

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 6-7

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Perketatkan saringan di pintu masuk negara

Langkah cegah penularan coronavirus selepas Thailand, Singapura catat kes jangkitan

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Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia memperketatkan saringan kesihatan terhadap kemasukan warga asing, khususnya dari Wuhan, China, dalam usaha mencegah coronavirus berpunca daripada bandar itu, merebak ke negara ini, selepas Thailand dan Singapura merekodkan kes positif jangkitan virus terbahit.

Sejak kelmarin, Singapura mengesan tiga kes positif virus berkenaan, manakala Thailand sudah merekodkan lima kes jangkitan coronavirus berkenaan.

Di setiap pintu masuk utama dengan negara jiran dan lapangan terbang yang mempunyai penerbangan terus dari China, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) kini memasang kaunter imbasan terma, dengan mereka yang disyaki akan dikuarantin sekurang-kurangnya seminggu.

Setakat ini, ujian makmal terhadap 12 individu yang menunjukkan simptom jangkitan, membabitkan 10 warga asing termasuk sembilan dari Wuhan, China dan dua penduduk tempatan, yang baru kembali dari bandar terbahit, mendapati semuanya negatif terhadap virus berkenaan.

Walaupun coronavirus baharu dikenali sebagai 2019-nCoV itu dilaporkan sudah menyebabkan 830 in-

Ada kes (jangkitan) dilaporkan di beberapa negara termasuk Singapura dan Thailand. Ini menunjukkan ada risiko (kepada Malaysia) kerana kita menerima pelancong daripada China hampir tiga juta setiap tahun.

Dr Lee Boon Chye,
Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan

dividu terkena jangkitan dengan 26 kematian dengan kebanyakan kes di China, namun Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) beranggapan masih terlalu awal untuk mengisytiharkan darurat kesihatan global.

"Meskipun wabak itu menular hingga mencetuskan kecamasan di China, tetapi ia belum boleh dianggap darurat kesihatan global," kata Ketua Pengarah WHO, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, sambil menambah, penilaian WHO mendapati wabak itu mempunyai risiko sangat tinggi di China dan peringkat serantau serta global.

Walaupun kebanyakan jangkitan dan kematian berlaku di China, namun kes positif 2019-nCoV itu turut dilaporkan dikesan di lapan negara iaitu Arab Saudi, Jepun, Korea, Singapura, Thailand, Taiwan, Amerika Syarikat dan Vietnam.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Lee Boon Chye, berkata mereka yang dikesan dengan simptom jangkitan, akan dikuarantin di bawah pengawasan dan penelitian KKM.

Katanya, lapan individu yang dikuarantin di Johor Bahru,

disyaki ada hubungan terus dengan kes yang dilaporkan di Singapura, menyebabkan mereka diasingkan dalam sebuah hotel.

"Ada kes (jangkitan) dilaporkan di beberapa negara termasuk Singapura dan Thailand. Ini menunjukkan ada risiko (kepada Malaysia) kerana kita menerima pelancong daripada China hampir tiga juta setiap tahun," katanya di Ipoh, semalam.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pendidikan, Kesihatan dan Sumber Manusia Johor, Aminolhuda Hassan, berkata walaupun disahkan negatif terhadap coronavirus 2019-nCoV, namun lapan pelancong China yang dikuarantin di negeri itu, masih diletakkan di bawah pengawasan selama 14 hari dengan pergerakan terhad.

Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Kesihatan, Pembangunan Luar Bandar, Agama dan Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan Negeri Kedah, Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh, berkata kaunter



Pelancong yang tiba di KLIA memakai topeng penutup mulut dan hidung sebagai langkah pencegahan coronavirus. (Foto Mohd Fadli Hamzah/BH)



Dr Boon Chye (kanan) memantau penumpang pesawat dari Singapura di Lapangan Terbang Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

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Kakitangan Kementerian Kesihatan membaca suhu badan pelancong yang masuk ke negara ini.

imbasan terma beroperasi di pintu masuk sempadan, termasuk Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Langkawi bagi mengekang penularan coronavirus.

