

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Sesuai buka sempadan apabila ada ubat antiviral

Putrajaya: Waktu terbaik untuk membuka semula sempadan tanpa keperluan kuarantin wajib sebaik pengembara tiba adalah apabila negara sudah memperoleh ubat antiviral bagi merawat jangkitan COVID-19.

Pakar Kesihatan Pekerjaan dan Kesihatan Am, Dr Hanafiah Bashirun, berkata biarpun kebanyakan populasi dewasa negara kini sudah mendapat vaksin, dari segi keselamatan kesihatan adalah penting untuk proses kuarantin dikekalkan dalam usaha menyekat penularan pelbagai varian baharu yang berbahaya.

Beliau berkata, buat masa ini, tidak ada bukti yang menyatakan bahawa vaksin kuat untuk menangani mana-mana varian kerana masih ada jangkitan memabitkan varian baharu COVID-19.

"Jika betul kita mahu menuju ke arah endemik, ia adalah cara terbaik, namun sekarang bukan masa yang tepat untuk keputusan itu diambil. Saya berpendapat, untuk sempadan negara dibuka tanpa sekatan dan tanpa perlu proses kuarantin, kita tunggu dahulu hingga ubat antiviral sudah diagihkan ke negara kita dan sedia ada untuk merawat mana-mana individu yang dijangkiti.

"Masa terbaik adalah apabila ubat antiviral sudah ada dan digunakan serta terbukti berkesan selain selamat untuk pesakit melawan COVID-19," katanya kepada *BH*.

Dr Hanafiah berkata, seperti kebenaran kecemasan diberikan kepada vaksin sebelum ini, ubat antiviral untuk COVID-19 juga memerlukan kebenaran sama.

Selapas mendapat kebenaran kecemasan itu, pihak berkuasa kesihatan akan melihat keberkesanannya termasuk komplikasi penggunaan ubat berkenaan bagi memastikan ia selamat untuk rawatan pesakit COVID-19.

Setakat ini, Pentadbiran Makanan dan Ubat-Obatan (FDA) Amerika Syarikat (AS) sudah meluluskan penggunaan secara kecemasan kepada ubat antiviral keluaran Pfizer (Paxlovid - nirmatrevir) yang bersekali dengan ritonavir) serta ubat keluaran Merk, molnupiravir, untuk rawatan COVID-19.

Namun demikian Dr Hanafiah berkata, beliau memahami tindakan yang mahu diambil kerajaan dalam isu berkenaan, namun ia perlu mengambil kira risiko yang perlu ditanggung.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
 MUKA SURAT : 8
 RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Muhyiddin disah positif COVID-19

Kuala Lumpur: Pengerusi Majlis Pemulihan Negara Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, disahkan positif COVID-19, semalam.

Dalam catatan di laman Facebook beliau, bekas Perdana Menteri itu berkata, beliau disahkan positif selepas melakukan ujian Reverse Transcriptase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).

"Alhamdulillah, saya hanya mengalami gejala ringan dan dalam keadaan baik.

"Mengikut protokol Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM), saya akan menjalani kuarantin sendiri di rumah.

"Mohon doakan kesihatan saya dan keluarga," katanya.

Muhyiddin turut meminta mereka yang berkemungkinan menjadi kontak rapatnya untuk mematuhi SOP yang ditetapkan KKM.

Sementara itu, Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob, mendoakan Muhyiddin dan keluarga diberikan kesembuhan serta dilindungi Allah SWT.

"Didoakan agar Allah SWT memberi kesembuhan dan melindungi Tan Sri (Muhyiddin) sekeluarga," katanya di Twitter.

Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak

Ibu bapa kian yakin daftar vaksin anak

Pendaftaran suntikan kanak-kanak meningkat 30,000 orang

Oleh Rafidah Mat Ruzki
 fidahruzki@bh.com.my

Putrajaya: Ramai ibu bapa kini semakin yakin untuk mendaftarkan anak mereka bagi mendapatkan suntikan vaksin COVID-19.

Berdasarkan data, jumlah pendaftaran suntikan kanak-kanak berusia lima tahun hingga 11 tahun meningkat sebanyak 30,000 orang, kelmarin.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy

Jamaluddin, berkata Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan terus berkongsi mengenai manfaat pelalian itu terhadap kanak-kanak, termasuk melalui Facebook, bagi memastikan kanak-kanak mendapatkan pelalian itu.

Sebelum ini, kebanyakan ibu bapa dikatakan mengambil pendekatan tunggu dan lihat kerana bimbang mengenai kesan sampingan susulan imunisasi.

Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam (Bahagian Pembangunan Kesihatan Keluarga) Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM), Dr Saidatul Norbaya Buang, kelmarin melaporkan tiada sebarang kesan sampingan dilaporkan dalam kalangan kanak-kanak yang menerima vaksin COVID-19 selepas Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) dilaksanakan sejak 3 Februari lalu.

Berdasarkan laman sesawang



Kanak-kanak menerima suntikan vaksin menerusi PICKids di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Melaka Megamall, semalam. (Foto Syafeeq Ahmad/BH)

COVIDNOW setakat kelmarin, sebanyak 50,062 dos pertama vaksin sudah diberikan kepada kumpulan kanak-kanak terbabit.

Jumlah itu membabitkan 1.4 peratus populasi kanak-kanak dalam kumpulan usia berkenaan.

Ia merangkumi 4.2 peratus populasi kanak-kanak lima tahun hingga 11 tahun di Lembah Klang, Sarawak (2.4 peratus), Sabah (0.7 peratus), Negeri Sembilan (0.4 peratus), Labuan (0.2 peratus) dan Kedah (0.1 peratus).

Selain itu, setakat tengah malam kelmarin, sejumlah 64,264,073 dos vaksin sudah diberikan kepada populasi dewasa di negara ini, termasuk 12,616,238 dos penggalak.

Ia membabitkan 22,931,979 individu atau 98 peratus daripada

populasi dewasa, yang lengkap menerima dua dos vaksin, manakala 23,207,389 individu atau 99.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Selain itu, sejumlah 2,792,830 atau 88.7 peratus daripada populasi remaja berusia 12 tahun hingga 17 tahun sudah melengkapkan vaksinasi, manakala 2,870,546 individu atau 91.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Bagi vaksinasi harian, sebanyak 152,358 dos diberikan kelmarin, meliputi 10,471 dos pertama, 1,506 dos kedua dan 140,381 dos penggalak, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif dos vaksin diberikan di bawah Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) sebanyak 64,264,073 dos.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
 MUKA SURAT : 9
 RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Kes baharu terus melonjak 17,134

Purata kadar keboleangkitan seluruh negara kini 1.39

Oleh Rafidah Mat Ruzki
 bhnews@bh.com.my

Putrajaya: Kes positif COVID-19 di negara ini terus melonjak, dengan 17,134 kes dilaporkan setakat tengah hari semalam.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata ia menyumbang kepada sejumlah 2,956,332 kes positif wabak berkenaan sejak Januari 2020.

Beliau berkata, daripada jumlah itu, sebanyak 86 kes atau 0.5 peratus adalah kategori 3, 4, dan 5, manakala 17,048 kes atau 99.5 peratus terdiri daripada kategori 1 dan 2.

"Kategori 2 terus merekodkan jumlah kes yang tinggi dengan 12,326 kes atau 71.94 peratus daripada keseluruhan kes yang dilaporkan

"Sebanyak 4,722 kes atau 27.56 peratus lagi pesakit dalam kategori 1, manakala kategori 3 merekodkan sebanyak 58 kes atau 0.34 peratus; kategori 4 (24 kes atau 0.14 peratus) dan kategori 5 mencatatkan empat kes atau 0.02 peratus," katanya.

Dr Noor Hisham juga berkata, purata kadar keboleangkitan COVID-19 (Ro/Rt) untuk seluruh negara kini adalah 1.39.

Ro/Rt merujuk kepada keboleangkitan sesuatu virus dalam masyarakat.

Jika nilai keboleangkitan adalah 1.39, ini bermakna bahawa setiap kes positif jangkitan virus boleh menyebarkan penyakit itu kepada 1.39 orang yang lain.

Menurunkan nilai Rt kepada kurang daripada 1 secara berterusan, akan membantu mengakhiri sesuatu wabak.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, Sarawak mencatatkan nilai Rt tertinggi, iaitu 1.68, diikuti Perlis (1.65), Sabah (1.59), Labuan (1.51) dan Terengganu (1.40).

Sementara itu, menurut portal Github Kementerian Kesihatan, 13 kematian akibat COVID-19 dilaporkan kelmarin, dengan tiga di Selangor, dua kes direkodkan masing-masing di Kelantan, Perak dan Sabah, manakala satu masing-masing di Kedah, Pulau Pinang, Terengganu dan Kuala Lumpur.

Buka sempadan pulih pelancongan perubatan

Kuala Lumpur: Pembukaan semula sepenuhnya sempadan negara akan membolehkan pelancongan perubatan kembali ke Malaysia bagi menjalani rawatan di hospital selepas ia terhenti sejak awal 2020.

Presiden Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM), Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh, berkata langkah itu juga bakal membantu memulihkan sektor pelancongan perubatan yang menjana RM1.7 bilion kepada negara pada 2019.

Beliau memaklumkan, APMH mempunyai keahlian 151 hospital di seluruh negara dengan majoritinya merawat pelancongan perubatan, terutama dari negara jiran.

"Bagaimanapun, hospital swasta akan mematuhi segala prosedur operasi standard (SOP) ditetapkan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) berhubung ujian saringan sebelum menerima pelancongan perubatan untuk men-

jalani rawatan.

"Kami akan menerima pelancongan perubatan yang sudah lengkap vaksinasi dengan dos pengalag (sebaik-baiknya supaya kurang risiko untuk mereka mengalami sakit teruk jika berlaku jangkitan COVID-19 ketika men-

jalani rawatan, dan seterusnya melindungi penyedia penjagaan kesihatan tempatan kita," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Media kelmarin melaporkan Majlis Pemulihan Negara (MPN) bersetuju dengan cadangan supaya Malaysia membuka semula sepenuhnya sempadan negara tanpa keperluan kuarantin wajib, seawal 1 Mac depan.

Pengerusi MPN, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, dipetik berkata bagaimanapun pembukaan sempadan kepada semua negara itu perlu dilaksanakan secara terancang dan berdasarkan penilaian risiko semasa.



Dr Kuljit Singh

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 51

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Aiman rasa lebih selamat

Pelakon cilik drama I-Tanggung ajak teman sebaya ambil vaksin COVID-19 sebagai perlindungan diri

Oleh **Fatin Farhana Ariffin**
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Pelakon cilik berusia sembilan tahun, Muhammad Aiman Badrul Hisham berkongsi rasa teruja selepas mendapatkan dos pertama vaksin COVID-19 menerusi Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-kanak (PICKids) yang mula dilaksanakan, sejak 3 Februari lalu.

Pelakon drama bersiri *I-Tanggung* ini memberitahu, selepas menerima suntikan vaksin COVID-19, Sabtu lalu, dia rasa lebih selamat kerana kerap terbabit dalam aktiviti penggambaran.

"Saya teruja apabila diberitahu akan menerima vaksin COVID-19. Saya seronok untuk pergi ke Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) Paradigm Mall, Kelana

Jaya, Sabtu lalu.

"Tiada rasa takut hendak berdepan jarum. Malah, saya rasa bersemangat selepas mengambil vaksin.

"Saya juga rasa lebih selamat untuk keluar berjalan-jalan. Jadi, kawan-kawan, bolehlah ambil vaksin kerana perkara ini baik untuk kesihatan kita.

"Pengambilan vaksin boleh membantu kita melawan penularan COVID-19 dan melindungi diri kita semua," katanya kepada *HIP*.

Aiman dijangka mengambil suntukan dos kedua Pfizer, April depan.

Dalam perkembangan lain, Aiman akan menjayakan drama terbitan TV3, *Adik Kakak* yang menggandingkan dirinya bersama pelakon, Fauziah Ahmad Daud mulai 16 Februari depan.

Aiman mahu menggunakan peluang itu sebaik-baiknya bagi mendalami ilmu lakonan.

"Saya teruja dapat berlakon dengan Fauziah. Namun, pada masa sama, saya takut sebab beliau primadona. Tetapi, tidak mengapa, saya ambil peluang ini untuk belajar ilmu lakonan daripadanya," katanya.

