Recreational travel unlikely this year or in early 2021

No recreational travel is likely this year or early next year as countries still knee-deep in the Covid-19 pandemic continue to play safe and keep tourists away.

Speaking at The Straits Times Covid-19 Webinar, Professor Teo Yik Ying, dean of the National University of Singapore Saw Swee Hock School of Public Health, said: “When we (travel), we end up being exposed to many different factors beyond our control.”

Answering a question posed by a participant, he noted that Covid-19 transmission could happen on the plane, at the hotel, or at local tourist attractions.

Citing the example of Australia, he said the country had almost won the battle against Covid-19 last month but fresh outbreaks have now been reported in Melbourne and the state of New South Wales.

“If we look at what’s happening in Hong Kong and Australia right now, the situation changed very quickly within a matter of two to four weeks.

“So, when it comes to mass market tourism, regrettably, I think we will not be able to travel out of Singapore for the foreseeable future,” Prof Teo added.

STAYCATION

He suggested taking a staycation in Pulau Ubin or Sentosa instead.

His comments come a few days after National Development Minister Lawrence Wong said leisure travel was unlikely this year, although essential business travel was possible.

Last Friday, Mr Wong, who co-chairs the multi-ministry task force tackling Covid-19, said it was unlikely the infection worldwide will disappear by the end of the year, making travel risky.

But negotiations with countries on reciprocal green lane arrangements will continue, to allow for essential business travel as long as mutual control measures are in place.

– THE STRAITS TIMES