

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Omicron BA.5 dijangka lonjak kes baharu harian

Virus varian terkini paling mudah merebak

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Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menjangkakan jumlah jangkitan baharu COVID-19 akan meningkat di negara ini disebabkan penularan sublineage Omicron BA.4 dan BA.5, terutama oleh BA.5 yang menjadi versi virus COVID-19 paling mudah merebak, setakat ini.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, berkata Omicron BA.5 lebih mudah menjangkiti berbanding varian Omicron se-

belumnya iaitu BA.1 dan BA.2.

Beliau berkata, pada peringkat global, sublineage BA.4 menunjukkan kadar peningkatan daripada 11 peratus pada minggu epidemik 24 bagi 2022 kepada 12 peratus pada minggu epidemik 25, manakala sublineage BA.5 menunjukkan peningkatan daripada 37 peratus ke 52 peratus.

"Kita jangka BA.5 akan terus meningkatkan jumlah kes harian COVID-19 di negara ini. Setakat ini, kita lihat juga, BA.5 bukan sahaja versi paling mudah merebak, malah ia juga mempunyai ciri untuk menjangkiti mereka yang dijangkiti Omicron, maknanya ia ada *immune escape*."

"Jika seseorang itu sudah dijangkiti Omicron, dia boleh dijangkiti semula dengan BA.5. Sebab itu, kita dengar banyak kes orang yang dijangkiti semula dalam masa yang singkat," katanya pada sidang media di

Parlimen, semalam.

Khairy berkata, sehingga 30 Jun lalu, terdapat 13 kes sublineage Omicron yang sedang dipantau rapi, membabitkan enam kes BA.2.12.1, lima kes BA.5 dan dua kes BA.5.2, yang semuanya didapati positif di antara Mei dan Jun lalu.

Mengenai keterukan penyakit akibat BA.5, Khairy berkata, buat masa ini, KKM tidak melihat perubahan dari segi keterukan kes dan beliau dimaklumkan pakar, kemungkinan besar keterukan berkenaan lebih kurang sama dengan Omicron sebelum ini.

Selain itu, Khairy memaklumkan, jumlah kes COVID-19 yang dilaporkan untuk lima hari pertama dalam minggu epidemik 27 (3 hingga 7 Julai 2022) menunjukkan peningkatan 31 peratus, berbanding jumlah kes dilaporkan untuk tempoh sama pada

minggu epidemik 26, iaitu daripada 11,394 kes kepada 14,967 kes.

"Jumlah kemasukan pesakit harian baharu COVID-19 yang dilaporkan untuk lima hari pertama pada minggu epidemik 27 menunjukkan peningkatan sebanyak 13.7 peratus, berbanding jumlah pesakit yang dilaporkan untuk tempoh sama pada minggu epidemik 26, iaitu daripada 835 pesakit kepada 968 pesakit," katanya.

Sementara itu, Khairy berkata, KKM akan mempertimbangkan untuk mengenakan kompaun kepada orang ramai yang tidak memakai pelitup muka di kawasan tertutup jika kes jangkitan COVID-19 meningkat dengan mendadak.

Beliau berkata, KKM tidak menolak untuk menguatkuasakan semula peraturan itu mengikut Akta Pencegahan dan Pengawalan Penyakit Berjang-

Jika seseorang itu sudah dijangkiti Omicron, dia boleh dijangkiti semula dengan BA.5. Sebab itu, kita dengar banyak kes orang yang dijangkiti semula dalam masa yang singkat

Khairy Jamaluddin, Menteri Kesihatan



kit 1988 (Akta 342).

Katanya, sejak 17 April lalu KKM sudah tidak lagi mengeluarkan notis kompaun selaras fasa peralihan ke endemik.

"Pemakaian pelitup muka ini terutama di kawasan tertutup masih diwajibkan, namun sudahpun agak longgar bagi penguatkuasaan.

"Ini kerana tiada lagi penurunan kuasa kepada polis dan tentera untuk memberi kompaun mereka yang tidak memakai pelitup muka, hanya KKM menguatkuasakannya," katanya.