Sementara itu, bapa Aiman, Badrul Hisham Abdul Rahim, 51, mengakui Aiman yang juga



Aiman selepas mendapatkan suntikan pertama vaksin COVID-19 di ibu negara, baru-baru ini.

anak bongsu daripada empat beradik, teruja mengambil vaksin selepas melihat abang-abangnya berbuat demikian.

"Aiman memang teruja dari awal lagi sebab dia tengok abang-abangnya sudah ambil vaksin. Aiman sering bertanya bila giliran dia. Jadi, apabila saya beritahu gilirannya tiba, dia seronok dan tidak takut.

"Saya memang menggalakkan Aiman mengambil vaksin sebab dia selalu pergi sesi uji bakat dan 'shooting'. Jadi, pendedahan terhadap virus COVID-19 tinggi.

"Selain itu, dia banyak berjumpa orang ramai. Aiman juga bersekolah. Jadi, saya fikir lebih selamat jika dia mengambil vaksin," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : LOKAL

IGAUAN HIDUNG SENGET

300 doktor saja ada tauliah KKM

Bilangan pakar bidang estetik bertauliah terhad ekoran prosedur rawatan kecantikan berisiko tinggi

Oleh Skuad Khas Harian Metro am@hmetro.com.my

Kuala Lumpur

Hanya kira-kira 300 doktor dalam bidang estetik atau rawatan kecantikan yang mempunyai pentauliah di bawah Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

Perkara itu didedahkan Presiden Persatuan Perubatan Estetik Malaysia, Dr Chin Shih Choon yang berkata, bilangan pakar bertauliah di negara ini terlalu kecil kerana ujian dijalankan amat ketat berikutan prosedur rawatan berisiko tinggi.

Menurutnya, setiap doktor perubatan estetik perlu mempunyai sijil pentauliah Letter of Credentialing and Privileging (LCP) daripada KKM sebelum boleh menawarkan perkhidmatan rawatan kecantikan.

"Doktor perubatan estetik mesti bekerja di hospital swasta sekurang-kurangnya dua tahun, memenuhi keperluan latihan dan lulus pemeriksaan pelesenan.

"Selain itu, mereka perlu menghadiri temu duga oleh pakar pembedahan plastik, pakar kulit, pakar estetik dan pegawai KKM.

"Pengamal perubatan terbahit mesti mengikuti langkah disenaraikan untuk menjadi doktor perubatan estetik diperakui," katanya ketika



LAPORAN Harian Metro, semalam.



“Doktor bidang estetik mesti bekerja di hospital swasta sekurang-kurangnya dua tahun” Dr Chin

dihubungi Harian Metro. Ditanya mengenai pusat estetik di kalangan warga asing yang mendakwa diri pakar estetik dari luar negara, Dr Chin tidak menafikan ada doktor mempunyai sijil pentauliah dari negara masing-masing.



SIJIL LCP yang dikeluarkan KKM.

Namun, beliau berkata, mereka tidak dibenar mengamalkan perubatan di negara ini jika tiada LCP dan Sijil Pengamalan Sementara (TCP) dikeluarkan KKM seperti disyaratkan.

Harian Metro difahamkan, kebanyakan pusat kecantikan di negara ini tidak dikendalikan warga asing tidak bertauliah dengan majoritinya didakwa cenderung bermotifkan keuntungan.

Selain memperdaya pe-

langgan dengan iklan kecantikan yang kononnya dikendalikan pakar, bahan digunakan dalam rawatan juga diragui.

Mengulas prosedur tepat sebelum pelangan menjalani rawatan kecantikan, Dr Chin berkata, mereka perlu bertemu pakar perunding terlebih dahulu bagi mendapatkan sejarah perubatan atau penyakit dihidapi.

Tambah beliau, pakar perubatan akan menilai rawatan sesuai, selain pembeda-

han mesti mendapat kelulusan pakar bius.

"Tanpa pengetahuan perubatan, seseorang yang tidak berpengalaman atau terlatih akan menyebabkan kecederaan. Jika masalah timbul semasa rawatan, pakar perubatan boleh menangani masalah sebaiknya.

"Ia tidak sesuai dilakukan di pusat kecantikan biasa atau hotel kerana berisiko apabila berlaku masalah seperti alahan ubat, pengsan, pendarahan berlebihan dan sebagainya," katanya.

Justeru, katanya, rawatan dan pembedahan perlu dibuat di hospital atau klinik estetik berdaftar yang mempunyai peralatan lengkap termasuk ubat kecemasan.

Beliau menasihati orang ramai yang mahu mendapatkan rawatan kecantikan supaya menyemak status klinik di laman sesawang KKM dan bertanya sendiri pakar estetik ditemui sama ada mereka ada sijil pentauliah atau sebaliknya.

Tambahnya, lebih baik mendapatkan kepastian terlebih dahulu sebelum melakukan rawatan kerana ia bukan saja mengundang risiko tetapi mengancam nyawa.

Semalam Harian Metro melalui laporan khas secara eksklusif melaporkan ada lebih 20 pusat kecantikan atau medspa di Lembah Klang dan beberapa negeri di Utara serta Selatan tanah air di dalangi pakar bedah warga asing menjalankan prosedur pembedahan dengan harga bajet.

Hospital Kerajaan. Khairy berkata, beliau sempat mengadakan perbincangan dan mendengar pandangan daripada wakil kesatuan.

Katanya, walaupun mereka pekerja bawah syarikat konsesi yang menerima tugas KKM, kebajikan mereka di bawah tanggungjawab Kementerian.

Sementara itu Roziah berkata, pihaknya merakamkan jutaan terima kasih kepada Khairy kerana sudi menerima kunjungan dan meneliti memorandum yang diserahkan mereka.

KPSPSHKSM SERAH MEMORANDUM KEPADA KKM

KJ: Tuntutan diteliti secara komprehensif

Putrajaya: "Semua pihak tidak boleh memandang ringan kepada perjuangan mereka selepas mengharungi perjalanan lebih 500 kilometer untuk datang berjumpa saya dan menyerahkan memorandum ini," ujar Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin.

"Pihak Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) akan meneliti secara komprehensif memorandum tuntutan itu.

"KKM akan mengadakan perjumpaan dengan syarikat konsesi bagi memahami dengan lebih mendalam berkenaan isu dibangkitkan. Ia akan dilakukan bagi memastikan kebajikan pekerja terbahit teraja berikutan golongan ini antara petugas barisan hadapan

yang banyak membantu mengurus pandemik Covid-19," katanya selepas mengadakan pertemuan dengan wakil KPSPSHKSM di lobi KKM di sini, semalam.

Sebelum itu, Khairy bertemu beberapa wakil kesatuan diketuai Pengerusinya, Roziah Mohd Hashim sebelum keluar dari ba-



“KKM akan mengadakan perjumpaan dengan syarikat konsesi” Khairy

ngunan KKM setengah jam kemudian.

Memorandum yang diserahkan menyatakan tiga tuntutan iaitu menghapuskan sistem kontrak dan serap semula pekerja sokongan hospital sebagai kakitangan kerajaan, menghentikan pemperasan kesatuan dan pembayaran elaun Covid-19 kepada semua pekerja sokongan di

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : COVID-19

Oleh Noor Hidayah
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Teluk Intan

“M ulanya gemetar sedikit tapi rasa itu hilang sebab angah dan achik ada sekali ketika cucuk vaksin dan sakit pun sekejap saja lepas tu dah tak rasa dah,” kata Mohamad Irfan Hakimie Zainal Abidin.

Mohamad Irfan Hakimie, 10, menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19 bersama dua adiknya, Mohamad Ikhwan Nadrin, 8, dan Mohamad Izz Zafri, 6, di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Khas (SPPV) Hospital Teluk Intan (HTI), di sini, semalam.

Mereka antara 30 kanak-kanak di daerah ini menjadi kumpulan pertama menerima suntikan vaksin itu sempena Majlis Pelancaran Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kanak-kanak (PICKkids) HTI.

Program untuk kanak-kanak berusia lima hingga 11 tahun itu bermula hari ini dan SPPV HTI dibuka setiap Rabu dan Khamis kecuali cuti umum dari jam 8.30 pagi

‘Rasa sakit cucuk pun sekejap je...’

Mohamad Irfan kongsi pengalaman terima suntikan vaksin di HTI

hingga 12 tengah hari dan 2.30 petang hingga 3.30 petang.

Mohamad Irfan Hakimie berkata, dia mengetahui keperluan suntikan vaksin daripada ibunya yang juga jururawat di hospital berkenaan, Fathiyah Nordin, 36, dan mahu mengambilnya sebagai perlindungan diri.

“Saya takut dengan virus ini. Ibu selalu cerita kita kena selalu pakai pelitup muka dan vaksin untuk bantu mencegah (penularan) virus ini.

“Along rasa baik saja sebab dapat cucuk vaksin bersama angah dan achik. Rasa sakit pun sikit saja selepas itu tak rasa dah,” katanya ketika ditemui.

Ibu mereka, Fathiyah berkata, anaknya pernah bertanya mengenai vaksin un-



MOHAMAD Irfan Hakimie (kiri) dan dua adiknya bergambar bersama maskot Mickey Mouse selepas menerima vaksin di SPPV HTI, semalam. - Gambar NSTP/SHARUL HAFIZ ZAM

tuk kanak-kanak selepas dia dan suami, Zainal Abidin Dzuhih, 40, yang juga anggota Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia (TLDM) melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka.

“Kerja saya berisiko dan sebelum ini saya pernah bertugas di wad Covid-19 selama empat bulan. Saya memang mengutamakan prosedur operasi standard

(SOP) termasuk akan membersihkan diri sebaik pulang kerja dan selalu buat ujian sendiri.

“Saya juga selalu beritahu semua anak mengenai ba-

haya virus ini dan apa yang perlu kita buat jadi mereka memahaminya dan mereka sendiri mahu mengambil vaksin.

“Ini ikhtiar kami dan beres-beres lega apabila anak sudah mengambil suntikan vaksin Covid-19 sebagai usaha melindungi diri daripada virus itu,” katanya.

Sementara itu, Dr Eileen Toh Su Sian, 36, berkata, dua anak perempuannya, Rachel Tang, 9, dan Eva Tang, 8, juga mahu mengambil vaksin itu sebagai perlindungan diri dan mengetahui ia sebagai usaha mencegah jangkitan virus.

Dalam pada itu, Timbalan Pengarah HTI Dr Noor Azira Haron berkata, SPPV berkenaan boleh menerima kehadiran 200 individu sehari dengan keutamaan kepada kanak-kanak mempunyai masalah kesihatan.

Katanya, pemberian vaksin bertujuan melindungi golongan berkenaan daripada mortaliti dan morbiditi akibat jangkitan Covid-19 serta membolehkan kanak-kanak menjalani aktiviti harian dengan lebih selamat terutama aktiviti di luar rumah dan tempat belajar.

Kuala Lumpur: Susulan peningkatan mendadak kes Covid-19 di Korea Selatan, pelajar Malaysia yang menuntut di universiti negara itu sentiasa mengambil langkah keselamatan daripada dijangkiti termasuk tidak keluar rumah dan memakai dua pelitup muka.

Penuntut Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains Komputer dan Kejuruteraan Universiti Korea, Irdina Azzahra Jaswan, 21, berlaku peningkatan mendadak kes Covid-19 di Korea Selatan yang dilaporkan mencecah 39,000 kelmarin.

Bagaimanapun Irdina Azzahra berkata, keadaan pandemik itu dalam keadaan terkawal dan sistem kesihatan di negara itu berjalan dengan baik, malah semua pelajar juga dilindungi dengan insurans.

“Hampir semua pelajar Malaysia di sini sudah mengambil dos penggalak, jadi tidak takut sangat jika berlaku apa-apa,” katanya ketika dihubungi, hari ini.

Menurutnya, pemantauan tahap kesihatan penuntut Malaysia di Korea Selatan juga kerap dibuat pegawai kesihatan negara ber-



LEDAKAN KES KOREA SELATAN

Pelajar Malaysia elak aktiviti di luar kediaman

kenaan.

