all of them were imported.

Just a day earlier on Sunday, it reported 48 new imported cases, which is the highest number of imported cases since 23 March last year.

During the dialogue, Mr Wong also noted that the biggest sources of travellers are construction and foreign domestic workers, and that the number of these workers coming into Singapore has not increased “in recent times”.

He also explained that travellers have to take a pre-departure test 72 hours prior arrival.

“But the nature of these sorts of test is that they are not foolproof,” he said, adding that some people can initially test negative as the virus is being incubated in the body.

This is the reason why travellers have to observe the stay-home notices of 14 days or up to 21 days in some countries, in order to not allow the highly contagious virus to spread into the community, Mr Wong said.

“Those are precautions that we have been taking all along and we will continue to take... even as we have a continuous flow of people coming in, which is needed for Singapore’s economy and society to function,” he expressed.

He continued, “We do all that is necessary to take the necessary precautions and safeguards, and isolate these cases from seeping through our community.”

Upon reading Mr Wong's explanation, netizens took to [TODAY's](#) Facebook page, which garnered close to 400 comments, to slam the Minister for his illogical reply.

The comments mostly discussed several issues, the first being that if Mr Wong is saying that the prevalence rate and incidence rate is high, then the logical thing to do is to close Singapore's borders.

One user said, "Please do not twist fact", adding that no one should be allowed to enter Singapore unless they are tested negative three days before boarding the plane.



Sherman Page

Please do not twist fact.

Stop everyone that stay outside Singapore from coming in unless they are tested negative 72 hours before boarding the plane

Like · Reply · 12 h



Top fan

Jason Seet

Lol. That is funny. So u know the prevalence rate and incidence rate is high and yet u allow the same number of people coming in, rather than reducing. Epic!

Like · Reply · 13 h



Alan Tan

If the incidence rate has gone up, shouldn't we tighten the boarder instead of keep wasting tax payers money to scan and care taking of these imported cases ? Hello, please speak proper English

Like · Reply · 14 h



Tan Ling Chui

Imported cases aren't due to travellers entering Singapore?

What kind of logic is that?

Like · Reply · 14 h





白順銘

Err... what kind of logic?

Like · Reply · 14 h    16



Don DW

Then due to what? Virus flying by itself through the atmosphere?

Like · Reply · 14 h

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Some online users opined that the Government is shifting the blame on other countries and that those on non-essential pass holders like dependent pass should not be allowed to enter Singapore for the time being.



 Top fan

Ong Qizong

I can understand the need of manual labour and maids to be coming back, but those dependent pass, LTVP are they essential? Even if they are essential why is it taking them 1 year to come back? So easy to find an excuse that it's happening to other countries too, why when Taiwan did well, you didn't compare SG to Taiwan? So convenient to just taichi to the rest of the world

Like · Reply · 13 h

   24



 Top fan

Wong Choon

Balancing the risk means non essential like dependent pass holders should not be allowed in.

Like · Reply · 14 h

 25



Wk Daniel Lim

Why allow people on dependant pass to come in? If the EP holders can't bear to leave their family, they should stay back in their own country and look for new jobs since they're so talented. You're increasing risks on our own people by letting in non essential people.

Like · Reply · 15 h



Top fan

James Chong

Balancing the risk? Ok let's take it like you said but why here they're "positive".

And you rightly said that some people may initially test negative while the body is incubating the virus.

Which also mean those coming in negative & not quarantine maybe incubating virus & spreading in community, no?

Don't gamble with Singaporean life and it's not public mood swing.

Like · Reply · 15 h · Edited



Jay Leong

There are 2 types of Tai Chi, 1 is using arm and leg, another 1 is using the mouth.

Like · Reply · 15 h



Others pointed out that Singapore should temporarily not allow people coming from countries where the virus is raging, in order to prevent COVID-19 from spreading into the community.

They explained that since the virus is still extremely active in other countries around the globe, then Singapore should not take the risk by opening its border to people from overseas.



Francis Ng

Then can we temporarily stopped importing as you know other countries virus is raging 🧑. Is just like in a war, you open your border for a small group of enemies to enter and slowly build their base here. We need a total retreat for this virus so other countries, speak same. Control within their own territory. Til there is peace 🕊 and free of virus war. That's how we get the economy back again.

Like · Reply · 15 h



💎 Top fan

Evelyn Tan

Then shouldn't u close the border since u know the infection rate has surged?

Like · Reply · 15 h



Evan Lee

He said himself that virus is raging everywhere, so isnt it time to decrease travellers' numbers already?

Like · Reply · 13 h



💎 Top fan

Marc Kingston

Since it's raging all over the world, you should have narrowed the entries to these people!
With even stricter regulatories and checks before allowing them to come in!

Like · Reply · 15 h





Hairi K Hairi

Not increase? Who cares! The thing is why is it open??!

Like · Reply · 15 h



Curio WS Chan

Exactly ! Why are we allowing more travellers into Singapore ?.. Shouldn't all these travellers go through all the necessary test before even boarding the aircraft ?

Like · Reply · 15 h



Top fan

Chip Dale Helen

Since the virus is raging everywhere than why the risk to let them in? This create potential risk if they happen to come in during the incubating period that is difficult to be detected. What if the person only start to fall sick after the incubation by than he/she might have roam around and pass the virus to others without even knowing it!

Like · Reply · 14 h



One user said that the Government constantly tells Singaporeans to not be complacent, avoid large gatherings and always maintain a safe distance in order to contain the spread of the virus.

However, it allows travellers into the country, indicating a double standard.



Ben Tan

Nonsense.. why the number gone up? of course singaporean's fault. Complacent, large gathering, no safe distancing causing our beloved guests to catch the virus. Dont you know the virus is raging outside? Naughty kids, how many times must I tell yall dont bring your guards down.. (Welcome travellers, this way please. Don't worry, Ive imposed more rules now, you're safe)

Like · Reply · 15 h

