AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : MUKA DUA

Empat individu pulih, dibenar keluar hospital

Putrajaya: Empat individu yang dimasukkan ke Hospital Sungai Buloh pada 24 Januari lalu sebelum disahkan dijangkiti COVID-19, sudah dibenarkan pulang semalam.

Ia berikutan ujian pengesanan ulangan terhadap virus itu yang dijalankan sebanyak dua kali terhadap mereka, menunjukkan keputusan negatif.

Timbalan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail yang juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Pusat, berkata perkembangan itu menjadikan kes COVID-19 yang sembuh dan dibenarkan pulang setakat semalam tujuh orang.

"Empat kes itu adalah kontak rapat kepada kes pertama membabitkan warga China yang dilaporkan di Singapura sebelum ini. Mereka dikesan dan dimasukkan ke wad isolasi di Hospital Sungai Buloh pada 24 Januari lalu sebelum disahkan positif COVID-19.

"Kerajaan ingin ucapkan tahniah kepada semua anggota kesihatan dan perubatan yang berusaha menguruskan semua kes ini sehingga mereka sembuh serta dibenarkan pulang," katanya pada sidang media selepas selepas mempengerusikan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Tertinggi Pengurusan Bencana Pusat berhubung COVID-19, di sini semalam.

Sementara itu, katanya, semua 105 individu yang sedang menjalani proses pemantauan di Akademi Kepimpinan Pendidikan Tinggi (AKEPT) di Bandar Enstek, Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, akan dibenarkan pulang pada 18 Februari ini sekiranya bebas jangkitan COVID-19.

Bersandarkan maklumat semasa, Dr Wan Azizah berkata, kumpulan itu yang dibawa pulang dari Wuhan, China, menerusi misi kemanusiaan awal bulan ini, kini dalam keadaan sihat dan baik.

"Mereka akan diberi kelulusan untuk pulang ke kediaman masing-masing pada 18 Februari ini jika keputusan saringan akhir didapati negatif jangkitan COVID-19. Jika keputusan saringan pada hari ke-14 iaitu pada 18 Februari ini didapati negatif, mereka boleh pulang," katanya.

Mengenai kes baharu, beliau memaklumkan, tiada pertambahan kes baharu dilaporkan setakat semalam, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif jangkitan COVID-19 di negara ini kekal 19 kes.

BHTV

Katanya, sembilan daripada kes berkenaan adalah pesakit bawah pemantauan (PUI), lapan kes dalam kalangan kontak rapat dan dua kes ialah rakyat Malaysia yang dibawa pulang dari China melalui misi bantuan kemanusiaan pada awal bulan ini.

"Daripada 19 kes itu, 13 adalah warga China dan enam lagi warga Malaysia. Aktiviti pengesanan kontak rapat kepada kes masih diteruskan dengan 239 kontak rapat sudah dikenal pasti dan jumlah itu akan bertambah sehingga pengesanan berkenaan selesai.

"Daripada jumlah 239 itu, 181 kontak rapat terdiri daripada warga Malaysia, 46 warga China dan 12 lagi lain-lain warganegara. Semua kontak rapat yang dikesan sudah diambil sampel dan diletakkan di bawah perintah pengawasan dan pemerhatian," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

'Boleh tambah pekerja asing di kilang topeng muka'

Putrajaya: Kerajaan memberi kelonggaran bagi pengambilan lebih ramai pekerja asing dalam usaha meningkatkan penghasilan topeng muka dan mulut di kilang untuk memenuhi permintaan bekalan susulan penularan COVID-19.

Timbalan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, berkata perbincangan pekilang dengan Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna (KPDNHEP) baru-baru ini, mendapati penambahan pekerja asing secara tidak langsung membolehkan kilang beroperasi 24 jam.

Katanya, Kementerian Sumber Manusia dan Kementerian Dalam Negeri akan mengendali dan memantau proses pengambilan dan kemasukan warga asing yang mahu diambil oleh pekilang bagi mengelak berlaku kebanjiran.

"Pengambilan lebih ramai pekerja asing adalah untuk menghasilkan lebih banyak topeng muka. Pada masa biasa, topeng muka ini hanya digunakan hospital, manakala orang awam hanya guna ketika jerebu. Sekarang, apabila kita perlukan (topeng muka) secara mendadak, pengeluarannya juga mesti dinaikkan secara mendadak.

"Mereka (kilang) akan mendapat pelepasan untuk beroperasi dalam tiga syif, iaitu 24 jam bagi mengeluarkan lebih banyak topeng muka," katanya pada sidang media selepas mempengerusikan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Tertinggi Pengurusan Bencana Pusat berhubung COVID-19, di sini semalam.