“Setakat ini tiada yang positif Covid-19 atau mempunyai gejala seperti demam. Keluarga di Malaysia tidak perlu bimbang kerana kami sentiasa mematuhi arahan dan mengambil langkah perlu mengelak dijangkiti wabak itu,” katanya.

Sementara itu, penuntut Ijazah Sarjana Muda Sains

Komputer dan Kejuruteraan Universiti Konkuk, Seoul, Ahmad Firdaus Abdul Razak, 21, berkata, susulan peningkatan kes Covid-19 di negara itu dia memilih untuk tidak pergi ke tempat tumpuan ramai.

“Walaupun banyak tempat menarik yang boleh dilawati di Seoul tetapi saya pilih duduk di kediaman pe-

lajar saja.

“Keluar pun untuk hal penting saja seperti beli makanan dan pastikan tidak sentuh muka jika berada di luar,” katanya.

Kelmarin Korea Selatan dilaporkan mencatatkan 38,691 kes jangkitan baharu harian susulan penularan varian Omicron akibat musim cuti.

Status bazar Ramadan diumumkan hujung bulan

Ipoh: Sebarang keputusan berhubung pengajuran bazar Ramadan di bandar raya ini, dijangka diketahui hujung bulan ini, kata Datuk Bandar Ipoh Datuk Rumaizi Baharin.

Rumaizi berkata, permohonan diterima oleh Majlis Bandaraya Ipoh (MBI) daripada peniaga berhubung sewaan lokasi tapak bazar Ramadan tahun ini sangat

mengalakkan biarpun tidak mendedahkan secara terperinci angka penerimaan itu.

Beliau berkata, bagaimanapun penularan varian Omicron wabak Covid-19 pada masa ini menyebabkan sebarang keputusan berhubung dengannya bergantung kepada hasil mesyuarat yang akan berlangsung dalam masa terdekat.

Sarawak bincang SOP baharu kekang wabak

Kuching: Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Negeri (JPBN) Sarawak dijangka mengadakan mesyuarat khas hari ini bagi memutuskan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) baharu bagi mengekang penularan Covid-19.

La susulan keputusan Mesyuarat Ke-12 Menteri Kuarantena Covid-19, kelmarin yang menetapkan SOP pemerik-

saan suhu badan dan buku rekod mendaftarkan masuk di premis akan dimansuhkan bermula Jumaat ini.

Sumber berkata, Pengerusi JPBN Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas perlu mendapatkan pandangan beberapa pihak, antaranya Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) berhubung pelaksanaan langkah itu di Sarawak.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : COVID-19

Muhyiddin positif Covid-19, gejala ringan

Kuala Lumpur: Bekas Perdana Menteri, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin positif Covid-19 selepas membuat ujian *Real-Time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR)*.

Muhyiddin dalam laman Facebook rasminya berkata, beliau hanya mengalami gejala ringan dan kini berada dalam keadaan baik.

"Mengikut protokol Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), saya akan menjalani kuarantin sendiri di rumah.

"Kepada sesiapa yang berkecenderungan men-

jadi kontak rapat saya, saya nasihatkan supaya mematuhi protokol yang ditetapkan oleh KKM," katanya.

Beliau turut memohon kepada orang ramai supaya dapat mendoakan kesihatan dirinya dan keluarganya.

Sementara itu, warganet mendoakan Muhyiddin segera diberi kesembuhan dan kesihatan yang baik.

"Semoga Abah cepat sembuh dan kuat melawan wabak ini," catat pengguna Facebook yang menggunakan nama Nurul Asyiqin.

Nasihatkan kontak rapat patuhi protokol ditetapkan KKM

WAKSINASI KANAK-KANAK Jumlah mendaftar meningkat 30,000

Putrajaya: Pendaftaran untuk kanak-kanak berusia lima hingga 11 tahun mendapatkan vaksinasi terhadap Covid-19, meningkat sebanyak 30,000 kelmarin.

Justeru, Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, dalam satu perkongsian di media sosial semalam berkata, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan terus berkongsi manfaat pelalian terhadap kanak-kanak termasuk melalui Facebook.

"Pendaftaran meningkat 30k (30,000) semalam (kelmarin)," katanya. Sementara itu, laman sewang Covidnow menunjukkan setakat kelmarin, 50,062 dos pertama diberi kepada kumpulan kanak-kanak berkenaan.

Jumlah itu membabitkan 1.4 peratus daripada populasi kanak-kanak dalam kumpulan usia berkenaan yang sudah divaksinasi bagi melawan Covid-19.

Setakat kelmarin, 4.2 peratus kanak-kanak berusia lima dan 11 di Lembah Klang menerima dos pertama disusuli Sarawak pada kadar 2.4 peratus, Sabah 0.7 peratus, Negeri Sembilan (0.4 peratus), Labuan (0.2 peratus) dan Kedah (0.1 peratus).

Kadar kebolehhajangan naik pada 1.39 kelmarin

Putrajaya: Malaysia mencatatkan kadar kebolehhajangan Covid-19 (Ro/Rt) pada paras 1.39 kelmarin sekaligus meningkat berbanding 1.32 Isnin lalu.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, dalam perkongsian melalui media sosial, berkata, Sarawak menunjukkan peningkatan apabila ia merekodkan Rt pada kadar 1.68 kelmarin berbanding 1.48 pada 7 Februari.

Ia disusuli Perlis pada kadar 1.65, Sabah (1.59), Labuan (1.51), Terengganu (1.40), Kedah (1.36), Putrajaya (1.35), Pulau Pinang (1.34), Pahang (1.28), Johor (1.26), Selangor (1.25), masing-masing 1.24 di

Kelantan dan Perak, Melaka (1.20), Kuala Lumpur (1.18); dan Negeri Sembilan pada kadar 1.14.

Sementara itu, Dr Noor Hisham menyarankan orang awam segera menjalani ujian Covid-19 sendiri dengan segera jika didapati bergejala.

"Jika anda kontak rapat, tunggu lima hari untuk jalankan ujian sendiri.

"Jika anda ingin berhimpun jalankan ujian sendiri sebelum berhimpun," katanya.

Kelmarin, Malaysia mencatatkan bilangan kes lima angka untuk tiga hari berturut-turut apabila sebanyak 13,944 kes dilaporkan.

Kuala Lumpur

Pembukaan semula sepenuhnya sempadan negara akan membolehkan pelancong perubatan kembali ke Malaysia untuk menjalani rawatan di hospital yang terhenti sejak awal 2020.

Presiden Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM) Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh berkata, pihaknya mengalu-alukan saranan Majlis Pemulihan Negara (MPN) supaya sempadan negara dibuka sepenuhnya mulai 1 Mac tanpa keperluan kuarantin.

Katanya, langkah itu juga akan membantu memulihkan sektor pelancongan perubatan yang menjana sebanyak RM1.7 bilion kepada negara pada 2019.

Katanya, persatuan itu mempunyai 151 hospital sebagai ahli di seluruh negara dan majoriti daripada hospital berkenaan merawat pelancong perubatan, terutama dari negara jiran.

"Bagaimanapun, hospital swasta akan mematuhi semua prosedur operasi standard (SOP) Kementerian Kesihatan mengenai saringan pelancong perubatan sebelum menerima pelancong perubatan sebagai pesakit.

"Kami hanya menerima pelancong perubatan yang divaksin sepenuhnya dengan dos penggalak (sebaik-baiknya) supaya kurang risiko bagi mereka mengalami sakit teruk sekiranya terdapat jangkitan Covid-19 semasa menjalani rawatan dan seterusnya melindungi penyedia penjagaan kesihatan tempatan kita," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Kelmarin, Pengerusi MPN Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin



LANGKAH pembukaan sempadan boleh membantu memulihkan sektor pelancongan perubatan yang menjana RM1.7 bilion kepada negara pada 2019.

PEMBUKAAN PENUH SEMPADAN

Beri manfaat buat pelancong perubatan

mencadangkan kepada kerajaan supaya sempadan negara dibuka seawal 1 Mac ini, tanpa keperluan kuarantin wajib.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Kuljit berkata, hospital swasta di negara ini bersedia menerima pesakit dari hospital awam sekiranya berlaku lonjakan kes pesakit Omicron di

fasiliti kerajaan.

Beliau berkata, ketika kemuncak kes Covid-19 varian Delta tahun lalu, 113 hospital swasta menerima pesakit dari 49 hospital Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

"Kami yakin untuk meneruskan sokongan kepada kerajaan untuk meringankan

beban seperti yang disarankan Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin dalam ucapannya pada 7 Februari lalu. Hospital swasta dimasukkan dalam Pasukan Tugas Bertindak Pantas Covid-19 (RRTF) Kebangsaan untuk memudahkan proses ini," tambahnya.

Dr Kuljit juga menggesa

" Kami yakin untuk meneruskan sokongan kepada kerajaan untuk meringankan beban Dr Kuljit "



orang ramai agar segera mendapatkan dos penggalak mereka.

"Ia terbukti di seluruh dunia, vaksinasi lengkap dengan dos penggalak telah mengurangkan kesan lebih teruk wabak dan membantu menggalakkan pemulihan ekonomi dengan pembukaan sempadan antarabangsa," tambahnya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 9

RUANGAN : LOKAL

53.9% populasi dewasa terima dos penggalak

Kuala Lumpur: Seramai 12,616,238 individu dewasa atau 53.9 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu di negara ini menerima dos penggalak Covid-19 setakat kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data di laman web Covidnow, sejumlah 22,931,979 individu atau 98 peratus daripada populasi sama melengkapkan dua dos vaksinasi manakala 23,207,389 individu atau 99.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya

satu dos vaksin.

Bagi populasi remaja berusia 12 hingga 17 tahun pula, sejumlah 2,792,830 atau 88.7 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu melengkapkan vaksinasi manakala 2,870,546 individu atau 91.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Bagi vaksinasi harian, 152,358 dos diberikan kelmarin meliputi 10,471 dos pertama, 1,506 dos kedua dan 140,381 dos penggalak

menjadikan jumlah kumulatif dos vaksin diberikan di bawah Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) 64,264,073 dos.

Sementara itu, Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah menerusi hantaran di Facebook semalam memaklumkan kadar kebole-hjangkitan Covid-19 (Ro/Rt) pada jangkam mengikut kes seharian semalam untuk seluruh negara adalah 1.39. - Bernama

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 10

RUANGAN : COVID-19

Oleh Hidayatidayu Razali
am@hmetro.com.my

Kota Bharu

Ramai yang keluar pada cuti umum lalu mungkin antara penyebab Kelantan kembali mencatatkan empat angka positif Covid-19 kelmarin, dengan 1,105 kes direkodkan.

Pada masa sama, negeri ini turut merekodkan lima kluster baharu.

Pengarah Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Kelantan Datuk Dr Zaini Hussin berkata, 1,093 kes membabitkan kategori 1 dan 2, 10 kes kategori 3 dan satu kes kategori 4.

Lima kluster pula membabitkan Kluster Jalan Pe-

Risiko kenduri, keluar 'makan angin'

Kelantan kembali catat bilangan empat angka kes positif Covid-19

rempuan Zainab II, Kluster Padang Tembak Kemumin, Kluster Jalan Nara Pasir Puteh, Kluster Cabang Jeram Pasu dan Kluster Persiaran Padang Golf 2.

"Kluster Jalan Perempuan Zainab II membabitkan sebuah rumah kebajikan yang merekodkan tujuh

kes hasil daripada 12 saringan individu.

"Kluster Padang Tembak Kemumin pula merekodkan sembilan kes daripada 25 kontak rapat di sebuah institusi pengajian-tinggi awam (IPTA)," katanya ketika dihubungi semalam.

Menurut beliau, Kluster Jalan Nara Pasir Puteh, Kluster Cabang Jeram Pasu dan Kluster Persiaran Padang Golf 2 masing-masing merekodkan 16 kes, 13

kes serta 12 kes membabitkan sekolah agama, sekolah menengah sains serta IPTA.

Dr Zaini berkata, pening-

katan kes ini mungkin disebabkan cuti umum minggu lalu yang menyebabkan ramai penduduk keluar untuk bercuti atau membawa anak ke tempat awam.

Beliau berkata, selain itu, penduduk yang pulang ke kampung untuk bercuti bersama keluarga dan kenduri juga menjadi faktor kes bertambah.