"Selain di Kompleks Kastam, Imigresen, Kuarantin dan Keselamatan (ICQS) Bukit Kayu Hitam, pemeriksaan rapi turut akan dilakukan di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Langkawi kerana ada penerbangan terus dari China.

"Walau bagaimanapun, saya

yakin syarikat penerbangan sudah mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga bagi menangani jangkitan virus ini. Selain itu, suhu badan individu 36 celsius ke atas akan dipantau kerana kita tak mahu terlepas pandang sesiapa yang berisiko.

"Jika ada individu yang dikesan memiliki tanda-tanda demam, mereka perlu menjalani pemeriksaan lanjut dan dikuarantin sekiranya perlu," katanya.



Kakitangan Kastam di Lapangan Terbang Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh memakai topeng penutup mulut dan hidung sebagai langkah berjaga-jaga. (Foto Effendy Rashid)

Terlalu awal isytihar darurat kesihatan global: WHO

Geneva: Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) menyifatkan, masih terlalu awal untuk agensi itu mengisytiharkan wabak coronavirus baharu yang mencetuskan kecamasan di China ketika ini, sebagai darurat kesihatan global.

"Hari ini saya tidak mengisytiharkan darurat kesihatan global. Sama seperti semalam, Jawatankuasa Darurat berbelah bahagi sama ada wabak itu mewakili Amaran Darurat Kesihatan Antarabangsa (PHEIC) atau tidak," kata Ketua Pengarah WHO Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus pada sidang akhbar selepas mesyuarat tertutup jawatankuasa itu.

"Meskipun wabak itu menular di China, tetapi ia belum boleh dianggap darurat kesihatan global," kata Tedros, sambil menambah penilaian risiko WHO mendapati wabak itu mempunyai risiko sangat tinggi di China dan di peringkat serantau serta global.

"Saya ingin ulangi bahawa hakikat saya tidak mengisytiharkan PHEIC pada hari ini bukan bermakna WHO tidak mengambil serius keadaan itu," katanya seperti dilaporkan agensi berita Xinhua.

Jawatankuasa Darurat itu bermesyuarat selama dua hari bagi

membincangkan isu berkenaan.

PHEIC ditakrifkan WHO sebagai satu peristiwa luar biasa yang menimbulkan risiko kesihatan awam kepada negara-negara lain, melalui penyebaran penyakit dan memerlukan respons antarabangsa yang selaras.

Tedros berkata, sebanyak 584 kes dilaporkan kepada WHO, termasuk 17 kematian. Sejumlah 575 kes dan semua kematian dilaporkan di China. Kes lain turut dilaporkan di Jepun, Korea, Singapura, Thailand, Amerika Syarikat dan Vietnam.

Beliau berkata, China sudah mengambil langkah-langkah perlu dan WHO merakamkan penghar-

gaan di atas kerjasama yang diberikan negara itu.

Buat masa ini, WHO tidak mengesyorkan apa-apa larangan perjalanan atau sekatan perdagangan yang lebih menyeluruh dan mencadangkan pemeriksaan keluar di lapangan terbang sebagai sebahagian langkah komprehensif untuk mengekang penularan wabak.

Semua negara harus mengambil langkah mengesan kes coronavirus, termasuk di kemudahan kesihatan, kata Tedros.

Sementara itu, China telah menutup beberapa jambatan, menghentikan pengangkutan awam dan menutup sebuah lapangan terbang utama membabitkan sembilan bandar dalam usaha menyekat pergerakan kira-kira 32 juta orang yang berada di sekitar lokasi terdeteksinya wabak coronavirus.

Pihak berkuasa berkata langkah itu adalah untuk mencegah dan mengawal penyebaran coronavirus baharu, yang sudah menjangkiti lebih 800 orang dan membunuh 25 orang.

