

Bali eyeing free travel corridor for vaccinated travellers

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Bali : Bali's Vice Governor has proposed to the central government for establishing a free travel corridor in the post Covid-19 era as well as prioritise vaccination for tourism frontliners, in his latest bid to revive the island's struggling tourism sector. With the reopening of international travel borders recently, Tjokorda Oka Artha Ardhana Sukawati had proposed for the free Covid-19 corridor to be forged with low-risk countries that have implemented mass vaccination, such as China.

As Covid-19 infection rates in Indonesia remain high, Tjokorda hoped that the central government would prioritise tourism workers in Bali to get vaccinated first to boost the confidence of international travellers.

Such priority matters, even with Covid-safe protocols in place across the destination, said Tjokorda, who is also the Chairman of Indonesia Hotel and Restaurant Association Bali chapter.

The Bali administration has also proposed to the central government for extending a soft loan totalling IDR 9.9 trillion (USD 712 million) to help tourism players in Bali revive their business.

In response, Sandiaga Uno, minister of tourism and creative economy, said that he had delivered Bali's soft loan proposal to the minister of finance and coordinating minister for the economy.

He added that he had lobbied related officials to prioritise Jakarta and the country's major destinations, namely, Bali, Batam, and Bintan, to get vaccinated first because they were the entry points for tourists.

The minister said that talks between his office and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Law and Human Rights to make a free Covid-19 corridor was at its final stages. Under the plan, incoming travellers will be exempted from quarantine.

He explained, "The plan is that tourists who are allowed to come are those who have been vaccinated at their home countries. (Upon arrival in Indonesia), they have to take an antigen test (and test negative) before they can (proceed to) do activities."