"Masyarakat dinasihati supaya terus patuh dan tidak lalai dengan saranan diberikan Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

"Jika semua memberi kerjasama dan menjaga diri, terutama ketika berada di tempat awam, kes Covid-19 di negeri ini akan kembali turun," katanya.

LIMA kluster dikesan di Kelantan dengan 1,105 kes direkodkan setakat kelmarin.

Lindung diri



KANAK-KANAK diberi belon dan gula-gula bagi keceriaan mereka mendapat vaksin dose pertama pada program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kanak - Kanak PICKIDS untuk kanak-kanak yang bermula umur lima hingga 11 tahun di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Axiata Arena Bukit Jalil. - Gambar NSTP /SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI.

Sibu: Sebuah Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 (PKRC) dibangunkan di kawasan Hospital Sibu bagi menangani kes berisiko tinggi di Bahagian Sibu susulan peningkatan mendadak kes Covid-19 di bahagian itu sejak beberapa hari lalu.

Menurut Jawatankuasa Pengurusan Bencana Bahagian Sibu (SDDMC) dalam kenyataan semalam, PKRC berkapasiti 100 katil itu sedia untuk digunakan dalam masa terdekat.

"Bahagian Sibu melaporkan 35 kes Covid-19 semalam (kelmarin). Trend peningkatan ini berlaku semenjak sambutan Perayaan Tahun Baharu Cina pada 1 Feb 2022," katanya.

Bagaimanapun, kadar penggunaan katil (BOR) di

PKRC kes berisiko tinggi dibangun di Hospital Sibu

35
Bilangan kes positif Covid-19 di Sibu setakat semalam

hospital tersebut untuk kes Covid-19 masih di bawah 20 peratus dengan hanya dua kes yang memerlukan bantuan oksigen pada masa ini.

Menurut jawatankuasa itu yang bermesyuarat semalam, PKRC sedia ada di Bahagian Sibu masih kosong dan boleh memuatkan seramai 360 pesakit iaitu

200 pesakit di daerah Sibu, Kanowit (100) dan Selangau (60).

Sementara itu, kenyataan itu memaklumkan setakat semalam program vaksinasi dos penggalak Covid-19 untuk orang dewasa di Bahagian Sibu telah mencapai 187,158 dos iaitu 86.47 peratus daripada jumlah orang dewasa yang layak menerimanya.

"Semua golongan dewasa yang belum menerima dos penggalak digalakkan mengambil vaksinasi tersebut secepat mungkin di mana-mana klinik kesihatan di Bahagian Sibu dan juga di

beberapa klinik atau hospital swasta yang ditetapkan," kata jawatankuasa itu.

Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan untuk kanak-kanak berumur lima sehingga 11 tahun sudahpun bermula di Bahagian Sibu dengan 920 dos telah diberikan iaitu 620 dos di daerah Sibu, Selangau (200) dan Kanowit (100).

Program itu dijangka melibatkan kira-kira 32,000 kanak-kanak di Bahagian Sibu dan akan dijalankan di sekolah rendah sehingga bulan Mac untuk dos pertama. - Bernama

KKM rekod 17,134 kes positif semalam

Kuala Lumpur: Menepati jangkauan, kes baharu Covid-19 terus meningkat apabila sebanyak 17,134 kes direkodkan semalam iaitu peningkatan 3,190 kes berbanding 13,944 kes kelmarin.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah menerusi perkongsian di laman Facebook beliau memaklumkan, jumlah kes baharu itu menjadikan kumulatif kes kini 2,956,332 kes.

Beliau berkata 99.5 per-

atus atau 17,048 daripada kes baharu semalam adalah Kategori Satu dan Dua, manakala 0.5 peratus atau 86 kes berada dalam Kategori Tiga, Empat dan Lima.

Menurutnya Kategori Satu mencatat sebanyak 4,722 kes atau 27.56 peratus; Kategori Dua (12,326 kes atau 71.94 peratus); Kategori Tiga (58 kes atau 0.34 peratus); Kategori Empat (24 kes atau 0.14 peratus) dan Kategori Lima (empat kes atau 0.02 peratus). - Bernama

Ismail Sabri doakan Muhyiddin sembuh

Kuala Lumpur: Perdana Menteri Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob mendoakan Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin yang positif Covid-19, diberikan kesembuhan.

Menyerusi catatan di akaun Twitter rasminya, Ismail Sabri turut mendoakan semoga Pengerusi Majlis Pemulihan Negara itu dan keluarga dilindungi.

"Didoakan agar Allah SWT memberi kesembuhan dan melindungi Tan Sri (Muhyiddin) sekeluarga," katanya dalam catatannya sambil memuat naik semula status Muhyiddin.

Muhyiddin semalam mengesahkan dirinya posi-

tif Covid-19 selepas melakukan ujian Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).

Menyerusi catatan di media sosialnya, bekas perdana menteri itu memaklumkan beliau akan menjalani kuarantin sendiri di rumah, berdasarkan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM).

"Alhamdulillah, saya hanya mengalami gejala ringan dan dalam keadaan baik," katanya sambil meminta mereka yang berkeinginan menjadi kontak rapatnya, untuk mematuhi SOP yang ditetapkan KKM. - Bernama

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Hanya 86 pesakit dilaporkan berada dalam kategori 3, 4 dan 5

Jangkitan baharu catat 17,134 kes

Oleh SITI A'ISYAH SUKAIMI

PUTRAJAYA – Masih tiada tanda-tanda penurunan, kes jangkitan Covid-19 terus mencatatkan peningkatan apabila melonjak sehingga 17,134 kes semalam, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif sebanyak 2,956,332 kes.

Menerusi maklumat yang dikongsikan oleh Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah, daripada jumlah tersebut, sebanyak 86 kes (0.5 peratus) kategori 3, 4 dan 5, manakala 17,048 kes (99.5 peratus) kategori 1 dan 2.

"Berdasarkan pecahan kategori pula, pesakit bagi kategori 1 mencatatkan sebanyak 4,722 kes (27.56 peratus), manakala untuk kategori 2 merekodkan 12,326 kes (71.94 peratus).

"Kategori 3 (jangkitan paru-paru) 58 kes atau 0.34 peratus, kategori 4 (jangkitan paru-paru dan memerlukan oksigen) 24 kes



PETUGAS kesihatan melakukan ujian saringan Covid-19 terhadap orang awam secara pandu lalu di Klinik Ajwa, Seksyen 7, Shah Alam semalam. – ZULFADHLI ZAKI

atau 0.14 peratus serta kategori 5 (kritikal, organ rosak dan memerlukan ventilator) dengan empat kes atau 0.02 peratus," katanya di sini semalam.

Dalam pada itu, maklumat COVIDNOW memaparkan, kadar penggunaan katil di Malaysia mencatatkan 70 peratus dengan Negeri Sembilan (80.7 peratus), Kedah (80.6), Melaka (80.4) dan Terengganu (80.2).

Seterusnya, Johor (79.4), Kelantan (77.4), Selangor (71.8), Pahang (70.7), Perak (69.9), Pulau Pinang (68.2), Sabah (68.1), Perlis (63.4), Sarawak (63.1), Putrajaya (50.8), Kuala Lumpur (45.1) dan Labuan (40.0).

Selain itu, 13 kematian Covid-19 dilaporkan, menjadikan jumlah kematian terkini mencatatkan 32,056 kes, manakala terdapat tiga kes meninggal dunia di luar hospital atau brought-in-dead (BID), dengan jumlah kes BID sebanyak 6,469 kes.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Kes naik, rakyat gesa kerajaan jangan buka sempadan negara

PETALING JAYA – Orang ramai menggesa kerajaan agar menangguhkan dahulu pembukaan sempadan negara berikutan jumlah jangkitan Covid-19 yang melonjak tinggi ketika ini.

Kelmarin, kes jangkitan Covid-19 mencatatkan 13,944 kes dan meningkat kepada 17,134 kes semalam sekali gus menimbulkan kebimbangan orang ramai.

Tinjauan Kosmo! di Facebook

Ketua-Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah mendapati, rata-rata pengguna menggesa agar kerajaan tidak terburu-buru membuka sempadan negara dan kekalkan arahan keperluan untuk menjalankan kuarantin wajib bagi pengunjung dari luar negara.

"Harap kes hari ini membuka mata kerajaan untuk tidak tergesa-gesa buka sempadan negara.

Maكين bertambah kes dengan varian yang kita tak tahu apa lagi bakal muncul," kata Hasya.

"Saya tak sokong sempadan negara dibuka untuk tujuan apa sekali pun. Biarlah tutup dahulu, nanti tak pasal-pasal sempadan negeri pula ditutup semula," kata Tengku.

"Harap petugas barisan hadapan kita terus teguh, walaupun terus dicaci maki netizen. Semo-

ga Allah terus merahmati dan melindungi kalian semua," kata Rosminah.

Sementara itu, ada juga pengguna media sosial yang meminta agar kerajaan melaksanakan penutupan sempadan daerah atau negeri segera agar kes jangkitan dapat dikurangkan sebelum umat Islam berpuasa.

"Lebih baik kerajaan larang dahulu rakyat untuk rentas ne-

geri dalam tempoh sebulan ini terutama negeri yang kes jangkitannya tinggi," kata Harraz.

"Berita tak baik kes naik, ketatkan SOP, bila SOP tak ketat ramai lupa Covid-19 ini masih ada," kata Caroline.

"Apa kata tutup sempadan negeri sekarang, sekurangnya dapat kurangkan kes sebelum puasa dan nak sambut Hari Raya," kata Rizal.

Jumlah kanak-kanak dapat dos pertama cecah 50,062

Pendaftaran PICKids bertambah 30,000

Oleh **NOR AZIAH MAT NOH**

PETALING JAYA – Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar memaklumkan jumlah pendaftaran Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) meningkat ketara sebanyak 30,000 kanak-kanak kelmarin.

Menerusi ciapan di laman Twitternya, Khairy Jamaluddin menjelaskan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan terus berusaha untuk mendidik masyarakat akan kepentingan vaksinasi dalam kalangan kanak-kanak.

"Pendaftaran meningkat seramai 30,000 kanak-kanak pada semalam (kelmarin), KKM akan terus menjelaskan kepada orang awam kebaikan cucuk vaksin kepada anak-anak, meskipun mela-

lui media sosial sahaja," tulisnya.

Menerusi data di laman web COVIDNOW, jumlah keseluruhan golongan kanak-kanak berusia 5 hingga 12 tahun yang telah mendapat suntikan pertama vaksinasi mencecah 50,062 dos setakat pagi semalam.

"Jumlah kanak-kanak yang telah mendapatkan dos pertama vaksinasi pula mencapai 1.4 peratus sehingga semalam," katanya.

Terdahulu, pada Januari lalu, akhbar melaporkan Khairy Jamaluddin mengumumkan program vaksinasi kanak-kanak akan dijalankan bermula bulan ini bagi penerima berusia antara 5 hingga 12 tahun dan sistem tempahan janji temu dijalankan melalui MySejahtera.

Sementara itu, berdasarkan

COVIDNOW seramai 12,616,238 individu dewasa atau 53.9 peratus daripada populasi golongan itu telah menerima dos pengalag Covid-19 setakat kelmarin.

"Sejumlah 22,931,979 individu atau 98 peratus daripada populasi dewasa negara ini telah melengkapkan dua dos vaksinasi, manakala 23,207,389 individu atau 99.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

"Bagi populasi remaja berusia antara 12 hingga 17 tahun pula, sejumlah 2,792,830 atau 88.7 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu melengkapkan vaksinasi, manakala 2,870,546 individu atau 91.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin," katanya.



SEORANG pelanggan menulis maklumat diri di dalam buku rekod daftar masuk di sebuah premis di Kuala Lumpur semalam.

Sambut baik arahan mansuh SOP imbas suhu, check in buku

Oleh **NUR HUDA MUSA**

PETALING JAYA – Pemilik premis menyambut baik arahan kerajaan berhubung pemansuhan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) pengambilan suhu badan dan rekod daftar masuk di kedai bermula esok.

Tinjauan Kosmo! di beberapa premis sekitar Kuala Lumpur mendapati, rata-rata pihak pengurusan menerima baik arahan kerajaan tersebut dan menyifatkan langkah itu memudahkan operasi mereka.

Seorang pemilik kedai runcit yang mahu dikenali sebagai Muhammad, 44, berkata, dia menyambut baik arahan kerajaan dan pemansuhan tersebut sedikit sebanyak memudahkan kerja pihaknya.