Sementara itu, Dr Wan Azizah yang juga Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Pusat, berkata Malaysia tidak akan mengikut langkah China menukar definisi kes positif jangkitan COVID-19.

Katanya, pendekatan sedemikian hanya dilaksanakan di Hubei kerana makmal di wilayah China itu tidak dapat menampung keperluan untuk melakukan ujian ketika ini, berbanding Institut Penyelidikan Perubatan (IMR) yang bertanggungjawab melakukan ujian saringan COVID-19 di Malaysia.

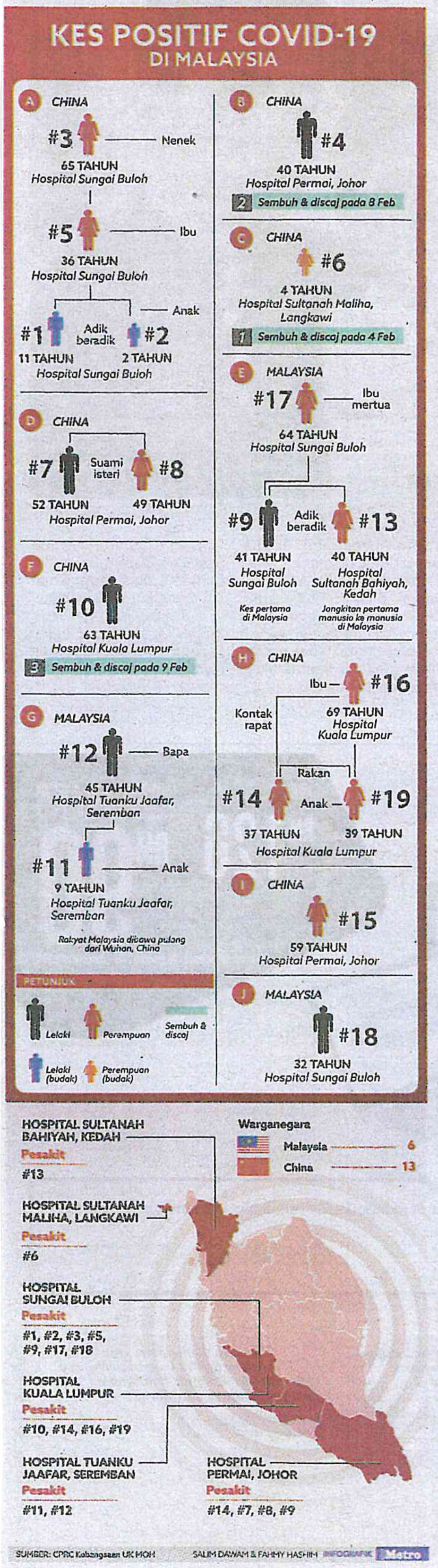
Dr Wan Azizah mempengerusikan Mesyuarat Jawatankuasa Tertinggi Pengurusan Bencana Pusat berhubung COVID-19, di Putrajaya, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

Beliau turut mengesahkan semua petugas perubatan mengendalikan rawatan dan pemantauan pesakit COVID-19 di Malaysia tidak dijangkiti virus itu setakat ini dengan saringan kesihatan secara berkala akan diteruskan bagi memastikan mereka bebas jangkitan virus berbahaya berkenaan.

Timbalan Perdana Menteri juga menegaskan, Malaysia tidak akan memberi kebenaran berlabuh kepada mana-mana kapal asing yang enggan berkongsi maklumat penting diperlukan pihak berkuasa seperti diwajibkan selari usaha kerajaan mengekang penularan COVID-19.

"Jabatan Imigresen melaporkan ada percubaan atau permohonan untuk berlabuh daripada dua kapal persiaran dari Hong Kong, iaitu kapal Westerdam dan Saphhire Princess. Westerdam dengan sekitar 1,000 penumpang yang pernah memasuki Hong Kong sebelum ke Taiwan pada 1 Februari lalu, pada mulanya berhasrat untuk berlabuh di Malaysia.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : LOKAL



VAKSIN KENA TUNGGU 18 BULAN

WHO perlu pelaburan henti wabak daripada terus merebak

Bernama

Geneva

Ketua Pengarah Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus berkata, vaksin pertama untuk Covid-19 dijangka dapat dihasilkan dalam tempoh 18 bulan, lapor agensi berita Xinhua.

Menerusi Twitternya beliau berkata, "ada banyak yang boleh kita lakukan bagi mencegah penularan dan bersedia untuk mengawalnya daripada terus merebak."