Dos penggalak kedua diputuskan tak lama lagi

Kuala Lumpur: Jawatankuasa Kerja Teknikal Untuk Vaksinasi sedang memperhalusi syor pemberian dos penggalak kedua vaksin COVID-19 bagi mereka yang berusia 60 tahun ke bawah tanpa masalah kesihatan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, berkata keputusan mengenai cadangan itu akan diumumkan dalam tempoh satu hingga dua minggu lagi.

Selain itu, katanya, jawatankuasa berkenaan mengesyorkan dos penggalak bagi individu dengan gejala sederhana berusia 12 hingga 17 tahun dikategorikan semula sebagai dos ketiga dan menjadi pelengkap kepada vaksinasi primer.

"Hanya setelah melengkapkan vaksinasi primer tiga dos, baru dos penggalak pertama boleh diberikan kepada individu dengan gejala sederhana berusia

12 hingga 17 tahun," katanya pada sidang media di bangunan Parlimen, semalam.

Beliau menjelaskan, langkah itu bertujuan memberi perlindungan optimum kepada kumpulan remaja berkenaan daripada risiko mendapat jangkitan COVID-19 dengan gejala yang teruk. Dalam pada itu, kes baharu jangkitan COVID-19 di negara ini terus meningkat melebihi 4,000 kes apabila 4,020 kes dikesan, setakat kelmarin.

Angka itu menjadikan jumlah jangkitan COVID-19 di negara ini meningkat kepada 4,586,322 kes.

Kali terakhir negara ini mencatat kes lebih 4,000 adalah pada 24 April lalu dengan 4,006 kes. Kelmarin, jangkitan mencatatkan 3,561 kes manakala 2,932 kes pada Selasa.

Selangor kekal menjadi negeri dengan jangkitan tertinggi

iaitu sebanyak 1,630 kes, diikuti Kuala Lumpur (1,049), Perak (295) dan Sabah (205).

Menerusi laman sesawang COVIDNOW, kes baharu itu membabitkan 4,011 penularan tempatan, sembilan kes import yang mendapat jangkitan dari luar negara.

Sehingga kini masih terdapat 33,839 kes aktif dengan kebolehhajngkitan COVID-19 di negara ini, iaitu 96.4 peratus atau 32,617 kes sedang menjalani kuarantin wajib di rumah, hospital (1,156), Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan COVID-19 (PKRC) (21), unit rawatan rapi (ICU) dan memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan (23) dan ICU serta tidak memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan (22).

Bagi kadar penggunaan ICU di seluruh negara, ia kini berada tahap 60.5 peratus penggunaannya dan terdapat sembilan

negeri mencatatkan penggunaan ICU melebihi atau pada kadar 60 peratus dengan Selangor tertinggi iaitu 83.2 peratus.

Ini diikuti Kedah dengan 76.7 peratus, Kelantan (73.4 peratus), Johor (65.3 peratus), Negeri Sembilan (63.3), Terengganu (61.9 peratus), Kuala Lumpur (60.9 peratus) manakala Perak (60.9 peratus) masing-masing 60 peratus.

Dalam pada itu, COVIDNOW turut memaparkan lima kes kematian semalam termasuk dua kes meninggal dunia di luar fasiliti kesihatan (BID).

Mengenai kes sembuh, 1,718 individu dilaporkan pulih daripada jangkitan menjadikan hingga kini 4,516,688 kes sembuh dilaporkan.

Sementara itu, Khairy mengesahkan tiada kes cacar monyet dilaporkan di Malaysia setakat ini.

Sehingga kelmarin, katanya, lima kes disyaki cacar monyet dilaporkan, namun semuanya disahkan bukan jangkitan cacar monyet.

"Satu daripada lima kes itu disahkan kes penyakit tangan, kaki dan mulut (HFMD), tiga kes cacar air, satu kes ketayap dan satu kes demam biasa," katanya.