Virus itu terdeteks dari Wuhan di wilayah Hubei, di mana pasar makanan laut dikenal pasti sebagai pusat wabak itu.

BERNAMA/AFP

Meskipun wabak itu menular di China, tetapi ia belum boleh dianggap darurat kesihatan global.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,
Ketua Pengarah WHO

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
 MUKA SURAT : 4A
 RUANGAN : LOKAL



PASANGAN pelancong memakai topeng muka ketika tiba di KLIA, semalam.

ANCAMAN KORONAVIRUS

8 pelancong disah negatif

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Kulai

Lapan warga China berasal dari Wuhan yang memasuki Johor Bahru sejak kelmarin disahkan negatif wabak koronavirus. Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pendidikan, Kesihatan dan Sumber Manusia, Aminolhuda Hassan berkata keputusan itu diperoleh daripada ujian klinikal yang dijalankan Jabatan Kesihatan Johor, semalam terhadap lapan individu itu. "Semua lapan warga China membabitkan empat dewasa dan empat kanak-kanak itu akan dipantau Jabatan Kesihatan Johor selama 14 hari dengan pergerakan mereka dihadkan hanya di sekitar hotel sahaja," katanya dalam sidang media di Hospital Temenghong Seri Maharaja Tun Ibrahim Kulai di sini, semalam. Sementara itu, Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Lee Boon Chye berkata, setakat

Budak 5 tahun negatif koronavirus

Kuala Lumpur: Budak lelaki berusia lima tahun antara empat pesakit yang disahkan negatif daripada jangkitan wabak koronavirus atau dikenali sebagai 2019 n-CoV. Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, kanak-kanak warga Jordan itu menerima rawatan di Hospital Queen Elizabeth, Kota Kinabalu. "Dia sebelum itu bercuti bersama ibu bapanya di Sabah. Ibu bapanya adalah penuntut Ijazah Doktor Falsafah (PhD) di Universiti Hua Zhong, Wuhan, China. "Keputusan ujian pengesanan dan pengesahan virus 2019 n-CoV terhadap kanak-kanak itu adalah negatif," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam. Menurut beliau, kes kedua dan ketiga

membabitkan seorang lelaki tempatan berusia 30 tahun dan wanita tempatan berusia 24 tahun yang mempunyai sejarah melawat China. "Kedua-duanya menerima rawatan di Hospital Sungai Buloh (HSB) dan keputusan ujian virus 2019 n-CoV juga negatif," katanya. Beliau berkata, kes keempat pula membabitkan remaja lelaki warga China berusia 16 tahun yang bercuti bersama keluarga di Sabah. Katanya, pesakit terbahit masih menerima rawatan di Hospital Queen Elizabeth, Kota Kinabalu dan dilaporkan stabil. "Ujian pengesanan dan pengesahan virus 2019 n-CoV yang dilakukan sudah mengesahkan remaja itu negatif," katanya.

ini tiada kes koronavirus membabitkan warga tempatan. "Tetapi kita akan terus memantau dan membuat saringan agar dapat pick up (menganalisis) pada peringkat awal dan asingkan sekiranya ada kes (koronavirus) sedemikian melepasi sempadan kita," katanya. Beliau berkata, setakat

ini terdapat lebih 800 kes di seluruh dunia membabitkan 25 kematian dengan kebanyakan tempat di China sudah mempunyai kes itu kecuali di tiga daerah. "Ada juga kes dilaporkan di beberapa negara termasuk di Singapura, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, Jepun, Thailand, Korea Selatan dan Amerika Syarikat.

"Ini menunjukkan ada risiko kerana kita menerima pelancong daripada China hampir tiga juta setiap tahun," katanya. Katanya, pihaknya ketika ini mengkaji langkah untuk membuat saringan khususnya kepada mereka yang datang dari China melalui Singapura. "Kita sedang kaji



PELANCONG memakai topeng muka ketika tiba di KLIA, semalam.