Terdahulu, pada taklimat akhbar beliau berkata, "Sekarang kita memerlukan pelaburan untuk menghentikan wabak Covid-19," sambil menambah menghasilkan vaksin dan terapeutik adalah agenda penting dalam penyelidikan.

"Kita bukan tidak berupaya untuk mempertahankan diri kerana sekarang terdapat banyak dasar dan langkah pencegahan dalam kesihatan awam.

"Jadi, kita perlu terus berusaha dengan menggunakan kelebihan yang ada bagi memerangi virus itu sambil bersiap sedia untuk langkah jangka panjang," tambahnya.

Tiada kes Covid-19 di Shah Alam

Kuala Lumpur: Masih terdapat pihak dikesan sengaja mencetuskan panik berhubung penularan wabak koronavirus baharu (Covid-19) dengan menyebarkan berita palsu sehingga tular di media sosial.

Malah, individu tidak bertanggungjawab ini dilihat cuba menimbulkan kegusaran dalam kalangan masyarakat selepas Covid-19 yang bermula di Wuhan, China merebak ke negara lain termasuk Malaysia.

Terbaru maklumat palsu sekali lagi tular di media sosial kononnya Hospital Shah Alam; Hospital Selayang; Sekinchan, Selangor; Jenjarom, Selangor dan Hospital Sunway, Cheras dikesan kes Covid-19.

Bagaimanapun, berita itu dinafikan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) melalui laman sosial Facebook (FB) rasminya dan menasihatkan orang ramai tidak mempercayai berita yang ditularkan itu.

"Berita berkenaan terdapat pesakit positif Covid-19 di Hospital Shah Alam adalah tidak benar dan ia adalah berita palsu.

"Hospital Shah Alam adalah bukan hospital yang disenaraikan untuk rujukan bagi penyakit Covid-19. Jangan berkongsi atau menyebarkan berita palsu ini," katanya.

Sementara itu, pihak KKM turut menafikan kejadian Covid-19 berlaku di Hospital Sunway Cheras, Hospital Selayang, Sekinchan, Selangor, Jenjarom, Selangor dan Hospital Sunway, Cheras.

Hospital Tengku Ampuan Jemaah (HTAJ) Sabak Bernam juga menafikan dakwaan terdapat pesakit Covid-19 seperti yang tular di media sosial.

Ahli Lembaga Pelawat HTAJ, Mohammad Haris Baharudin berkata, perkara itu tercetus susulan terdapat seorang individu dari Sekinchan yang baharu pulang dari Vietnam disyaki dijangkiti wabak itu, namun gejala dialaminya bukan disebabkan wabak itu.

Terdahulu, satu video berdurasi 25 saat yang menunjukkan beberapa individu sedang memakai sut berwarna putih serta memakai topeng hidung dan mulut di hadapan Unit Kecemasan Hospital Selayang yang dikaitkan dengan Covid-19 tular di media sosial.

Sebelum ini, satu klip video selama 13 saat memaparkan beberapa individu lengkap sut perlindungan menolak seorang wanita berkerusi roda di Mid Valley turut tular di media sosial yang didakwa ada kaitan Covid-19.

Setakat ini juga, Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM) sudah membuka 26 kertas siasatan berhubung kes penyebaran berita tidak sahih berhubung penularan Covid-19 di media sosial.

Timbalan Pengarah Risikan dan Operasi Jabatan Siasatan Jenayah (JSJ) Bukit Aman, Datuk Mohd Roze Shaari berkata, pihaknya menerima tiga lagi laporan iaitu dua di Kuching dan Miri, Sarawak dan satu lagi di Temerloh, Pahang.

"PDRM menggesa orang ramai menghentikan spekulasi berkenaan siasatan-siasatan yang dijalankan," katanya.

Sementara itu, Jurucakap Suruhanjaya Komunikasi dan Multimedia (SKMM) berkata, penyebar berita palsu boleh diambil tindakan mengikut Seksyen 505 Kanun Keseksaan yang memperuntukkan hukuman penjara sehingga dua tahun atau denda atau kedua-duanya.

Agensi swasta disaran guna pengimbas haba

Kuala Lumpur: Agensi swasta digalakkan untuk menempatkan pengimbas haba di premis masing-masing terutama di hotel bagi mengekang penularan wabak Covid-19.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan Dr Lee Boon Chye berkata, langkah itu dapat membantu kerajaan mengawal penularan wabak berkenaan di Malaysia.