Beliau bagaimanapun mengesahkan mendapat maklumat seorang warganegara Malaysia yang menetap di Singapura, dijangkiti penyakit itu.

"Lelaki 45 tahun itu disahkan menghadapi masalah lesi kulit pada 30 Jun dan disahkan positif pada 6 Julai.

"Lelaki itu bersama keluarga dan kawannya dilaporkan melancang ke Pulau Pinang pada 17 hingga 20 Jun dan berada di Johor Bahru pada 11 dan 12 Jun serta 2 dan 3 Julai," katanya.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
 MUKA SURAT : 4
 RUANGAN : NEGARA



ERDOGAN (kiri) bersama Ismail Sabri selepas mengadakan pertemuan di Turkiye.

Malaysia-Turkiye sambut baik pembangunan vaksin Kerjasama vaksin Covid-19 Turkovac

Oleh RIDZAUDDIN ROSLAN

PUTRAJAYA – Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob menyambut baik tawaran Presiden Turkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdogan untuk bekerjasama dalam pembangunan vaksin Covid-19 keluaran negara itu iaitu Turkovac.

Ismail Sabri berkata, beliau akan meminta Kementerian Kesihatan untuk meneliti tawaran itu selaras dengan Pelan Hala Tuju Pembangunan Vaksin Negara yang telah dilancarkan pada tahun lalu.

"Dalam pada itu, Majlis Pelancongan Penjagaan Kesihatan Malaysia (MHTC) telah menandatangani Memorandum Persefahaman (MoU) bersama Aktuel Expo Healthcare International Fair Company.

"Kerajaan juga terus memperkasa negara sebagai destinasi pelancongan kesihatan bertaraf dunia menerusi kepakaran Malaysia dalam kesuburan in-vitro (IVF), kardiologi, onkologi, pergigian, pembedahan plastik selain beberapa bidang lain dan Turkiye merupakan antara pasaran utama kita," katanya dalam satu kenyataan semalam.

Ismail Sabri berkata, Turkiye juga memberi komitmen untuk menambah lebih banyak peluang tajaan atau biasiswa kepada pelajar Malaysia bagi melanjutkan pelajaran dalam pelbagai bidang di negara itu.

"Pada masa sama, kerajaan menerusi Agensi Kelayakan Malaysia (MQA) telah mengiktiraf ijazah daripada 208 universiti di Turkiye dan perkara itu disam-

but baik oleh Erdogan.

"Saya turut memberi keutamaan terhadap kerjasama Malaysia-Turkiye dalam bidang pendidikan, malah Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP), Universiti Malaysia Kelantan (UMK) dan Universiti Tun Hussein Onn (UTHM) telah menandatangani MoU bersama beberapa universiti di Turkiye," jelasnya.

Katanya, pada masa ini, seramai 57 individu daripada 284 pelajar Malaysia telah menerima biasiswa dari Turkiye.

Dalam perkembangan sama, Ismail Sabri berkata, beliau berpuas hati dengan hasil lawatan ke Turkiye dan percaya kerjasama kedua-dua negara bakal membuka lembaran dimensi baharu atas dasar dan pendekatan menang-menang.

Kes naik, Akta 342 mungkin dikuat kuasa

PETALING JAYA – Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menjangkakan jumlah jangkitan baharu kes Covid-19 bakal meningkat di negara ini susulan daripada penyebaran varian Omicron BA.4 dan BA.5.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar berkata, bagi varian Omicron BA.5, ia merupakan versi virus paling mudah merebak dan lebih mudah menjangkiti berbanding varian Omicron sebelumnya iaitu BA.1 dan BA.2.

"Ketika ini terdapat 13 kes Omicron sedang dipantau rapi oleh KKM melibatkan enam kes BA.2.12.1, lima kes BA.5 dan dua kes BA.5.2 dengan kesemuanya didapati positif di antara Mei dan Jun, manakala tiada kes sublineage Omicron BA.4.

