



by **AZREN HANI**

**MALL operators and local retailers** have made a desperate plea to the government to allow all malls and all retail outlets to re-open by July 15 2021 or when the 10% vaccination target is achieved, whichever is the earlier.

“All of us, whether we are malls or retail operators, have been valiantly struggling for the past 16 months with critical cash flow just to keep our heads above water and any prolongation will simply be the final knell for our businesses and the industry as a whole.

“We cannot afford to give up and again urgently appeal to the authorities to give us at least a fighting chance to help ourselves to survive and start on the precarious journey to recovery,” they said in a joint statement yesterday.

The statement was signed by Malaysia Shopping Malls Association, Malaysia Retailers Association (MRA), Malaysia Retail Chain Association (MRCA), Bumiputra Retailers Organisation (BRO), Malaysia REIT Managers Association (MRMA) and Malaysian Association of Theme Park and Family Attractions (MATFA).

According to the retailers, the Health Ministry’s data revealed that retail and shopping sector including outside shopping areas contributed merely 0.8% of all cases in May 2021, even prior to the full lockdown which started on 1 June 2021.

This significantly improved and extremely low figures testify to the retail and mall industries’ strict adherence to the SOPs. The shopping mall industry has an estimated real estate value of RM145 billion as at December 2020.

For the retail industry, it contributed to 34.6% of Malaysia’s GDP of USD358.7 bil. in 2018 (source: Department of Statistics/Bank Negara Annual Report 2019/Retail Group Malaysia) which would total to USD124 bil. or RM497 bil.

“It cannot be denied that the shopping mall and retail industry contributes significantly to our economy and foreign direct investments by new brands and retailers and we must make all efforts to preserve the performance of this sector,” the statement read.

“Our market size is relatively small and it is challenging to entice foreign brands to our country to add diversity for attracting tourists thus we need to make all efforts to retain those who already have presence in our country.

The retailers added that without tourist arrivals, the situation is even more critical as they can only rely on domestic consumption to pull through the current precarious period.

“We are now in the midst of an all debilitating EMCO in the nation’s most economically productive location of Selangor/Kuala Lumpur. Going forward, we trust that any lockdowns will be judiciously determined based on locality and neighborhoods that are infected with significant clusters and not to impose nationwide lockdowns which unnecessarily penalise those areas that are low risk,” the retailers said.

They added that those economic sectors that have diligently operated under strict SOPs and having achieved low risk environment should be encouraged and not be made to suffer for the inability of those that have caused the infections due to their lackadaisical non-compliance of SOP.

“Precise in-depth analysis and breakdown based on locality and states should be undertaken so that the green zones are not made to suffer unnecessary economic damage because of the hot spot zones.

“We desperately appeal to the authorities to allow the entire retail sector which are not at risk to re-open immediately especially the shopping malls and retail shops including street front shops, including indoor playland and family entertainment attractions with strict compliance to stringent SOPs,” they said.

<https://themalaysianreserve.com/2021/07/04/malls-retailers-ask-for-fighting-chance-by-reopening-soon/>