"Kita sudah membuat pemetaan dan 26 unit mesin pengimbas haba *thermal scanner* tambahan adalah mencukupi menjadikan keseluruhan jumlah 80 unit yang diletakkan di Pintu Masuk Antarabangsa (PMA) seluruh negara.

"Tetapi, kita amat menggalakkan pihak swasta meletakkan pengimbas haba di premis mereka terutama pemilik hotel sebagai langkah awal mengesan wabak berkenaan," katanya dalam sidang media selepas merasmikan Kongres Saintifik ke-17 Persatuan Hypertensi Malaysia di sebuah hotel di sini, semalam.

Menurutnya, satu mesin pengimbas haba itu berharga sekitar RM40,000.

Diminta mengulas mengenai penubuhan jawatankuasa kerja bersama berkaitan Covid-19 dengan Singapura, Lee berkata, perkara itu belum ditetapkan.

"Pegawai kesihatan kami sedang menuju ke arah itu sebab ada beberapa perkara tidak semestinya selesai dengan pertemuan.

"Ini cuma satu jawatankuasa kerja antara timbalan menteri kesihatan kedua-dua negara yang akan meneliti tiga perkara iaitu perketatkan kawalan sempadan melalui ujian imbasan, perkongsian maklumat kesihatan awam, klinikal atau penyelidikan serta pemindahan pesakit antara dua negara," katanya.

Menurutnya, kerjasama dua hala itu belum ditetapkan sama ada berbentuk pertemuan secara bersemuka atau melalui persidangan video.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : ANCAMAN COVID-19 DI CHINA

Pihak swasta digalak sedia mesin pengimbas suhu badan

KUALA LUMPUR - Pihak swasta digalak untuk menyediakan mesin pengimbas suhu badan di premis masing-masing terutama di pintu masuk utama bangunan.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Dr Lee Boon Chye berkata, ia dapat membantu kerajaan mengekang penularan jangkitan koronavirus (Covid-19).

"Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) kini mempunyai sebanyak 80 mesin pengimbas suhu badan yang diletakkan di pintu masuk antarabangsa (PMA) di seluruh negara dan jumlah itu dilihat mencukupi buat masa ini.

"Walaupun harga mesin tersebut agak mahal kira-kira RM40,000, namun kami tetap menggalakkan pihak swasta untuk sediakan mesin berkenaan, contohnya jika pihak hotel dapat sediakannya, ia dapat membantu kami (kerajaan)," katanya pada sidang media selepas merasmikan Kongres Saintifik ke-17 Persatuan Hipertensi Malaysia (MSH) 2020 di sini semalam.

Boon Chye melakukan saringan suhu badan ketika melawat ruang pameran selepas perasmian Kongres Saintifik ke-17 Persatuan Hipertensi Malaysia 2020 di Kuala Lumpur semalam.

Mengulas mengenai kerjasama KKM dan Singapura berkaitan Covid-19, Boon Chye berkata, mesyuarat pertama Jawatankuasa Kerja Bersama akan diumum pada minggu hadapan.

"Saya merancang ke Singapura atau Johor Bahru tetapi saya perlu meneliti jadual kedua-dua pihak.

"Jika pertemuan ini dapat diadakan minggu depan, kami akan menyokong sama ada ia akan diadakan secara bersemuka atau melalui sidang video," katanya. - *Bernama*

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 19
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Pembelian topeng muka secara pukal tidak dibenarkan

Dr Wan Azizah pada sidang media di Putrajaya semalam.

PUTRAJAYA - Kerajaan tidak membenarkan sebarang pembelian topeng muka secara pukal untuk dihantar ke luar negara.

Timbalan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail berkata, ia bagi mengelak kekurangan bekalan stok produk tersebut.

"Kita mendapati ada yang 'bertroli- troli' ambil topeng muka untuk dihantar ke luar negara. Kerajaan tidak benarkan. Kita ada kuota.

"Penjual juga diarahkan untuk tidak menjual secara pukal dan membuat kawalan kendiri.

"Kerajaan telah mengeluarkan surat kepada Kementerian Perdagangan Dalam Negeri dan Hal Ehwal Pengguna (KPDNHEP) berhubung arahan tersebut," katanya pada sidang media selepas mempengerusikan mesyuarat khas peringkat tertinggi Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Pusat (JPBP) berhubung Kluster Penyakit Covid-19 di sini semalam.

Hadir sama, Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah; Timbalan Menteri Dalam Negeri, Datuk Mohd Azis Jamman; Menteri Komunikasi dan Multimedia, Gobind Singh Deo serta Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Imigresen, Datuk Khairul Dzaimee Daud.