"Mereka yang telah melengkapkan vaksinasi atau telah

dijangkiti sebelum ini lebih berkemungkinan untuk dijangkiti semula dengan varian ini. Ia juga akan menyumbang jangkitan Covid-19 dalam beberapa minggu akan datang.

"Situasi seperti ini juga telah mengakibatkan peningkatan kemasukan ke hospital di negara-negara lain seperti Singapura, Portugal, United Kingdom dan lain-lain," katanya di Bangunan Parlimen semalam.

Dalam pada itu, kementerian tidak menolak kemungkinan untuk menguatkuasa semula Akta 342 kepada mereka yang enggan memakai pelitup muka di kawasan tertutup jika kes terus meningkat.

Beliau berkata, pemakaian pelitup muka di premis tertutup masih wajib, namun notis kompaun tidak lagi dikeluarkan sejak 17 April lalu.



ORANG ramal tetap memakai pelitup muka di tempat terbuka walaupun negara kini beralih ke fasa endemik.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Pemilik klinik swasta pernah minta naikkan harga perkhidmatan sebelum ini

Bukan masa hendak naikkan caj – KJ

Oleh RASDAN AHMAD

KUALA LUMPUR – “Ini bukan masanya untuk menaikkan harga pelbagai caj di klinik swasta ketika ini kerana kita tahu rakyat sedang susah,” tegas Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar.

Tambah beliau, memang terdapat jadual caj yang telah ditetapkan oleh pihak Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) untuk fasiliti kesihatan swasta, namun buat masa ini, jadual tersebut tidak pernah dipinda atau diubah.

“Mereka (klinik swasta) sebelum ini ada minta berkenaan caj untuk dinaikkan sebab sudah lama harga caj terbabit tidak berubah.

“Harga siling, contohnya konsultasi memang ada mereka minta untuk dinaikkan. Kita akan adakan sesi libat urus untuk bincangkan berkenaan isu ini.

“Ini merupakan kerisauan pihak Kementerian kerana caj yang terlalu tinggi sepertimana laporan yang telah didedahkan,” katanya pada sidang akhbar khas di Bangunan Parlimen semalam.

Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, pihaknya juga ada membuat perbincangan dari semasa ke semasa bersama pengendali fasiliti kesihatan swasta untuk memahami dengan lebih lanjut



Khairy Jamaluddin



KERATAN Kosmo! semalam.

lagi ketuluan mengenai caj yang dikenakan pihak mereka.

“Caj yang mereka letakkan adalah terlalu tinggi, sesi libat urus juga akan diadakan berperingkat bagi memastikan yuran atau caj yang dikenakan adalah tidak membebankan rakyat.

“Secara spesifik pihak Kementerian akan menyiasat laporan (berita) tersebut,” jelasnya.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika ditanya mengenai laporan muka hadapan Kosmo! semalam



KLINIK swasta ada memohon dengan dengan KKM menaikkan caj rawatan di fasiliti kesihatan.

berkenaan caj tinggi yang dikenakan oleh klinik swasta ketika ini.

Kosmo! semalam melaporkan, ramai ibu bapa terpaksa berfikir dua kali untuk membawa anak mereka mendapatkan rawatan di klinik swasta yang ketika ini mengenakan caj tinggi terutama melibatkan perkhidmatan pemeriksaan dan ubat-ubatan.

Situasi itu sekali gus menyebabkan ada ibu bapa yang

sanggup memberi anak mereka sisa ubat yang disimpan hampir enam bulan lalu selain mendapatkan rawatan tradisional yang jauh lebih murah.

Seorang suri rumah, Izyan Adnan, 40, mendakwa, bukan sahaja harga barang makanan dan keperluan meningkat, kos rawatan dan ubat-ubatan juga semakin mahal.

Katanya, dahulu, caj rawa-

tan klinik swasta hanya sekitar RM30, tetapi kini telah meningkat kepada RM60 seorang.

Perkara itu turut diakui Peratuan Perubatan Malaysia yang mendedahkan terdapat beberapa kenaikan beberapa caj di klinik swasta.