ANGGOTA Polis Bantuan KLIA memakai topeng muka sebagai langkah elak dijangkiti koronavirus.



KAKITANGAN KKM memantau dan membuat saringan wabak koronavirus pada penumpang pesawat AKI310 dari Singapura yang tiba di Lapangan Terbang Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh.



Semua lapan warga China membabitkan empat dewasa dan empat kanak-kanak itu akan dipantau Jabatan Kesihatan Johor selama 14 hari dengan pergerakan mereka dihadkan hanya di sekitar hotel sahaja"

Aminolhuda Hassan

bagaimana hendak membuat saringan khususnya mereka yang datang dari China melalui Singapura kerana kita mahu memastikan tidak ada kes koronavirus masuk ke dalam negara," katanya. Kelmarin, pihak berkuasa Singapura memaklumkan kepada Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) bahawa satu kes import koronavirus membabitkan seorang lelaki, warganegara

China dari Wuhan berusia 66 tahun. Berikutan laporan itu, Kementerian Kesihatan Singapura menghugungi KKM untuk memaklumkan terdapat seramai lapan orang yang ada bersama lelaki itu sedang berada di Johor Bahru. Dengan perkongsian maklumat itu, pihak Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN) Johor bertindak segera dengan mengesan dan melakukan saringan kesihatan bagi memeriksa status kesihatan. Hasil saringan menunjukkan mereka sihat dan tiada tanda-tanda ataupun gejala jangkitan sehingga hari ini. Sampel klinikal juga diambil untuk ujian pengesanan koronavirus. Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Johor akan terus memantau tahap kesihatan harian mereka sehingga 14 hari atau negara asal atau yang mana terdahulu.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : ANCAMAN KORONAVIRUS DI CHINA

Malaysia tambah saringan

Pemeriksaan terhadap warga asing di pintu masuk negara diperketat elak wabak koronavirus

Oleh NOOR AINON MOHAMED YUSOF

IPOH

Kerajaan memperketatkan kemasukan warga asing ke negara ini berikutan penularan wabak koronavirus.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Lee Boon Chye bagaimanapun mengesahkan Malaysia masih bebas daripada wabak tersebut, namun langkah keselamatan diambil segera bagi mengelakkan ia menular ke negara ini.

"Semalam (kelmarin) dilaporkan empat kes disyaki virus itu dan kesemuanya telah diperiksa dan disahkan bebas koronavirus.

"Kita akan terus membuat saringan supaya tindakan awal dapat diambil.

"Kita akan pertingkatkan peralatan saringan suhu badan di semua lapangan terbang dan pintu masuk negara," katanya kepada pemberita selepas mengadakan lawatan di Lapangan Terbang Sultan Azlan Shah (LTSAS) di sini semalam.

Sementara itu, Boon Chye mengesahkan lapan pelancong warga China yang tiba bersama seorang yang diuji positif wabak koronavirus di Singapura telah dikuarantinkan di sebuah hotel di Johor kelmarin.



Boon Chye (kanan) beramah mesra bersama seorang penumpang yang tiba dari Singapura di Lapangan Sultan Azlan Shah, Ipoh semalam.

Beliau berkata, kesemua pelancong yang tiba kelmarin telah diasingkan dan dipantau pasukan kesihatan.

Kelmarin, media Singapura melaporkan seorang warga China diuji positif sekali gus menjadi mangsa pertama wabak koronavirus di negara itu.

Lelaki berusia 66 tahun berasal dari Wuhan, China itu tiba di Singapura bersama sembilan rakan pada Isnin lalu dan menginap di Resort Shangri-La Rasa Sentosa.

Laporan itu turut menyebut lapan individu daripada kumpulan yang tiba beritanya ke Singapura sudah keluar dari negara tersebut dan kementerian telah menghubungi pihak berkuasa negara yang mereka tuju.



Wanita dan kanak-kanak memakal topeng penutup mulut dan hidung ketika keluar dari Balai Ketiba Antarabangsa, Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur, Sepang semalam.