"Ini kerana, ada pelanggan degil yang mengimbas suhu sahaja tetapi tidak mendaftar masuk menggunakan aplikasi MySejahtera.

"Sekiranya pelanggan hanya perlu daftar di MySejahtera sahaja selepas ini, lebih mudah untuk kami pantau dan pelanggan juga sudah tentu tidak boleh mengelak," katanya ketika ditemui Kosmo! semalam.

Sementara itu, seorang pengurus kedai gunting rambut, Lim Pei Xian, 32, berkata,

pihaknya menyambut baik arahan kerajaan itu, bagaimanapun tidak dapat menafikan kebimbangan mereka sekiranya ada pelanggan yang berdegil.

"Apa yang kami bimbang ialah pelanggan yang tidak sihat berdegil mahu juga masuk ke premis.

"Jadi, apa yang kami harap ialah orang ramai lebih bertanggungjawab. Kami pula akan amalkan SOP seperti biasa. Kakitangan premis ini juga semuanya sudah divaksin, jadi kami cuma harap langkah-langkah ini cukup untuk memastikan semua pihak sentiasa selamat," katanya.

Seorang juruwang sebuah kedai makan dikenali Ramesh, 41, berkata, pemansuhan itu agak mengelirukan kerana ada pelanggan yang tidak membawa telefon bimbit mereka semasa mengunjungi kedai itu.

"Jika pelanggan beri alasan tidak bawa telefon bimbit, jadi, bagaimana kita hendak mengesan kontak rapat sekiranya berlaku sesuatu," katanya.

Kelmarin, Menteri Kanan Pertahanan, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Tun Hussein mengumumkan, SOP berkaitan pemeriksaan suhu badan dan buku rekod daftar masuk akan dimansuhkan bermula esok.



SEORANG kanak-kanak menangis ketika menerima suntikan vaksin di Pusat Dagangan Dunia (WTC) Kuala Lumpur kelmarin. – FARIZ RUSADIO

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : VAKSIN UNTUK RAKYAT

Muhyiddin positif Covid-19

Bekas PM itu alami gejala ringan, kini jalani kuarantin di rumah

Oleh NURHIDAYAH HAIROM

SHAH ALAM

Bekas Perdana Menteri, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin didapati positif Covid-19.

Beliau mengesahkan perkara itu menerusi satu hantaran di Facebook pada Rabu.

"Saya telah didapati positif Covid-19 pagi ini (Rabu) setelah membuat ujian Reaction Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR).

"Alhamdulillah, saya hanya mengalami gejala ringan dan dalam keadaan baik," katanya.

Beliau kini menjalani kuarantin sendiri di rumah mengikut protokol Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM).

"Kepada sesiapa yang berkecenderungan menjadi kontak rapat saya, saya nasihatkan supaya mematuhi protokol yang ditetapkan oleh KKM," katanya.

Muhyiddin turut memohon agar orang ramai mendoakan kesihatan beliau dan keluarga.

Pada Selasa, Muhyiddin mengengerusikan Mesyuarat Majlis Penulihan Negara (MPN).

Antara yang hadir ialah Menteri Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri, Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali; Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar; Menteri Pendidikan, Senator Datuk Dr Mohd Radzi Md Jidin; Menteri Kewangan, Senator Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz; Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Hal Ehwal Ekonomi),



MUHYIDDIN

Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed; Menteri Pembangunan dan Usawahan Koperasi, Tan Sri Noh Omar; Ketua Pengarah Jabatan Imigresen, Datuk Seri Khairul Dzaimae Daud dan Ketua Pengawai Eksekutif Capital A Berhad, Tan Sri Tony Fernandes.

Selain itu, ia turut dihadiri pemberita yang membuat liputan sidang akhbar.

Sementara itu, Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob mendoakan agar Muhyiddin diberikan kesembuhan daripada Covid-19.

Menerusi catatan di akaun Twitter rasminya, Ismail Sabri turut mendoakan semoga Pengerusi MPN itu dan keluarga dilindungi.

"Didoakan agar ALLAH SWT memberi kesembuhan dan melindungi Tan Sri (Muhyiddin) sekeluarga," katanya dalam catatannya sambil memuat naik semula status Muhyiddin.

Belum ada laporan AEFI PICKKids - KKM

SHAH ALAM - Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) tidak menerima laporan kesan advers susulan imunisasi (AEFI) sejak Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKKids) dilaksanakan pada 3 Februari lalu.



DR NOOR AZMI

bapa perlu segera ke klinik atau hospital berdekatan bagi mendapatkan rawatan," katanya dalam sesi Wawancara Eksklusif bersama Sinar Harian pada Selasa.

Dalam usaha memperluaskan pemberian vaksin kepada kanak-kanak, Dr

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan I, Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali berkata, data yang dikeluarkan Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (NPRF) setakat Selasa masih sifar AEFI dengan 43,000 dos vaksin telah diberikan kepada kanak-kanak.

"Seperti yang dilalui golongan dewasa sebelum ini, kesan sampingan yang mereka terima mungkin ringan sahaja. Ada sedikit bengkak pada tempat yang disuntik, demam dan sebagainya namun ia akan kembali pulih dalam tempoh dua hari sahaja.

"Kita juga sudah menasihatkan ibu bapa supaya memantau keadaan anak-anak dalam tempoh sekurang-kurangnya dua minggu pertama selepas disuntik. Mereka tidak digalakkan melakukan aktiviti lasak kerana bimbang mengalami alergi dan demam berpanjangan.

"Jika perkara ini berlaku, ibu

Noor Azmi berkata, KKM akan membuka Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) di semua sekolah di seluruh negara seawal-lewatnya 14 Februari ini.

Katanya, seramai 50 peratus kanak-kanak dijangka akan menerima suntikan dos pertama di sekolah terpilih pada penghujung bulan ini.

"Jadi, visi ini akan melibatkan agensi-agensi dan Kementerian lain seperti Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM) dan ProtectHealth Corporation Sdn Bhd, anak syarikat KKM yang mengendalikan doktor swasta untuk mengambil bahagian.

"Ibu bapa juga perlu memberi sokongan dan kerjasama untuk memujuk anak-anak mendapatkan vaksin. Ini penting bagi menjayakan usaha pemberian suntikan vaksin Covid-19 kepada 80 peratus kanak-kanak di negara ini," katanya.

Kes baharu Covid-19 lepassi angka 17,000

KUALA LUMPUR - Sebanyak 17,134 kes baharu Covid-19 direkodkan pada Rabu iaitu peningkatan 3,190 kes daripada 13,944 kes sehari sebelumnya.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah menerusi perkongsian di laman Facebook memaklumkan, jumlah kes baharu itu menjadikan kumulatif kes kini 2,956,332 kes.

Beliau berkata, sebanyak 99.5 peratus atau 17,048 daripada kes baharu pada Rabu adalah kategori satu dan dua, manakala 0.5 peratus atau 86 kes berada dalam kategori tiga, empat dan lima.

Menurutnya, kategori satu mencatat sebanyak 4,722 kes atau 27.56 peratus, selain kategori dua (12,326 kes atau 71.94 peratus), kategori tiga (58 kes atau 0.34 peratus), kategori empat (24 Kes atau 0.14 peratus) dan kategori lima (empat kes atau 0.02 peratus).

Infographic titled 'COVID-19: APA YANG DIKETAHUI MENGENAI OMICRON SETAKAT INI'. It includes sections on symptoms, transmission, risk factors, and prevention measures like wearing masks and social distancing.

116 calon SPM sedang dikuarantin

MELAKA - Seramai 116 daripada 13,134 jumlah keseluruhan calon Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia (SPM) 2021 di Melaka tidak dapat menduduki peperiksaan lisan Bahasa Melayu yang bermula pada Selasa kerana positif Covid-19 dan sedang dikuarantin.

Exco Pendidikan dan Teknologi negeri, Datuk Rais Yasin bagaimanapun berkata, mereka yang terlibat itu boleh menduduki peperiksaan berkenaan pada sidang kedua yang berlangsung April depan.

Menurutnya, Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri (JPN) telah menghantar senarai calon kepada Lembaga Pemeriksaan beserta dokumen untuk dipertimbangkan bagi membolehkan mereka menjalani ujian tersebut.

Katanya, setakat ini juga tiada lagi sekolah ditutup akibat Covid-19 dan Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah (PKD) mengambil inisiatif menyuraukan pelajar asrama mengikut kategori pada penutupan sekolah lalu.

"Data sehingga 8 Februari lalu seramai 50 orang masih positif manakala 206 sedang dikuarantin.

"Bilangan murid yang positif dan telah sihat pula seramai 179 orang dan 690 pelajar telah potong gelang," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian kepada pemberita selepas menyempurnakan perasmian Akademi Ragbi Melaka di Ayer Keroh di sini pada Rabu.

Dalam pada itu, Rais berkata, JPN tidak menghalang penguat kuasa kesihatan untuk melakukan pemantauan dan pemeriksaan di sekolah.

Bagaimanapun, katanya, mereka perlu memaklumkan kepada pihak berkenaan termasuk pentadbiran sekolah agar tidak timbul sebarang masalah.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : VAKSIN UNTUK RAKYAT

Pembukaan sempadan selamat - Pakar

Bagaimanapun syarat dan penguatkuasaan ketat perlu dilaksanakan

Oleh MUHAMMAD AMNAN HIBRAHIM

SHAH ALAM

Keputusan membuka sepenuhnya sempadan negara kepada individu dari luar negara tanpa menjalani kuarantin wajib tidak akan memberikan implikasi buruk terhadap situasi penularan Covid-19 di dalam negara.

Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam daripada Universiti Islam Antarabangsa Malaysia (UIAM), Dr Mohammad Farhan Rusli berkata, pembukaan sempadan dilihat selamat untuk dilaksanakan dengan mengambil kira tahap kesiapsiagaan sistem kesihatan negara.

"Ini bermakna kita punya sistem MySejahtera, penjejakan kontak, pelaporan kes positif dan sebagainya itu kita kena pastikan sudah bersedia.

"Bila dikatakan sudah bersedia ataupun tidak, sebenarnya daripada sistem kesihatan itu kita sudah bersedia," katanya kepada *Sinar Harian* pada Rabu.

Pada Selasa, Pengerusi Majlis Pemulihan Negara, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin mengesyorkan supaya sempadan negara dibuka sepenuhnya seawal 1 Mac ini tanpa keperluan kuarantin wajib.

Mengulas lanjut, Dr Mohammad Farhan berkata, bagaimanapun pembukaan tersebut perlu dilaksanakan dengan penguatkuasaan dan syarat yang ketat termasuk mewajibkan pengambilan vaksinasi lengkap.

Beliau berkata, meskipun pertambahan kes dijangka akan terus berlaku ekoran daripada penularan varian Omicron, namun ia bukan merupakan indikator utama yang harus dilihat oleh rakyat pada ketika ini.

Katanya, indikator utama perlu diperhatikan oleh rakyat dalam menilai sistem kesihatan negara ialah jumlah kemasukan ke hospital dan unit rawatan rawatan rapi, pesakit memerlukan bantuan pernafasan serta yang paling penting jumlah kematian.



DR MUHAMMAD FARHAN DR MALINA

"Tiga indikator ini sebenarnya akan menunjukkan kita punya sistem kesihatan boleh tamung ataupun tidak. Jadi kita jangan silap dekat situ.

"Esok kalau kes cecah 100,000 pun, kalau yang masuk hospital jumlahnya 50 orang dan 10 perlu bantuan pernafasan maka ada satu kes kematian, itu masih dikira terkawal," ujarnya.

Dr Mohammad Farhan berkata, dengan penularan varian Omicron, kes harian Covid-19 di dalam negara sememangnya dijangkakan terus meningkat terutamanya selepas Pilihan Raya Negeri (PRN) Johor dan sambutan Hari Raya Aidiladha.

Beliau bagaimanapun berkata, isu tersebut tidak perlu dibimbangi sekiranya majoriti rakyat Malaysia telah me-



Laporan Sinar Harian pada Rabu.

lengkapkan vaksinasi masing-masing termasuk dos penggalak.