Dr Wan Azizah yang merupakan Pengerusi JPBP berkata, Kabinet menerusi Kementerian Dalam Negeri telah memutuskan untuk memberi kelonggaran pengambilan lebih ramai pekerja asing untuk penghasilan lebih banyak topeng muka.

"Apabila keperluan mendesak, pengilang perlu meningkatkan pengeluaran mereka," katanya.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 31
RUANGAN : NEGERI/JOHOR

SINAR HARIAN • SABTU 15 FEBRUARI 2020 Sinar Harian NEGERI • JOHOR

Bukan kes Covid-19

JKNJ nafi polis tahan murid disyaki positif koronavirus

Oleh NOR AZURA MD AMIN

JOHOR BAHRU

Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Johor (JKNJ) menafikan dakwaan seorang murid Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan Cina (SJKC) di Kulai Besar, Kulai ditahan polis disebabkan positif koronavirus (Covid-19) seperti yang tular di media sosial sejak kelmarin.

Menjelaskan perkara itu, Pengarah JKNJ, Dr Aman Rabu berkata, sebaliknya pelajar berkenaan dibawa ke hospital untuk siasatan lanjut bagi kes disyaki berjangkit.

"Laporan polis dibuat oleh pihak hospital selepas pelajar terbabit yang disyaki menghidap penyakit berjangkit dibawa pulang oleh keluarganya walaupun dia perlu dimasukkan ke wad untuk pemerhatian dan siasatan lanjut.

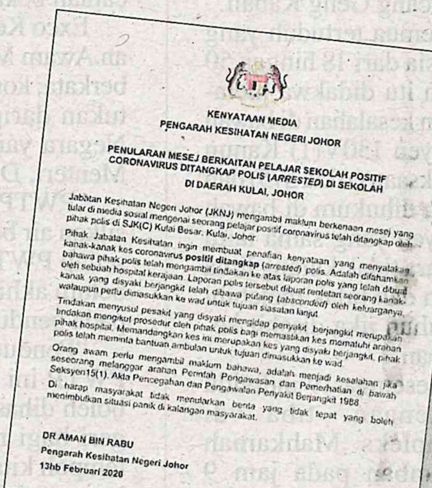
"Tindakan terhadap pesakit yang disyaki menghidap penyakit berjangkit itu adalah mengikut prosedur bagi memastikan pesakit mematuhi arahan hospital.

"Memandangkan kes ini adalah disyaki berjangkit, polis meminta bantuan ambulans untuk membawa kanak-kanak itu ke wad," katanya dalam satu kenyataan kelmarin.

Petang kelmarin, tular di media sosial berkaitan laporan polis mengenai pasangan ibu bapa yang kononnya telah melarikan anak mereka yang disyaki dijangkiti Covid-19 daripada kuarantin sebuah hospital kerajaan.

Sehubungan itu, Dr Aman berkata, beliau meminta masyarakat tidak menularkan berita yang tidak tepat hingga boleh menimbulkan situasi panik dalam kalangan masyarakat.

Tegasnya, JKNJ menafikan dakwaan yang menyatakan kanak- kanak positif kes Covid-19 ditahan polis seperti yang tular itu.



KENYATAAN MEDIA
PENGARAH KESIHATAN NEGERI JOHOR

PENULARAN MESEJ BERKAITAN PELAJAR SEKOLAH POSITIF CORONAVIRUS DITANGKAP POLIS (ARRESTED) DI SEKOLAH DI DAERAH KULAI, JOHOR

Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Johor (JKNJ) mengambil maklum berkenaan mesej yang tular di media sosial mengenai seorang pelajar positif coronavirus telah ditangkap oleh pihak polis di SJK(C) Kulai Besar, Kulai, Johor.

Pihak Jabatan Kesihatan ingin membuat penafian kenyataan yang menyatakan kanak-kanak kes coronavirus **positif ditangkap** (*arrested*) polis. Adalah difahamkan bahawa pihak polis telah mengambil tindakan ke atas laporan polis yang telah dibuat oleh sebuah hospital kerajaan. Laporan polis tersebut dibuat rentetan seorang kanak-kanak yang disyaki berjangkit telah dibawa pulang (*absconded*) oleh keluarganya walaupun perlu dimasukkan ke wad untuk tujuan siasatan lanjut.

Tindakan menyusul pesakit yang disyaki mengidap penyakit berjangkit merupakan tindakan mengikut prosedur oleh pihak polis bagi memastikan kes mematuhi arahan pihak hospital. Memandangkan kes ini merupakan kes yang disyaki berjangkit, pihak polis telah meminta bantuan ambulan untuk tujuan dimasukkan ke wad.