Kedah kawal pintu masuk sempadan Malaysia-Thailand



DR ISMAIL

KODIANG - Kerajaan Kedah memperketatkan pemeriksaan di kaunter imbasan termal di semua pintu masuk sempadan termasuk di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Langkawi bagi mengekang penularan wabak koronavirus di negeri ini.

Exco Kesihatan, Pembangunan Luar Bandar, Agama dan Syarikat Berkaitan Kerajaan Negeri

Kedah, Datuk Dr Ismail Salleh berkata, pihaknya juga akan memberi lebih tumpuan terhadap pelancong atau penduduk setempat yang baru pulang dari China dan Filipina.

Menurutnya, kesemua kakitangan Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kedah yang bertugas di pintu sempadan sudah dimaklumkan perkara itu berikutan virus ter-

babit mula merebak ke Thailand dan Singapura.

"Saya yakin syarikat penerbangan juga mengambil langkah berjaga-jaga," katanya ketika ditemui pada majlis perasmian projek menaik taraf Jalan Padang Sera-Siputeh di sini semalam.

Dr Ismail berkata, tiada keperluan untuk menambah kakitangan di pintu sempadan ketika ini.

REAKSI

Langkah pengawasan di negeri-negeri



Semua pejabat kesihatan daerah di Negeri Sembilan diarahkan supaya

sentiasa ambil langkah berjaga-jaga dan proaktif jika ada suspek disyaki terlibat wabak koronavirus."

- Exco Kesihatan, Alam Sekitar, Koperasi dan Kepenggunaan Negeri Sembilan, S Veerapan



Kerajaan Kelantan bersama Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri mengambil langkah pencegahan penularan wabak koronavirus menerusi hebahan awal kepada masyarakat supaya berwaspada dan langkah berjaga-jaga di pintu masuk ke Kelantan."

- Exco Kerajaan Tempatan, Perumahan dan Kesihatan Kelantan, Dr Izani Hussin

Pasukan Respons Kecemasan ditubuhkan di Beijing

SHAH ALAM - Kementerian Luar sudah berhubung dengan Misi Diplomatik Malaysia di China bagi memantau perkembangan wabak koronavirus di negara itu, selain memastikan bantuan konsular kepada rakyat Malaysia di sana.

Dalam kenyataan semalam, Kementerian Luar berkata, Kedutaan Malaysia di Beijing menubuhkan Pasukan Respons Kecemasan bagi mengesan rakyat Malaysia di kawasan terjejas.

"Usaha sama turut dilaksanakan Misi Diplomatik Malaysia di Guangzhou, Hong Kong, Kunming, Nanning, Shanghai, Xi'an termasuk Pusat Persahabatan dan Perdagangan Malaysia di Taipei," menurut kenyataan tersebut.

Empat pesakit di Sabah disahkan negatif jangkitan

KUALA LUMPUR - Empat pesakit yang disyaki dijangkiti koronavirus di Malaysia disahkan negatif virus itu.

Kementerian Kesihatan dalam satu kenyataan semalam mengesahkan ujian pengesanan dan pengesanan koronavirus seorang pesakit yang dirawat di Wad Isolasi di sebuah hospital di Sabah adalah negatif.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, geg-

jala dialami pesakit di Sabah itu adalah disebabkan jangkitan influenza A.

"Dimaklumkan bahawa keputusan ujian pengesanan dan pengesanan virus koronavirus yang dijalankan ke atas kes disyaki itu oleh IMR (Institut Penyelidikan Perubatan) adalah negatif.

"Gejala yang dialami oleh beliau disebabkan jangkitan influenza A. Beliau kini beransur pulih dan stabil," katanya semalam.

Lapan yang dikuarantin negatif koronavirus

KULAI - Kesemua lapan pelancong China yang dikuarantin untuk tujuan pemeriksaan di sebuah hotel di Johor Bahru disahkan negatif jangkitan koronavirus dan sihat.

