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Renewed calls for China, HK visitors to be denied entry

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AS the SARS crisis worsened in China and Hong Kong, which together reported 13 new deaths on Monday, Utusan Malaysia yesterday renewed the call for visitors from both countries be denied entry into Malaysia.

The paper's Awang Selamat opined that restrictions should also be imposed on Malaysians visiting China and Hong Kong.

Awang said the decision to quarantine the Sentosa Mental Hospital in Kuching, Sarawak, should serve as a lesson, alluding to the fact that a Hong Kong resident had earlier visited a patient at the hospital.

The paper's stand was echoed by Umno Youth Public Complaints Bureau head Datuk Subahan Kamal, who said restrictions against travellers from Taiwan, Hong Kong and Canada which were lifted more than a week ago, should be re-imposed.

Berita Harian reported the assurance by Malaysia Airlines that the air in its aircraft was safe.

Apart from SARS, another news item which continued to receive wide coverage was Malaysian outrage against The Economist for its derogatory report on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Many quarters had demanded an apology from the magazine for publishing the article A Qualified Success with the chorus of protest carrying a common theme - ban the magazine for insulting the Prime Minister and his leadership.

Acting Prime Minister and Home Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was quoted as saying that several options against the London-based magazine were being considered, including banning it.

Another publication coming under fire is Pas official organ, Harakah, for its report claiming that the Government supported the United States' invasion of Iraq.

Berita Harian quoted Umno Youth chief Datuk Hishammuddin Hussein as saying that Pas had gone overboard.