Orang awam perlu mengambil maklum bahawa, adalah menjadi kesalahan jika seseorang melanggar arahan Perintah Pengawasan dan Pemerhatian di bawah Seksyen15(1), Akta Pencegahan dan Pengawalan Penyakit Berjangkit 1988.

Di harap masyarakat tidak menularkan berita yang tidak tepat yang boleh menimbulkan situasi panik di kalangan masyarakat.

DR AMAN BIN RABU
Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Johor
13hb Februari 2020

Kenyataan media Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Johor berkaitan penularan mesej murid sekolah positif Covid-19 ditahan polis di Kulai kelmarin.

DR AMAN

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 7
RUANGAN : NEWS

15PC REDUCTION TARGET

Ministry aims to cut population's salt intake

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry has set a target for Malaysia to lower its population's salt intake by 15 per cent this year to prevent and control non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said the ministry had developed a five-year Salt Reduction Strategy (2015 to 2020) made up of three core interventions.

"First, to monitor population salt intake and sodium levels in food. Second, generate awareness about the need to reduce salt intake and the approaches; and third, lower the sodium content of food products through industry engagement, reformulation and labelling schemes," he said at the launch of the Malaysian Society of Hypertension Annual Scientific Congress 2020 here yesterday.

Cardiovascular diseases (CVDs), he said, remained among of the most important NCDs and were the leading cause of global deaths.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) estimated about one in three deaths was due to CVDs, and approximately 75 per cent of these deaths occurred in low- and middle-income countries.

For Malaysia, he said it was estimated that 73 per cent of total deaths were due to NCDs, and over half of these were due to CVDs.

"Data from our population-based health surveys, the National Health and Morbidity Survey (NHMS) have shown that the prevalence of NCD risk factors continues to rise among Malaysians. This is a worrying trend. One of the key risk factors is hypertension.

"In Malaysia, the prevalence of hypertension in adults aged 18 and above was 30.3 per cent in 2015 or about 6.1 million adult Malaysians. Out of these, more than half were unaware that they have high blood pressure."

The control of hypertension remained below 40 per cent, based on the NHMS 2015 data. Despite the majority, an estimated 80 per cent, received treatment over time.

"In Malaysia, the amount of sodium consumed, mostly in the form of salt, is above the recommended intake for good health. Excess salt intake tends to raise blood pressure.

"The ministry can only give a general guideline as food consumption is the right of the people. We can only advise on the better food to consume and what you cannot, but we cannot force people to eat healthily.

"The food industry should look into ways to reduce sodium in food preparation. This (15 per cent reduction) is a realistic goal."

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NEWS

Factors hindering vaccine research

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has the potential to venture into vaccine development in light of the emerging threat from new viruses and diseases.

But limited resources and lack of investment hindered development in this, said Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye.

"Vaccine research can have different entry points. The Institute for Medical Research is already doing some early work on viruses, including isolation of virus and deactivation of virus.

"However, vaccine development at later stages, for example at clinical trials, involves huge investment, and there is significant risk of failure. It also requires sufficient number of patients for trials. Hence, it is not easy.

"Malaysia has the expertise to develop the vaccine. Whoever is investing (in vaccine development) can always build the facilities," he said yesterday.

He said though the private sector could seek investment to develop vaccines, the manufacturing of existing vaccines could only be done locally if pharmaceutical companies wished to manufacture in Malaysia.

On Feb 13, former member to the United Nations secretary-general's Scientific Advisory Board, Emeritus Professor Tan Sri Dr Zakri Abdul Hamid, said it was time Malaysia invested in the medical biology sector and research and development in health science.

He said Malaysia was lagging behind as it was dependent on international manufacturers for vaccine supplies and that millions had been spent on importing vaccines when they could be engineered locally.

Consultant paediatrician Datuk Dr Musa Nordin stressed the need for Malaysia to incentivise vaccine manufacturers by setting up plants in the country.

He said this should include vaccines under the National Immunisation Programme, as well as other flu vaccines.

"The flu vaccine is critical for national security. When there was a flu pandemic in 2009, we were short of flu vaccines as they were diverted to high-income countries or countries that have manufacturing plants."

Dr Musa said vaccine development was expensive and risky.

On average, it takes 10 years from pre-clinical trials (through phases one to three of clinical trials) before it can be certified effective and safe for registration by regulatory bodies.

He acknowledged that Malaysia had the expertise to develop vaccines, but said putting together an infrastructure to research new vaccines could be challenging.