Exco Pendidikan, Kesihatan dan Sumber Manusia Johor, Aminolhuda Hassan berkata, kesemua mereka yang terdiri daripada empat dewasa dan empat kanak-kanak itu sudah berada di bandar raya ini sejak 22 Januari lalu.

"Kita menerima makluman daripada Kementerian Kesihatan Singapura semalam (kelmarin) bahawa ada lapan kenalan rapat seorang pesakit itu sudah berada di Johor Bahru untuk bercuti.

"Kita berjaya mengesan mereka selain pemantauan teliti terus dilakukan.

"Kesemua mereka sihat dan tiada simptom koronavirus," katanya kepada pemberita di Hospital Temenggong Seri Maharaja Tun Ibrahim di sini semalam.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 6-7

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

GROWING PANDEMIC

GOING ALL OUT TO CURB SPREAD OF WUHAN VIRUS

Johor Health Dept monitors 8 Chinese tourists who crossed over from Singapore

THARANYA ARUMUGAM
AND TEH ATHIRA YUSOF
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AS Singapore recorded its third case of the Wuhan coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection, the Health Ministry is pulling out all the stops to prevent the virus from spreading to the country.

The ministry, in a statement, said the Singapore health authorities had informed it that eight people, who had close contact with an infected patient from Wuhan, were in Johor Baru.

All eight people, comprising four adults and four children, who are also from China, have been isolated and are being monitored by the state Health Department for a minimum period of 14 days or until their departure home.

"Initial screening results revealed that they are in good health and displayed no symptoms of the virus," said Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Dr Noor Hisham said clinical samples had been taken from the Chinese nationals to detect the presence of 2019-nCoV.

It was earlier reported that a 66-year-old Chinese national from Wuhan tested positive for the virus in Singapore. The man was there with nine travel companions on Monday.

Up to Jan 24, there had been no confirmation of the presence of 2019-nCoV in Malaysia, Dr Noor Hisham said.

It was previously reported that the National Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC) had

received four suspected cases of the virus.

Laboratory tests previously performed on the samples taken from three of the cases were found to be negative for the virus. Two people were from Selangor and one was from Sabah.

The fourth case involved a 5-year-old Jordanian boy in Sabah, who also tested negative for 2019-nCoV.

Dr Noor Hisham said the child was receiving treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu.

"He had been vacationing with his parents in Sabah. They are doing their doctorate studies at Huazhong University (of Science and Technology) in Wuhan.

"Viral detection and confirmation tests conducted on the child tested negative for 2019-nCoV," he said yesterday.

He said previous cases involved a 16-year-old Chinese teenager who was on holiday with his family in Sabah, as well as another one involving a Malaysian couple in Selangor.

The 30-year-old man and a 24-year-old woman had previously travelled to China.

"Both are being treated at Sungai Buloh Hospital.

"They tested negative for the 2019-nCoV."

Dr Noor Hisham said the Chinese teenager was receiving treatment at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Kota Kinabalu and was in stable condition.

It was reported on Thursday that flights between Malaysia to Wuhan have been suspended following the growing pandemic.

The fear of the possibility of an outbreak in Malaysia over the Lunar New Year season was heightened following the possibility of human-to-human transmission of the virus.

Text messages advising Malaysians to stay away from "Chinese populated" areas are being circulated on social media.

"Do not bring your children to shopping malls during the Lunar New Year break because these



places will be overcrowded. Chinese nationals are the carriers of this deadly virus," one WhatsApp message read.

Subsequently, the Health Ministry advised the public to exercise extra caution ahead of the Lunar New Year, which is expected to see an increase in cross-border travellers and an influx of tourists, especially from China.

Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said despite several cities in China being put under lockdown in a bid to contain the spread of the virus, Malaysians should re-

main cautious over the possibility of it entering the country.