Katanya, peningkatan caj rawatan perkhidmatan dan ubat-ubatan itu turut melibatkan penyelenggaraan.

Terkejut bil klinik cecah RM322

JOHOR BAHRU – Seorang suri rumah terkejut apabila melihat bil caj konsultan dan ubatan yang dikenakan sebuah klinik swasta di Pusat Perdagangan Kebun Teh di sini mencecah RM322.

Siti Noor Asiah Muda, 33, berkata, dia membawa anak sulungnya yang berusia lapan bulan dan suaminya yang mengalami demam dan batuk.

Ujarnya, mereka sekeluarga tidak mempunyai pilihan dan ini merupakan kali kedua menerima rawatan setelah kali pertama di klinik kesihatan kerajaan yang terpaksa menunggu masa yang lama.

“Kali pertama pergi klinik dekat Larkin, namun orang ramai, tengok anak dan suami sudah menggigil kesejukan, kami buat keputusan rujuk klinik swasta.

“Setelah selesai, suami tunjuk bil, saya terkejut dan tidak menyangka cecah RM322, pada awal ingat bawah RM200,” katanya kepada Kosmo! di sini semalam.

Ujar Siti Noor Asiah, caj yang dikenakan pada amatanya ter-



SITI NOOR ASIAH menunjukkan ubatan serta bil yang dikenakan sebuah klinik swasta yang didakwa mahal di Johor Bahru semalam.

lalu mahal untuk lapan jenis ubat termasuk ubat selesema, batuk serta antibiotik selain konsultan.

Katanya, dia juga terkejut apabila ujian RTK Antigen Covid-19 mencecah RM30.

“Nak tak nak, kena bayar juga sebab dah pergi. Kos agak mahal

la, memandangkan kita rakyat biasa berdepan dengan masalah kenaikan barang itu ini.

“Kami berharap pihak kerajaan memantau dan kawal berhubung caj dan harga ubat yang dikenakan yang semuanya naik,” ujarnya.

Ibu bapa tiada pilihan, nak anak dirawat cepat

SHAH ALAM – Ibu bapa terpaksa memilih untuk ke klinik swasta walaupun tahu kos rawatan mahal disebabkan waktu menunggu yang singkat untuk berjumpa doktor.

Ibu bapa yang mempunyai anak sakit ketika itu dikatakan tiada pilihan dan tidak mahu menunggu lama di klinik atau hospital kerajaan yang memerlukan masa hampir 6 jam di situ.

Seorang pekerja kilang di Telok Panglima Garang, Kuala Langat di sini dikenali Azhari, 35, berkata, dia tiada pilihan kerana tidak boleh cuti selalu dan perlu mendapatkan rawatan yang segera untuk anak keduanya berusia 8 tahun baru-baru ini.

Katanya, dia dikenakan caj sehingga RM100 termasuk ubat dan konsultasi untuk anaknya yang demam baru-baru ini.

“Bagi saya yang bergaji RM2,000 dan menanggung tiga anak dan isteri suri rumah sepenuhnya, kos tersebut

agak tinggi tetapi saya kasihan melihat anak yang demam dan batuk teruk.

“Rawatan di klinik kerajaan sememangnya murah tetapi sebagai pekerja kilang saya tidak boleh selalu bercuti,” katanya ketika ditemui Kosmo! semalam.

Bagi pekerja swasta dikenali Nazri, 50, memaklumkan perlu membayar sehingga RM10 hingga RM15 hanya untuk memeriksa kandungan gula sahaja.

Justeru, dia tidak mempunyai pilihan dengan melakukan pemeriksaan di hospital kerajaan walaupun lama kerana ramai pesakit.

Sementara itu, seorang doktor klinik swasta di Shah Alam yang enggan dikenali berkata, caj dikenakan adalah mengikut kadar dibenarkan oleh pihak berkuasa.