Dalam pada itu, Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam, Jabatan Mikrobiologi Perubatan, Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Profesor Madya Dr Malina Osman berkata, rakyat tidak perlu risau terhadap langkah untuk membuka sempadan negara kerana situasi Covid-19 negara ketika ini masih terkawal.

"Kes yang memerlukan rawatan dan mereka yang kritikal kekal rendah dan ia mampu ditangani oleh sistem perkhidmatan kesihatan.

"Ini berlaku berikutan liputan vaksin yang tinggi, membolehkan sebahagian besar individu terlindung daripada mendapat komplikasi serius. Vaksin juga didapati berkesan

terhadap Omicron," jelasnya.

Bagaimanapun, beliau berkata, masih terdapat kerisauan perlu diambil perhatian terhadap kumpulan berisiko iaitu warga emas mempunyai komorbiditi dan masih enggan menerima dos penggalak serta mereka yang masih belum lengkap vaksin.

Katanya, kerisauan itu termasuk kepada ibu bapa yang masih memiliki persepsi kurang baik terhadap vaksinasi anak-anak mereka.

"Sekiranya rakyat sudah ambil dos penggalak, amalkan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) seperti dinasihatkan serta melakukan ujian sendiri setiap kali terdedah dengan aktiviti berisiko, kita sepatutnya boleh terus bergerak ke hadapan tanpa risau keterlaluhan," jelasnya.

Daftar PICKids terus catat peningkatan

PUTRAJAYA - Pendaftaran Program Vaksinasi Covid-19 Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) meningkat sebanyak 30,000 lagi pada Selasa.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar menerusi ciapannya memaklumkan, pihaknya akan terus menyampaikan kebaikan vaksinasi kanak-kanak di pelbagai saluran termasuk Facebook.

PICKids merupakan program vaksinasi kanak berusia lima hingga 11 tahun yang dilancarkan pada 3 Februari lalu menggunakan vaksin jenis Comirnaty keluaran PfizerBioNTech.

Berdasarkan data yang dikemaskini menerusi laman sesawang CovidNow setakat jam 11.59 malam Selasa, Lembah Klang merekodkan kemajuan vaksinasi PICKids tertinggi iaitu 4.2 peratus diikuti Sarawak (2.4), Sabah (0.7), Negeri Sembilan (0.4), Labuan (0.2) serta Kedah (0.1) telah menerima dos pertama.

Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) menasaskan 80 peratus kanak-kanak menerima vaksin Covid-19.

Untuk tujuan itu, pusat pemberian vaksin (PPV) akan dibuka di sekolah bagi memudahkan kanak-kanak mendapatkan vaksinasi mereka.

'Tak sakit, harap kawan-kawan ambil suntikan sama'

TELUK INTAN - "Ayah suruh cucuk, ingatkan sakit, rupanya tak sakit langsung," kongsi Husna Farisya Rosli, 10.

Murid Tahun Empat Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Sultan Abdul Aziz itu antara 30 individu yang menerima suntikan vaksin di bawah Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kanak-kanak (PICKids) di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Khas (SPPV) Hospital Teluk Intan di sini pada Rabu.

Husna Farisya berkata, ayahnya ber-takut suntikan itu penting bagi mencegah diri daripada dijangkiti Covid-19.

"Sebelum ini pun ayah selalu ingatkan supaya jaga diri dengan mengamalkan kebersihan dan penjarakan fizikal. "Dengan suntikan ini, saya jadi lebih yakin terutama bila nak ke sekolah nanti," katanya.

Muhammad Ammar Wafiuddin Abdullah Zubair, 11, turut berkongsi rasa teruja apabila menerima suntikan berkenaan ketika hadir ditemani ayahnya. "Saya yakin dengan pengambilan vaksin ini kita akan dapat jalani kehidupan seperti dahulu.

"Jadi saya harap kawan-kawan ambil suntikan ini untuk kebaikan bersama," katanya.

Sementara itu, Mohamad Irfan



Mohamad Irfan Hakimie ditemani ibunya, Fathiyah menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19 bersama dua adiknya, Mohamad Ikhwan Nadrin (dua dari kiri) dan Mohamad Izz Zafri.

Hakimie Zainal Abidin, 10, datang bersama dua adiknya, Mohamad Ikhwan Nadrin, 8, dan Mohamad Izz Zafri, 6, untuk menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19 di sini.

Kata Mohamad Irfan Hakimie, hadir bersama adik-beradik dapat mengurangkan rasa gementar ketika dicucuk.

"Along (panggilan diri) jadi semangat sebab adik-adik pun ada sekali," katanya.

Ibu mereka, Fathiyah Nordin, 36, yang bekerja sebagai jururawat memang berhasrat untuk membawa tiga anaknya itu menerima suntikan dengan segera bagi

membantu mengesah penularan varian baru.

Jelasnya, tuntutan kerja bersama suami, Zainal Abidin Dzuhrir, 40, yang berkhidmat dalam Tentera Laut Diraja Malaysia (TLDM) menjadikan keluarga mereka dalam golongan berisiko untuk dijangkiti.

"Saya sendiri pernah bertugas di wad pesakit Covid-19, jadi sudah tentu kebimbangan dijangkiti Covid-19 itu ada.

"Dengan suntikan ini sekurang-kurangnya kita sudah buat pencegahan awal," katanya.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
 MUKA SURAT : 2
 RUANGAN : NEWS / STORY OF THE DAY



People waiting to be vaccinated against Covid-19 at Dewan Ang Si Chong in Butterworth, Penang, yesterday. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

KEEP CALM

EXPERT: COVID SURGE NO CAUSE FOR ALARM

Vast majority of cases are mild and not straining healthcare system, says scientist

AUDREY DERMAWAN
 GEORGE TOWN
 news@nst.com.my

THE current surge in Covid-19 cases is not something to be alarmed about, a virologist said.

Universiti Sains Malaysia's Dr Kumitaa Theva Das said the country's active caseload increase of around 1,000 to 2,000 a day was expected as a similar trend was seen globally.

"There is an increase in cases as we are now dealing with the Omicron variant, which is highly transmissible, and spreads fast in a short time.

"However, the numbers we should pay attention to are those in Categories 3, 4 and 5, as those are the cases that will affect our healthcare system.

"For example, of the 13,944 cases recorded on Tuesday, only 73, or 0.52 per cent, were severe cases.

"So it is not something to be

alarmed about," she told the *New Straits Times*.

Kumitaa, a geneticist with USM's Infectomics Cluster, Advanced Medical and Dental Institute, said those who received primary vaccine doses months ago would see their antibody levels decreasing now, putting them at risk of infection if they did not get a booster shot.

She said unvaccinated young children were also at risk, and made up 15 to 20 per cent of the new cases.

Although the Omicron variant differed from previous variants, Malaysia had the tools to tackle the surge, she said.

Kumitaa said among the measures people could take were getting vaccinated (and a booster if possible), getting tested if one was symptomatic or had been to a high-risk location, wearing a well-fitting face mask like the KN95, and, keeping vigilant even after being vaccinated.

"Existing public health measures can continue, including constant surveillance and related responses, such as testing, contact-tracing, isolation, quarantine and genetic sequencing.

"Such information is crucial for early detection and will help us if

new mitigation methods need to be implemented," she said.

Kumitaa said new variants would likely emerge as long as there were unvaccinated populations globally.

She said infections lasted longer in the unvaccinated, which made it easier for new virus mutations and variants to develop.

She said new variants could be detected fast with constant surveillance.

On views that even those vaccinated were infected with Covid-19, Kumitaa said everyone wanted to be healthy and safe, but due to information overload, one

might not know what to believe.

"So it is crucial to convey the right message in a manner that people can understand why this (vaccination and booster) is necessary to keep them safe.

"To gain the public's trust in vaccinations and boosters, it is crucial to use the right platform, simple infographics or bite-sized videos, ensure that the information is available in different languages, and most importantly, use language that is easy to understand," she said.



Dr Kumitaa Theva Das

>> Continued next page

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

17,134 INFECTIONS

D-G: CASES RISE BUT MOST ARE MILD

Four states and Putrajaya see exponential spike in people ill with Covid-19

DHESEGAAN BALAKRISHNAN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

DAAILY Covid-19 infections surged to 17,134 yesterday, but most of the cases were mild.

The country's infection tally is now 2,956,332.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said, most of the new cases (12,326) were in Category 2, which showed mild symptoms, followed by Category 1 (4,722), which had no symptoms.

The remaining 86 cases were made up of Categories 3 (58), 4 (24) and 5 (four).

Four states and one federal territory saw an exponential rise in active Covid-19 cases in the two

weeks from Jan 26 to Feb 8.

In Kedah, active cases shot up almost threefold, from 2,388 to 6,898. In Penang, the caseload saw a similar surge from 1,617 to 4,129. The patient load in Selangor rose from 12,086 to 21,308.

In Sabah, active cases saw a more than twofold increase, from 5,313 to 11,867, and Putrajaya saw a rise from 439 to 885.

Up to Tuesday, 83,071 infected people were in hospital or being isolated and health authorities are tracing 375 clusters of infections.

The Health Ministry detected another 17 clusters yesterday: 10 from educational institutions, three from workplaces and four involving the high-risk group.

Thirteen people died of Covid-19 yesterday, including



People waiting to be tested for Covid-19 at a drive-in testing hub in Dewan Besar Sungai Dua, Tasek Gelugor, in Penang yesterday. PIX BY DANIAL SAAD

three who were brought in dead to hospital.

The Covid-19 death toll is now 32,056.

A total of 140,381 people received their booster shots on Tuesday, bringing the tally to 12,616,238 doses.

Dr Noor Hisham said the national infectivity index (Rt) climbed from 1.32 on Monday to 1.39 on Tuesday, with Sarawak recording the highest figure of 1.68.

All states and federal territories registered an Rt of above 1, which means that each case is estimated to result in more than one infection.



Health workers in protective gear swabbing people at a drive-in Covid-19 testing hub in Dewan Besar Sungai Dua, Tasek Gelugor.

'Vital to counter vaccine misinformation'

>> From previous page

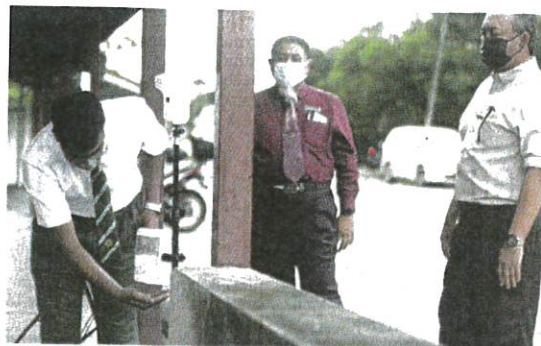
On the increase in clusters from education institutions nationwide, she said a multi-pronged approach was needed to keep schools safe, including empowering teachers, staff and getting the support of the parent-teacher association to create a safe environment.

"Hand sanitisers should always be available around the school. Children must be made to understand the importance and practice of wearing a mask correctly and of physical distancing," she added.

On whether vaccinations should be mandatory, Kumitaa said now was not the time as there was a lot vaccine scepticism because of misinformation.

"Forcing someone to take the vaccine will be counter-productive, and may end up in more fake certificates being issued or vaccines being thrown away.

"It is more crucial to improve



A Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia candidate sanitising his hands before entering his school for the oral and science laboratory examinations yesterday in Kuala Lumpur. PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

our information campaign. This means understanding where their beliefs stem from, being empathetic and making sure concerns from the grassroots are addressed.

"Once all proactive and suffi-

cient efforts have been made and those who refused to get vaccinated put others at risk of serious harm, then it can be considered (to make it mandatory)."

Asked about another lockdown to lower daily infections, Kumi-

taa said the authorities had to balance between saving lives and livelihoods.

"We are in a different place now than in early 2020. Our high vaccination rate is our first line of defence. We can continue building on other public health efforts, including ensuring proper ventilation or employers being able to assess whether WFH (work from home) is a possibility.

"There are many small steps that one can take (without relying on strict lockdowns).

"Instead of the daily new cases, we should focus on the hospitalisation figures."

On the National Recovery Council's (NRC) proposal to let international travellers without quarantine, Kumitaa said there would come a time when borders reopened to allow things to go back to normal.

She said the NRC had yet to release the details of what this would entail, adding that the starting date (March 1) might be

delayed until the Omicron wave was under control.