Pending further information from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and updates from China, he said Malaysia would continue its surveillance at entry points, including at airports, land transport, the Malaysian-Thailand border and Johor-Singapore Causeway.

"We have initiated thermal screenings (since Jan 1 at the airports and from Jan 22 at the borders) to isolate travellers with symptoms of the illness.

"We know the virus originates

from Wuhan and people from there are travelling all over China and the world."

He said although the virus had been detected in many countries, including Singapore, no case had been reported in Malaysia.

"Nevertheless, it can happen. That's why our border control is important," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Dr Lee said thermal screening and border control did not mean that the virus could be contained because those with it would not show any symptoms for days and could slip through.

China expands lockdown to 10 cities

WUHAN (China): China expanded an unprecedented quarantine effort against a contagious virus yesterday to corral more than 30 million people inside 10 cities, as trapped residents voiced fear and the death toll climbed to 26.

While the World Health Organisation (WHO) held off on declaring a global emergency despite confirmed cases in half a dozen other countries, China expanded its lockdown to cover an area with a total population equivalent to that of Peru.

A range of Lunar New Year festivities were cancelled while Beijing's Forbidden City and Shanghai's Disneyland announced temporary closures to prevent the disease from spreading further.

The previously unknown virus

has caused alarm because of its similarity to SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome), which killed hundreds across mainland China and Hong Kong between 2002 and 2003.

WHO said China faced a national emergency, but stopped short of making a declaration that would have prompted greater global cooperation, including possible trade and travel restrictions.

The virus has hit China in the midst of its Lunar New Year holiday, typically marked by family gatherings and public celebrations.

The disease was first discovered last month here, an industrial and transport hub of 11 million people in the country's cen-

tre and has since spread to several other countries, including the United States.

Yesterday, Wuhan was a ghost town, its streets deserted and stores shuttered. Eight other smaller cities nearby have battened down the hatches.

In the latest lockdown, Jingzhou, a city of more than five million, yesterday shut down all rail services leaving the city as well as public buses and other modes of transport.

Wuhan's straitjacket also tightened, with authorities limiting the number of taxis allowed on the roads beginning yesterday. Leading Chinese ride-hailing service Didi Chuxing said it was temporarily suspending Wuhan services.

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Travellers wearing face masks exiting the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Sepang yesterday.
PIC MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

Students watch out for one another

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysian students in China are more united than ever in weathering the threat of the coronavirus spreading at an alarming rate from Wuhan, the epicentre of the outbreak.

Penang-born PhD student at Wuhan's Central China Normal University, Jolly Goh, 30, said Malaysians in the city were keeping close tabs on each other.

"When news of the virus broke, I sensed a brief moment of panic in the student community here.

"I was writing papers in my dormitory when I heard the news.

"However, things got better when we shared the news developments in WeChat groups along with other members of the Malaysian Students' Association here in Wuhan.

"There are also Malaysian student bodies in other provinces in China.

"We used the group chat to exchange information on precautions, virus prevention measures, emergency rescue contacts, and even on how to select and correctly use face masks," she said.

According to Goh, the student body also initiated a charity drive to help those facing financial constraints.

"My school authorities have placed great importance on the safety of students by giving each of us free thermometers and face masks.

"It was mandated that every student who stayed in school had to take their temperature every day and report it to the international students' affairs office daily."

Goh said she had strong faith in the authorities' handling of the health crisis.

"I've also stocked up food prior to winter. However, I learnt through the news media that the government would ensure adequate food supply in Wuhan.

"The least I have to do, once my food runs out, is to go out and get it from the nearby supermarket.

"However, from where I am, I haven't seen any ambulance making rounds in the city, or the presence of an underground medical team here. I have faith that everything will be all right"

Another Malaysian student from Wuhan University, Thomas Tan Jun Hao, 21, said living in a city on lockdown was a "real" experience.

"The place is fast becoming a ghost town.

"Access to airports, high-speed rail, MRT and such has been blocked, while pedestrians and vehicles on the roads have become scarce.