“Walaupun sedar bebanan rakyat ketika ini, namun kita juga ada kos perlu ditanggung. Ia juga bergantung ubat yang juga naik harga,” ujarnya.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Khairy saran rakyat ambil dos penggalak kedua

PETALING JAYA: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) menggalakkan warga emas, individu yang mempunyai komorbiditi dan pekerja barisan hadapan untuk mendapatkan dos penggalak kedua sekurang-kurangnya empat bulan selepas menerima dos penggalak pertama.

Menterinya, Khairy Jamaluddin berkata sehingga kelmarin, sebanyak 31.4 peratus daripada golongan dewasa iaitu seramai 7,393,199 individu masih belum dapat dos penggalak.

“KKM ingin mengatakan dos penggalak ini tidak wajib tetapi sangat disarankan terutama bila kita berdepan dengan gelombang baharu dan apabila kita melihat pergerakan manusia di Malaysia akan meningkat kerana cuti aialadha.

“Kepada warga emas dan rakyat yang ada masalah komorbiditi untuk segera dapatkan dos penggalak sekiranya belum terima dos penggalak. Ini sangat penting memandangkan kita berdepan dengan gelombang Covid-19 yang baharu.

“Bagi dos penggalak yang kedua, hanya 151,018 telah mendapat dos penggalak kedua iaitu 6.06 peratus daripada 2,339,792 individu yang layak,” jelasnya.

Menurut Khairy, KKM telah buka ruang kepada warga emas dan juga penduduk Malaysia yang ada komorbiditi untuk menerima dos penggalak kedua.

“Kita menawarkan dos penggalak yang kedua dan mereka berkelayakan boleh mendapatkan dos penggalak mereka secara percuma di pusat pemberian vaksin swasta yang berdaftar yang tersenarai di laman web Protect Health,” katanya dalam sidang akhbar di Parlimen.

Setakat ini di Malaysia, KKM mengesahkan, sehingga 30 Jun, sudah terdapat 13 kes sub-varian Omicron yang sedang dipantau rapi iaitu enam kes BA.2, lima kes BA.5 dan dua kes BA.52.

Setakat ini tiada kes BA.4 dilaporkan.

Tambah Khairy, kini negara telah mempunyai rawatan untuk kes-kes baharu dijangkiti Covid-19 iaitu ubat antiviral



KKM ingin mengatakan dos penggalak ini tidak wajib tetapi sangat disarankan terutama bila kita berdepan dengan gelombang baharu.”

yang bernama Paxlovid.

“Ubat ini diberikan kepada pesakit Covid-19 yang berisiko tinggi yang mengalami gejala ringan hingga sederhana.

“Kriteria pesakit Covid-19 yang layak menerima Paxlovid adalah untuk mereka yang umur 18 tahun ke atas, mengalami jangkitan Covid-19 kategori dua dan tiga atau 60 tahun ke atas serta yang mempunyai masalah komorbiditi serius boleh mendapatkan Paxlovid di pusat kesihatan yang disenaraikan,” katanya.

Sementara itu, bekas timbalan Menteri Kesihatan, Dr. Lee Boon Chye berkata, dua faktor punca peningkatan kes dan kemasukkan ke Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) iaitu daripada penularan sub-varian terbaru Omicron.

Menurut beliau, sub varian BA.4 dan BA.5 tidak boleh dicegah hanya dengan bersandarkan kadar vaksin sedia ada selain keberkesanan vaksin yang semakin berkurang selepas enam bulan menerima suntikan

“Kita boleh tengok terdapat peningkatan kemasukan ke ICU. Pertama sekali, ada kemungkinan sub-varian BA.4 dan BA.5 tidak boleh dicegah melalui vaksin atau disebabkan keberkesanan vaksin menurun.

“Selain itu, keberkesanan vaksin sejak penerimaan dos ketiga juga menurun sebab sudah lebih enam bulan sejak kita semua menerima dos itu.