"The investment outlay is too daunting and the pull factor for brilliant minds is wanting. Many of our best brains are researching in cutting edge facilities elsewhere.

"Even the National Institutes of Health (NIH) rely on smart partnerships with multinational corporations," he said, adding that NIH's timeline to develop a Covid-19 vaccine assumed that a large pharmaceutical manufacturer would step up to develop the product.

No major pharmaceutical company has come forward yet to manufacture the Covid-19 vaccine being developed by NIH.

Johnson & Johnson announced its interest in developing a vaccine with the United States' Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

Pharmaceutical companies like Merck and GlaxoSmithKline have aided in public health emergencies. Merck manufactured a vaccine for Ebola that was recently approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration and European regulators.

On the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) outbreak in 2002 and 2003, Dr Musa said it took researchers 20 months from the release of the viral genome to the vaccine being ready for human trials.

"It never made it to market because SARS was contained with public health measures."

World Health Organisation director-general Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, on Tuesday, said the first vaccine for Covid-19 could be ready in 18 months, reported Xinhua news agency.

"There's a lot we can do to prevent transmission and prepare for any further spread," he tweeted.

At a press briefing earlier on Tuesday, he said while the world needed investment in research and development, "we also need investment in stopping the Covid-19 outbreak now".

He said developing vaccines and therapies was an important part of the research agenda.

"We are not defenceless. There are many basic public health interventions that are available to us now, and which can prevent infections now. So we have to do everything today using available weapons to fight this virus, while preparing for the long term."

No new cases, four Chinese nationals discharged

PUTRAJAYA: There are no new Covid-19 cases in Malaysia, as four patients were discharged after testing negative for the virus.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said the four Chinese nationals were a family and had close contact with Singapore's first case.

She said total cases in the country remained at 19, with nine of them listed as patients under investigation, eight as close contact cases and two Malaysians who returned from the humanitarian mission to Wuhan, China.

The discharge of the four patients brought to seven the number of infected people who were given the all-clear.

Dr Wan Azizah said 239 close contacts of patients had been identified — 181 Malaysians, 46 Chinese nationals and 12 from other countries.

"Samples have been taken and they are under observation. More close contacts will be identified.

"We urge those who have been in close contact (with patients) to come forward for checks," she said after chairing the Disaster Management High-Level Committee meeting here yesterday.

The discharged patients were a 65-year-old woman, her 36-year-old daughter-in-law and her two grandsons aged 11 and 2. They were admitted to Sungai Buloh Hospital on Jan 24.

Dr Wan Azizah said Malaysia would not follow health authorities in Hubei province by imposing a broader definition for diagnosing Covid-19.

She said Malaysia would continue screening cases with laboratory tests to diagnose patients.

"The Chinese authorities have explained that the reason for the spike in the number of cases there is due to a change in how they are tabulated. Patients who show all clinical symptoms of the infection are classified positive (diagnosed) without waiting for lab results."

She said foreign ships would not be allowed to dock in Malaysian waters if they refused to share details required by the authorities in light of the Covid-19 outbreak.

She said the Immigration Department reported attempts by two cruise ships from Hong Kong, *Westerdam* and *Sapphire Princess*, to dock in the country recently.

"*Westerdam*, with a capacity of about 1,000 passengers, entered Hong Kong before sailing to Taiwan on Feb 1. It intended to dock in Malaysia. It was granted permission (to dock) in Cambodia yesterday (Thursday). *Sapphire Princess* docked in Singapore."

The Foreign Ministry said Malaysia and China agreed to strengthen cooperation to overcome the Covid-19 outbreak, which had killed nearly 1,500 people in the republic.

The mutual understanding and close cooperation between the two nations in battling the epidemic was relayed through a telephone conversation between Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Chinese President Xi Jinping, the ministry said.

In the phone call on Thursday afternoon, Xi pledged that the Chinese government would take care of Malaysians in China like its own citizens, the ministry said.

"The two leaders spoke of mutual understanding and close cooperation to contain and overcome the epidemic, as well as to minimise its impact."

Malaysian ambassador to China Raja Datuk Nushirwan Zainal Abidin said no Malaysian had been admitted to hospital in China on suspicion of contracting Covid-19.

He said the Malaysian embassy in Beijing worked closely with the Chinese government to gather information and updates on Malaysians in the republic.

"The strong diplomatic ties between Malaysia and China has enabled sharing of information and updates on the outbreak.

"Malaysians have been given the assurance that they will receive just treatment irrespective of the development (related to the outbreak) in the republic.

"The Malaysian embassy in China is in constant communication with Malaysians in the republic to check on their safety and ensure that they will be provided with necessary assistance if needed."