Kumitaa said it was too early to tell when Malaysia would transition into the endemic state.

Based on the "Transitioning from Pandemic to Endemic Covid-19 Safely and Sustainably" report that was tabled in Parliament, several indicators were suggested to determine the nation's transition into endemicity, including 1.5 severe cases per 100,000 population; five per cent hospital admissions in Categories 3, 4 and 5; 10 or fewer daily Covid-19 deaths; less than 20 per cent intensive care unit occupancy and more than 80 per cent of the population vaccinated.

"However, as we are dealing with a different variant now, these parameters may no longer hold true."

Page 1 pic: Parents bringing their children to be vaccinated against Covid-19 at Teluk Intan Hospital yesterday.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
 MUKA SURAT : 4
 RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

COVID-19 IN CHILDREN

'KIDS AT RISK OF SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS'

174 kids had multi-system inflammatory syndrome between November, January, says specialist

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SIXTY-THREE children under age 12 died of Covid-19 in the country between July and December last year. Tunku Azizah Hospital paediatrics specialist Dr Sabeera Begum Kader Ibrahim said children were susceptible to serious complications when infected by Covid-19, particularly multi-system inflammatory syndrome in children (MISC).

She said data from 14 government hospitals nationwide from November last year to January this year showed there were 174 MISC cases among children.

"Children are at risk of complications due to Covid-19 such as MISC, where the body response to the virus could lead to severe inflammation of the heart, lung, brain and other organs, including the eyes and skin.

"(Because of MISC,) these children can be admitted into the intensive care unit (ICU) and could lead to death.

"Data we have collected has shown that of the nearly 200 children admitted into the ICU since Nov 1 last year until Jan 31 this year, seven deaths had been reported, linked to MISC after Covid-19 infection," she said at a



A girl with a balloon getting a Covid-19 vaccine jab at the Axiata Arena vaccination centre in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. PIC BY SAIFULLIZAN TAMADI

media engagement session on Covid-19 Vaccine Product Safety Evaluation and Monitoring held online yesterday.

Dr Sabeera said between July and December last year, 270,000 children under age 12 were infected by Covid-19, adding that cases among children were increasing due to the Omicron variant.

She advised parents to immediately seek treatment if their

children start displaying symptoms such as fever, flu, diarrhoea and vomiting, and reminded parents to ensure their kids had good hygiene and were hydrated.

Hospital Raja Zainab 2 Kota Baru paediatrics specialist Dr Nik Khairulddin Nik Yusoff urged parents to ensure their children had enough rest before taking them to vaccination appointments.

He said children about to be inoculated must be in good health and should have enough to eat and drink before being jabbed.

"Before being vaccinated, ensure your children had enough to eat and drink and are not unwell, such as having fever or vomiting.

"They should have enough rest. Do not allow any vigorous activity within a week after vaccination so that they can recover well."

He said he understood some parents were worried and hesitant to get their children vaccinated, but highlighted that many other countries had already begun inoculating children aged 5 to 11 with the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine.

"Data has shown that there are not many side effects for vaccinated children and most side effects are minor and can be resolved in one or two days."

Ministry rep: No AEFI reported among 41,000 vaccinated children

KUALA LUMPUR: There have been no reports of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) among the more than 41,000 children who have been vaccinated under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme for Children (PICKKids).

Since PICKKids was launched on Feb 3 at Tunku Azizah Hospital here, 41,393 children aged between 5 and 11 have received their first dose of Covid-19 vaccine.

This includes children with comorbidities who are prioritised for inoculation.

Public health physician Dr Sai-

datul Norbaya Buang, from the Health Ministry's Family Health Development Division, said up to Feb 7, a majority of the children vaccinated against Covid-19 were in Selangor, at 25,367. This is followed by 8,623 vaccinated kids in Kuala Lumpur, 4,392 in Sarawak and 2,394 in Sabah.

"Children with comorbidities, such as those with chronic illnesses and low immune systems, are being prioritised for Covid-19 vaccination.

"Through PICKKids, the ministry hopes to have 80 per cent of the country's population fully vac-

inated within four to six months," she said at a media engagement session on Covid-19 Vaccine Product Safety Evaluation and Monitoring held online yesterday.

She said the ministry was on track to administer the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine to 3.6 million children by the end of March.

She said it was vital for children to be protected against Covid-19, adding that with vaccination, they would be able to socialise safely in schools.

"We offer this vaccination for free to all children in Malaysia regardless of their citizenship or dis-

ability status or where they reside.

"Only the Pfizer vaccine approved by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency will be administered."

Health deputy director-general (research and technical support) Datuk Dr Hishamshah Mohd Ibrahim said it was not possible to hide data on Covid-19 immunisation side effects to cover up the real situation from the public.

In refuting allegations on the matter, he said every AEFI case would be detected in hospitals and the data would be included in official reports.

"How are we to hide such information? As cases are reported and sent to hospitals, all data will be captured in the system and reported to the Health Ministry.

"We go through (all information) in detail if there was any death caused by the vaccine, and there is nothing to hide.

"All data regarding Covid-19 in the country all this while has been made available to the public."

He said the ministry would continue to monitor reports on AEFI and encouraged people to report vaccination side effects and get the appropriate treatment.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

SURGING OMICRON WAVE

'SINOVAC BOOSTER BETTER THAN NONE'

Move will give 3.5m recipients some protection against Covid-19, say health experts

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THE decision to allow Sinovac vaccine recipients to receive the same vaccine type for their booster dose, while acknowledged to be less effective than a heterologous (mixed) dose, is still "better than nothing", say public health experts.

They believe the move will at least provide the 3.5 million Sinovac recipients nationwide who have yet to get their booster doses with some degree of protection against Covid-19, which is now seeing a rapid surge in cases fuelled by the spread of the Omicron variant.

Public health expert Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said allowing Sinovac recipients to receive the same vaccine for their booster was a preferable option to having no booster doses at all.

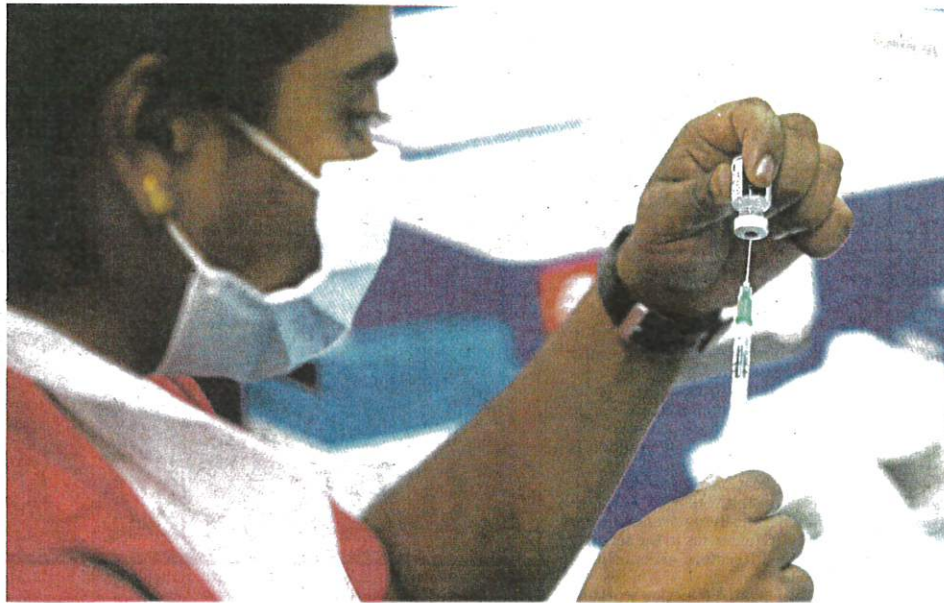
"These 3.5 million people make up a significant portion of the population. It will slow down the transmission (viral load) but they can still be infected.

"But most importantly, the majority should be protected by boosters. What boosters they take should be their choice," he told the *New Straits Times*.

A study by Brazilian and Oxford University researchers involving 1,240 Sinovac vaccine recipients who were given different booster combinations, including Pfizer and the China-made vaccine, showed that people who had two doses of Sinovac should get boosted with a different vaccine to ramp up their protection against Omicron.

The findings, reported in *The Lancet* journal on Jan 21, showed that while those with a third Sinovac dose did experience a boost in antibodies 28 days later, the improvement was much higher in those boosted with vaccines from Pfizer, AstraZeneca or Johnson & Johnson.

The Health Ministry on Monday had announced that while it still recommended Pfizer or AstraZeneca boosters, Sinovac recipients and those aged 60 and above could still opt for the same



A frontliner preparing a Sinovac booster dose at a vaccination centre in Seberang Jaya last year. FILE PIC

booster to retain their fully vaccinated status ahead of the Feb 28 deadline.

Epidemiologist Dr Malina Osman said the government was doing the right thing as it would bring the outliers into the fold.

"At this point, everybody is out in public and many are not following the standard operating procedures. The elderly and high-risk groups, such as the immunocompromised, need to get their boosters fast.

"If the government does not allow Sinovac recipients to get boosters of their choice, the healthcare system could be at risk when the cases rise exponentially and our 1,400-capacity Intensive Care Units (ICU) can no longer cope."

Public health specialist Dr Safiya Amaran said the key reason behind boosters was not avoiding infection but preventing severe effects.

The Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin medical lecturer said recipients of the Sinovac vaccine, which reportedly have an effective coverage of only 90 days, were losing what little im-

munity coverage they had as the Omicron variant skips vaccine firewalls that had thwarted the Delta variant.

She also supported the ministry's hardline approach in giving a deadline for booster shots for Sinovac recipients and the elderly.

"Many of the elderly died or were hospitalised during the Delta wave because they exceeded their three-month threshold of the vaccine's coverage. The public should appreciate this move by the government because this is for their benefit."

She said while the efficacy was not as high as other combinations, when combined with the other two Sinovac doses, the third dose did offer significant protection as seen during the Delta wave.

"ICU cases will also go down to a certain extent when the vaccinated percentage increases and the healthcare system can breathe again, as what we witnessed last year during the regressive phase of the Delta wave."

However, Datuk Seri Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud, who

heads Putrajaya's Independent Covid-19 Vaccination Advisory Committee, did not recommend Sinovac as a booster due to the low level of neutralising antibodies that it was observed to produce.

He said in the battle against the Omicron wave, there were two ways booster jabs could help.

"As Omicron has more than 30 mutations in the spike protein, which make it unrecognisable to many antibodies, antibodies are finding it difficult to locate the variant. So, the first approach is simply to boost the number of circulating antibodies to a level that some antibodies will be able to locate and neutralise the Omicron variant."

He said the second approach was to boost the T-cells. Research, he added, suggests that the cellular immunity still held

strong against the Omicron variant, which might account for the low percentage of severe infections with the variant.

"The first approach is aimed at stopping infections, but this booster (any booster) approach is less than perfect (due to the sheer infectiousness of the Omicron variant) and needs to be combined with non-pharmaceutical interventions like mask wearing, physical distancing and sanitisation.

"Masks need to be worn properly in the workplace and outside the home at all times except for meals. If the wearer can afford it, they should opt for N95, KN95, KF94, FFP2 masks or better.

"If not, then double masking is a cheaper alternative — an inner surgical mask with an outer good-fitting washable cloth mask."



Dr Safiya Amaran



Datuk Seri Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Numbers don't matter anymore, serious cases do, say experts

By **FAZLEENA AZIZ**
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PETALING JAYA: Public perception of Covid-19 baseline cases will have to change in view of the country's rising infectivity rate (Rt), says a Universiti Malaya expert.

"A total of 40,000 daily cases may now be the 'new' 10,000 daily cases of last year," said professor of epidemiology and public health Dr Sanjay Rampal.

"We need to re-calibrate our perception and interpretation of the number of daily infections."

He attributed this to the Omicron variant, which is likely to cause a

higher baseline level.

With good public health measures, he said the number of daily cases might hover around 8,000 to 10,000 cases a day.

"However, we are likely to experience periods of large outbreaks in the coming months with daily numbers increasing to above 50,000 cases a day," he cautioned.

Dr Rampal said the healthcare system should be able to deal with the situation in view of Omicron causing a less severe impact on the vaccinated population, unlike the previous Delta surge.

The rate, which indicates the average number of people who may

catch the virus from an infectious person, has been going up of late.

