URGING THE DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM TO TEMPORARILY HALT PASSENGER FLIGHTS TO AND FROM INDIA AND PAKISTAN DUE TO THE ALARMING SURGE OF COVID-19 CASES IN SAID REGION

WHEREAS, as of writing, India has recorded a total of 17,306,300 COVID-19 cases with 195,116 deaths, while Pakistan has a total of 795,627 COVID-19 cases with 17,117 deaths;

WHEREAS, yesterday, April 25, 2021, India has reported 346,786 cases of COVID-19 for the previous 24 hours, with 2,624 deaths, the world’s highest daily toll since the pandemic began last 2020;

WHEREAS, one of the causes of this surge was pinpointed to be the new B.1.617 COVID-19 variant in India, which was given the “double mutant” monicker because it contains two key mutations also found in three other strains, the variant in California and variants in South Africa and Brazil;

WHEREAS, preliminary evidence indicates that the B.1.617 variant is more contagious than the previous strains of COVID-19 and it has been reported to have become the dominant strain in the state of Maharashtra in India;

WHEREAS, the Philippines has already been dealing with new COVID-19 strains from Brazil, UK, and South Africa as well as a fourth new variant discovered locally, known as the P.3 variant;

WHEREAS, the surge of new cases in the Philippines in April alone has been record-breaking for the country, which forced a vast part of the economy to be restricted once again as Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) was declared in the National Capital Region (NCR), Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal, collectively the “NCR+”;

WHEREAS, as the Philippine health care system starts to cope with the effects of the new surge, safety travel precautions shall be in place to prevent the entry of new COVID-19 variants;

4 Id.
WHEREAS, while currently, travel restrictions in the NCR+ was already lowered to Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ), the government should not bring its guard down as the possible entry of new variants may cause another deadly surge worse than the situation right now;

WHEREAS, several other countries such as Iran, Kuwait, UAE, Indonesia, France, US, UK, Hongkong, Singapore, Canada, and Australia have already banned flights from India, some of which have banned flights from both India and Pakistan;

WHEREAS, through this Resolution, it is suggested for the country to follow suit so as to temper the possibility of new variants entering the Philippine territory;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the House of Representatives to urge the Department of Tourism to temporarily halt passenger flights to and from India and Pakistan due to the alarming surge of COVID-19 cases in said region.

ADOPTED,

PRECIOSA HIPOLITO CASTELO