"Many residents are more aware of the outbreak and have chosen to stay home," he said.

The Muar-born student said not a single person in Wuhan is seen without a face mask these days.

"Even stores are posting notices requiring customers to wear a face mask before entering the store."

A student in Beijing, Che Nurabiah Hajar Che Zainuddin, 23, said the student body in her university had been especially protective.

"Since the news came out, the person in charge of the students'

body at Beijing Language and Culture University has been actively communicating with us (Malaysian students) via group chats.

"We keep updating our whereabouts and conditions through the group chat frequently."

The final-year student of Teaching Chinese as a Second Language said she never thought the virus could be deadly.

"When I first knew about it, I did not think it was serious.

"The town I'm living in, which is Haidian, has not completely turned into a ghost town yet. Most of us put on a face mask when we go out. I think my room is the only sanctuary for me right now," she added.

"I am grateful to learn that I'm not alone at the very least."

The Malaysian embassy has established an emergency response team, led by Ambassador Raja Datuk Nurshirwan Zainal Abidin.

According to the office, there are nine Malaysian students currently residing in Wuhan, and 25 to 30 students in Beijing.

The focus at the moment is to maintain contact and gather information on Malaysians in Wuhan and other affected areas, and to extend appropriate consular support.

The embassy advised all Malaysians in China to keep themselves updated on the situation, via the local media as well as Malaysia's Health Ministry, the National Health Commission of the People's Republic of China's and the World Health Organisation.

"There is an incubation period of about two weeks.

"Travellers who show symptoms of pneumonia within two weeks of returning from overseas trips, especially from China, should report to us and be treated."

He said patients suspected of 2019-nCoV infection would be sent to state hospitals.

"There are 26 hospitals prepared to receive patients with the coronavirus.

"The patients will be isolated, investigated and treated in designated wards.

"So far, there is no evidence that the virus is a 'super transmitter' with a capacity to infect many people from a single case.

"The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome, for instance, is more severe and life-threatening than the coronavirus as it has a higher mortality rate.

"There are existing regulations and measures in place to handle the disease.

"The WHO will issue an advisory on the things we need to do." **Additional reporting by Farah Solhi**

To discourage nationwide travel, the government also said all tickets for rail, air, road, or water transport could be exchanged for a refund.

Beijing has cancelled public events that usually attract throngs at temples during the New Year holiday, while the historic Forbidden City will close from tomorrow.

Yesterday, staff in full body protective suits were seen checking the temperatures of people entering a subway station in Beijing.

Chinese authorities said the number of cases leapt overnight to more than 800, with 177 in serious condition.

They were also examining 1,072 suspected cases.

Beijing was praised for its response, in contrast to SARS, when it took months to report the disease and initially denied WHO experts any access.

"The strict measures in and around Wuhan are aimed at reducing the number of new cases coming out of the epicentre "to zero", said Chinese Centre for Disease Control and Prevention head Gao Fu.

Speaking on state television on Thursday, he asked citizens to forego New Year gatherings and confine themselves at home until all was clear.

"If we all work as one, we can contain the virus in Wuhan and add no more cases exported from Wuhan, so as to stem the virus nationwide."

China also confirmed yesterday the second virus death outside the Wuhan region, saying a patient died in the Heilongjiang province, 2,000km northeast.

Shanghai Disneyland said it would close for an indefinite period beginning tomorrow "in order to ensure the health and safety of our guests and cast". **AFP**

THE GLOBAL SPREAD OF 2019-NCOV

A new coronavirus currently labelled as 2019-nCoV has been spreading after emerging in the central city of Wuhan in China. Up to Jan 23, 845 cases have been reported globally and 26 people have died.

PLACES WITH CONFIRMED CASES OF 2019-nCoV



Note: Data as of 1600 GMT Jan 23, 2020
Source: Reuters, China National Health Commission
Staff, 24/01/2020