Nushirwan said 57 Malaysians, comprising students, professionals and tourists, were in Wuhan and in good health.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATION

Private sector urged to install thermal scanners

KUALA LUMPUR: The private sector has been encouraged to install thermal scanners at their premises, especially at the main entrance of buildings as this will help curtail the spread of Covid-19 (novel coronavirus) infections.

Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said at present, the Health Ministry has 80 thermal scanners at international gateways throughout the country, and this number is sufficient for now.

"Although these machines are quite expensive, costing RM40,000 (each), we encourage the private sector to install them, for instance, hotels, as this could help us (the government)," he said at a press conference after launching the Malaysian Society of Hypertension 17th Scientific Congress here yesterday.

On the cooperation between the Health Ministries of Malaysia and Singapore on curbing Covid-19, Dr Lee said the first meeting of the Joint Working Committee will be announced next week.

"I am planning to go to Singapore or Johor Baru, but I have to look at the schedule of both parties," he said.

Separately, Dr Lee said the Health Ministry was aiming to reduce the salt content in Malaysian food by 15%, as is outlined in the Salt Intake Reduction Strategy 2015-2020.

"The ministry is conducting a study into the negative effects of sodium or salt in Malaysian food, as well as conducting an ongoing programme on hypertension," he said.

Dr Lee added that to achieve this target, food producers and providers must also reduce the use of salt in the food they serve.

The congress was attended by about 500 local and foreign delegates to discuss various issues relating to tackling hypertension. — Bernama

For more stories: See page 8

On high alert: A health officer observing people's temperature profile on a thermal scanner as they arrive at the Boustead Cruise Centre in Pulau Indah, Klang. — Bernama

Four more recover from Covid-19

Envoy commends Malaysia for job well done in fighting outbreak

By LOH FOON FONG
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Meeting the press: Bai speaking to reporters during a press conference at Hospital Sungai Buloh. With him is Dr Lee (second from left).

SUNGAI BULOH: Four more Chinese nationals have been discharged from Hospital Sungai Buloh, bringing the total to seven, says the Health Ministry.

The four are a 65-year-old woman, her 36-year-old daughter-in-law, and grandsons aged two and 11.

All had come to Malaysia as tourists during Chinese New Year and were discharged yesterday.

On Jan 25, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad said that Malaysian authorities were alerted by their Singaporean counterparts that four family members of an infected Chinese national had crossed over from Singapore.

The elderly woman and the two children were put in the isolation ward for about three weeks at Hospital Sungai Buloh.

They were the first three cases of Covid-19 (novel coronavirus) detected in Malaysia.

The daughter-in-law was allowed to be at the hospital to be with her children.

China's Ambassador to Malaysia Bai Tian, who visited them at the hospital, said he was happy that the patients had been discharged.

"The four patients had not taken any special medication but recovered through their own immune system," he said when met at the hospital, adding that this showed that it is not a disease to be feared.

He noted that more than 6,000 patients had recovered in China.

Bai also said that he had a "cheerful" long chat with the family.

The mother was grateful for the treatment received at the hospital and she was touched by the hospitality and care given to them.

"This is a blessing in disguise for them as they had a good experience going through the hardship and seeing the solidarity and friendship extended to them," Bai said.

He commended the medical team for its skills, professionalism and care given to the patients, adding that the hospital was well-equipped with state-of-the-art infrastructure.

State government health officials had also been very supportive, he added.

Bai said that the four people had come to Malaysia in a big group comprising grandparents, parents and two children.

They were diagnosed with Covid-19 shortly after they arrived in Johor Baru.

The father and grandfather were diagnosed in Singapore and were treated there while the four were diagnosed in Malaysia and sent to the Hospital Sungai Buloh.

Three other earlier patients in Malaysia have also recovered and been discharged from hospitals.

They were all Chinese nationals, aged four, 40 and 63.

"I want to thank the Health Ministry for its excellent preventive measures since the outbreak," Bai said.

He also commended the ministry's team for its successful communication as he did not see unnecessary panic in Malaysia.

"With better knowledge, this helps to mitigate the situation," he said.

Also present at the hospital yesterday was Deputy Health Minister Dr Lee Boon Chye, who congratulated the Hospital Sungai Buloh team for a job well done.

He said the four patients from China were given symptomatic treatment and no specific antiviral was given.

"Their immune system was able to fight it," he said.

He said it was too early to tell which antivirals were useful and they were awaiting more results from China.

"We stand in solidarity with China. This should not be seen as a China problem but one that the world faces together," he said.

Watch the video thestartv.com