It was 1.20 on Saturday, 1.27 (Sunday), 1.32 (Monday) and 1.39 (Tuesday and yesterday).

A value of 1.4 means that 100 people will spread the disease to 140 people. An Rt of below one means the infection is not spreading.

Universiti Malaya Department of Social and Preventive Medicine Faculty of Medicine's Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming said people may not need to be too worried with the daily number of cases, as fully vaccinated people may have mild symptoms.

"Instead, we should monitor the

number of severe cases that require hospitalisation or deaths," she said.

She acknowledged that vaccines could not fully prevent the transmission of Covid-19, but were very effective in preventing severe symptoms and deaths.

Attention should also be given to the elderly and high-risk groups who may get severe symptoms when they are infected, she added.

Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said the high numbers were expected in view of the Omicron variant.

"However, the situation now is different from what we were facing

with the Delta variant," she noted. "With Delta, we had a high number of people in the intensive care unit, higher admissions, fatalities, and cases of brought in deaths."

Right now, she said, the most vulnerable groups were unvaccinated children and those who had not completed their vaccination or booster shots, especially if they had comorbidities.



Thumbs up for removal of temperature checks
 See page 13

Demand for test kits soars

Customers face supply shortages, price hikes after CNY

By **WANI MUTHIAH**
 and **STEPHANIE LEE**
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KLANG: Sales of Covid-19 test kits have increased drastically since the recent Chinese New Year celebrations, resulting in supply shortages as well as price hikes in some locations.

For example, Lee Pharmacy Port Klang manager Nelly Teoh said the price hike was between 50 sen and RM1 per set for the popular brands. "Currently, the most popular variety is the lollipop variety, which one has to put under the tongue to detect infection," said Teoh, adding that the kits were used by those who attended Chinese New Year gatherings and in schools to test students and teachers.

"Schools have been actively testing after they reopened. Some schools prefer a particular brand and because of this, that brand is facing a shortage," said Teoh.

Sree Sentosa Pharmacy supervisor K. Kavitha said many parents were stocking up test kits to test their children before sending them to school.

Pharmacist CL Lam, who owns a pharmacy near Bukit Tinggi here, said Covid-19 test kits were selling like hotcakes.

"I suppose people feel a sense of security when the self-test kits show a negative result and that is why



Hot item: Covid-19 test kits have been selling like hotcakes due to the rising number of cases. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

sales have gone up after the recent festivities," he said, adding that some people could also be carrying out several tests on themselves over a span of a few days.

When contacted, Malaysian Pharmacists Society president Amrahi Buang said besides the recent festivities and merry-making, the demand for self-test kits was also due to the recent increase in Covid-19 cases.

"The increase in cases of the highly contagious Omicron variant has also created a high demand for test

kits," said Amrahi, adding that the reopening of schools also caused the demand for test kits to soar.

To make matters worse, logistical problems due to the recent holidays were also among the reasons behind the supply shortage.

"We think this logistics issue will be settled by this week," said Amrahi, adding that demand and supply of Covid-19 test kits fell under the jurisdiction of the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

Shortages of Covid-19 test kits were also reported in Sabah.

Bev Joeman said she visited shops and pharmacies around Damai and Foh Sang near Kota Kinabalu, but could not get even one test kit.

"There are nine of us in the family and we need them because some of us are starting to experience mild fevers and coughs while some recently had casual contact with a Covid-19-positive relative," she said, adding that she only managed to get five self-test kits after visiting several places.

"Cases are rising and these kits are going out of stock, so we are quite concerned," Joeman added.

Claudius Chan posted on Facebook that she too had a hard time trying to get test kits in her hometown of Beaufort, while Zura Wong from Papar added that many shops in her area were facing similar shortages.

In Tuaran, notices had been put up informing customers that test kits were out of stock.

Mariah Doksil is trying to remain calm after a child in her son's preschool class recently tested positive for Covid-19.

"I will try to look for test kits again tomorrow and also check if any of us starts to fall sick," said the mother of three.

She added that she would go to the hospital or a private clinic if the situation worsened.

Over 12.6 million Malaysian adults get booster jab

KUALA LUMPUR: Some 53.9% of the adult population in Malaysia, or 12,616,238 individuals, have received the Covid-19 booster dose as of Tuesday.

According to the CovidNow portal, a total of 22,931,979 individuals or 98% of the adult population had completed their vaccination, while 23,207,389 individuals or 99.2% had received at least one dose of the vaccine.

For adolescents aged 12 to 17, a total of 2,792,830 individuals or 88.7% had completed their Covid-19 vaccination, while 2,870,546 individuals or 91.2% had received at least one dose of the vaccine, Bernama reported.

On Tuesday, a total of 152,358 doses of the vaccine were dispensed, involving 10,471 as the first dose, 1,506 as the second dose and 140,381 as the booster dose.

This brings the cumulative number of doses administered under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme to 64,264,073.

Covid-19 infections up to 17,134, but mostly mild cases

KUALA LUMPUR: Covid-19 cases continue to spike with 17,134 cases reported yesterday, bringing the cumulative cases to 2,956,332.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said over the same period, Malaysia had recorded 5,681 recoveries, bringing the cumulative recoveries to 2,829,752.

"Of the 17,134 new cases, 86 were in Categories Three, Four and Five (the most severe), while the remaining cases were Categories One and Two," he added.

"Of the new positive cases, 130 were imported cases involving 73 Malaysians and 57 foreigners," he

said in his daily statement yesterday.

He said 143 cases were being treated in the intensive care unit with 73 requiring ventilator support.

"Fifteen new clusters were detected on Wednesday, which brings the number of active clusters to 385.

The national R-nought rate (which denotes infectivity) is now at 1.39.

"All states recorded a value of over 1.0 with Sarawak topping the charts at 1.68, followed by Perlis (1.65), and Sabah (1.59).

"At the bottom of the chart, Melaka recorded 1.20, followed by Kuala Lumpur (1.18) and Negri

Sembilan (1.14)," he said.

Sabah holds an all-time high record of new daily cases registered since the start of the vaccination programme for the public, with 3,333 cases yesterday.

Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun, the minister in charge of Covid-19 matters in Sabah, said prior to that, the highest daily cases recorded stood at 3,487 on Aug 26, 2021.

He said over half or 1,075 of yesterday's cases were sporadic infections, with 3,318 (99.55%) of the new cases falling under the asymptomatic or light infection category.

He advised the public to avoid crowded places as Kota Kinabalu

recorded 591 new cases, followed by Sandakan (510), Penampang (324), Tuaran (266), Papar (224), Ranau (196), and Tawau (191).

Three new clusters - Kluster Simpangan Paitan, Beluran (with 23 cases), Kluster Access Menawo, Keningau (12) and Kluster Bukit Garam, Kinabatangan (47) - were recorded as well, he said.

Masidi said 22 of the 30 active clusters in Sabah were education-related.

The index case for Kluster Access Menawo Keningau is a 21-year-old hostel student of Institut Pelajaran dan Dakwah Islam Sabah, who fell ill on Feb 6.

Masidi said Kluster Simpangan Paitan started when a female hostel student from SMK Simpangan showed signs of having contracted the virus on Feb 4 and was confirmed positive on Feb 6, while her hostel mates and other close contacts tested positive thereafter.

An 18-year-old female student in SMK Bukit Garam sparked the Bukit Garam cluster after she fell ill on Jan 28 and tested positive on Feb 6, while 46 of her hostel mates and school staff also tested positive.

"All patients in these three clusters fell under Categories One and Two, and have been isolated and given treatment," said Masidi.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NATION

More children in Sabah getting vaccinated

By STEPHANIE LEE
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KOTA KINABALU: Sabah's vaccination rate for children under the age of 12 got off to a slow start on Feb 3 but has since picked up, says Sabah Community Development and People's Wellbeing Minister Datuk Shahelmy Yahya.

He said on the first day, only 20 children under the age of 12 took their Covid-19 vaccination shots at the Women and Children's Hospital in Likas near here.

"But after that, we saw some 50 to 60 children getting their shots daily here," he said after visiting the hospital to check on the vaccination programme for children yesterday. Shahelmy said all of them were walk-in vaccinations.

"Parents can choose to just walk-in and bring their children to receive their jabs or register via MySejahtera and wait for the appointment," he added.

He said parents who have yet to receive their booster shots would be administered the vaccine when they bring their children for their shots.

He encouraged adults to take it to



Easy does it: Shahelmy watches a boy receiving his vaccine shot.

boost immunity against Covid-19, especially in view of the Omicron variant, adding that schools might be used as vaccination centres for students soon to boost the vaccination rate in the state.

On another matter, he said Sabah

had not discussed the possibility of more social or movement restrictions for the state in view of the increased number of Covid-19 cases.

Asked whether there would be more restrictions now that the cases

had spiked and breached the 2,000 mark on Tuesday, he replied: "Not yet."

Shahelmy also reminded those who have not done so to get their booster shots before March or risk losing their fully vaccinated status.

Muhyiddin tests positive for Covid-19

PETALING JAYA: Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin is experiencing mild symptoms after testing positive for Covid-19.

The former prime minister said the infection was detected in an RT-PCR test he took yesterday.

The Perikatan Nasional chairman said he would abide by the Health Ministry's standard operating procedure to self-quarantine at home.

"Alhamdulillah (Praise be to God), I only have mild symptoms and am well. To anyone who might have been my close contact, my advice is to abide by the protocols set by the Health Ministry," he said on Facebook.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob prayed for Muhyiddin's swift recovery.

In his tweet, Ismail Sabri also prayed for the chairman of the National Recovery Council and of his family, reported *Bernama*.

AKHBAR : THE SUN ON THURSDAY
 MUKA SURAT : 4
 RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Essential to get booster jabs

➤ Additional doses on regular basis keep immune system at its peak as efficacy of vaccine wanes with time, says expert

BY MUHAMMAD YUSRY
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PETALING JAYA: Booster doses of vaccines are part and parcel of a long-term process of preventing infections or reducing severity of symptoms.

The efficacy of a vaccine wanes with time, according to virologist Dr Muhamad Afiq Aziz. He said additional doses on a regular basis would keep the body's immune system at its peak and thus be able to fight new infections.

Muhamad Afiq, who is with the Institute of Biological Science Research at Universiti Malaya, said the emergence of the Omicron variant of the Covid-19 virus, as well as other variants that may continue to surface in the future, showed that booster doses are essential.

He said the main reason for getting vaccinated against Covid-19 is not to fall seriously ill or succumb to the illness if infected.

He added that judging by the reduction in the need for hospitalisation or use of ventilators, as well as lower fatality rate,

booster doses are effective.

"We need to get a booster dose. The level of antibodies in our body produced by vaccination goes down over time.

"Data from clinical trials shows that booster shots improve our immune response towards this virus," he told *theSun*.

Muhamad Afiq likens it to the influenza vaccine. "The flu virus mutates regularly, so we need a new dose of the vaccine every year to stay protected against new strains," he said.

However, the awareness on the importance of vaccination among Malaysians is still low, he added.

"From my observation, I find that many people get vaccinated only after being informed of the government's ruling that only fully vaccinated shoppers are allowed to enter malls."

Universiti Putra Malaysia consultant clinical microbiologist Dr Zamberi Sekawi said there may even be a need for a fourth dose of the vaccine.

He said efforts should also be made to enhance the efficacy of the vaccine to meet the

threat from new strains of the virus.

"The virus has already mutated significantly. The current variant is very different from the original or 'parent' strain," he said.

Zamberi added booster dose is effective in fighting the Omicron variant and he urged all those who are eligible to take the vaccine.

However, virologist Dr Sandy Loh of University Nottingham Malaysia said there may already be a need for a variant-specific vaccine to increase their effectiveness against newer strains.

"Can we keep up with the speed at which the virus is mutating and new variants emerging? Unfortunately, we have not been able to do it so far."

Loh said there would come a time when a booster shot is needed at shorter intervals.

"This can only be avoided if we have a universally effective vaccine that can prevent any variant from infecting us."

Loh added that when Covid-19 is declared an endemic disease, there is a likelihood that booster doses would be needed for many years.

"With the available vaccine, we may need to get booster doses every few months.

"If we do get one that will ensure efficacy for a year, like the flu vaccine, that will be an improvement," she added.