“Ada baiknya jika mereka yang berisiko mendapatkan dos ketiga supaya mereka lebih terlindung daripada sub-varian terbaru ini. Langkah-langkah pencegahan masih perlu diteruskan,” katanya kepada *Utusan Malaysia*.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 23

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Risiko peningkatan kes Covid-19

Kes varian Omicron *sublineage* BA.5 sudah berada di Malaysia, berkemungkinan boleh merebak luas

KUALA LUMPUR

Kes varian Omicron *sublineage* BA.5 sudah berada di Malaysia dan berkemungkinan merebak luas, sekali gus mengakibatkan peningkatan kes Covid-19, menurut Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar.

Beliau berkata, sehingga 30 Jun lepas, 13 kes *sublineage* Omicron dipantau rapi iaitu enam kes BA.2.12.1; lima kes BA.5; serta dua kes BA.5.2, dan semua kes ini didapati positif antara

bulan Mei dan Jun lepas.

"Tiada kes *sublineage* Omicron BA.4 yang direkodkan setakat ini. Kalau lihat dari segi epidemiologi di negara-negara lain, BA.5 adalah *sublineage* utama yang memberi kesan kepada peningkatan kes di peringkat global dan kita menjangkakan BA.5 akan terus meningkatkan lagi jumlah kes harian di Malaysia.

"Omicron BA.5 adalah versi virus Covid-19 yang paling mudah merebak setakat ini (berbanding varian Omicron sebelumnya iaitu BA.1 dan BA.2) tetapi ia juga mempunyai ciri untuk menjangkiti mereka yang sudah dijangkiti dengan Omicron BA.1 dan BA.2," katanya dalam sidang media di sini pada Jumaat.

Beliau berkata, situasi ini juga mengakibatkan peningkatan kemasukan ke hospital di negara seperti Singapura, Portugal, United Kingdom dan lain-lain.

Khairy Jamaluddin bagaimanapun berkata, maklumat dari Israel dan Amerika



Orang ramai disarankan terus kekal mengamalkan SOP bagi mengelakkan peningkatan kes Covid-19.

Syarikat menunjukkan individu yang telah melengkapkan vaksinasi dos primer dan menerima dua dos penggalak, terutamanya dalam kumpulan umur 60 dan ke atas, mempunyai kadar kematian lebih rendah berbanding mereka yang hanya mempunyai satu dos penggalak.

Mengenai jangkaan tempoh puncak Omicron BA.5, beliau berkata, KKM menjangkakan kes

akan meningkat dalam tempoh satu atau dua bulan atau maksimum tiga bulan berdasarkan pengalaman menghadapi gelombang varian Omicron sebelum ini.

Sementara itu, Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, tiga strategi utama digariskan buat masa ini bagi mengharungi gelombang baharu Covid-19 iaitu vaksinasi dalam kalangan penduduk,

rawatan Covid-19 bagi individu berisiko tinggi menggunakan ubat antiviral dan pematuhan prosedur operasi standard (SOP).

Beliau sekali lagi menasihatkan individu yang masih belum menerima dos penggalak dan mereka yang layak menerima dos penggalak kedua, untuk segera mendapatkannya. - Bernama

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

COVID CAUTION OVER OMICRON SUBVARIANT

Highly transmissible Omicron subvariant BA.5 has been detected in the country, says Khairy

HANA NAZ HARUN
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MALAYSIA is entering a new wave of Covid-19, with the Omicron BA.5 subvariant already present in the country.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the ministry had detected five cases of the BA.5 subvariant cases through genomic sequencing up to June 30.

"Up to June 30, the Health Ministry has detected 13 Omicron sublineages, which we are monitoring closely, including six BA.2.12.1 cases, five BA.5 cases, and two BA.5.2 cases.

"This means BA.5 is present in the country. These cases were found through genomic sequencing done on positive cases detected between May and June.

"There is a big possibility BA.5 has spread widely in Malaysia," he said at a press conference at the Parliament building yesterday.

He said BA.4 subvariant cases have not been detected yet.

He said the ministry had expected the rise in new cases due to the Omicron subvariants, particularly the BA.5 subvariant.

He said the BA.5 subvariant was the most transmissible strain of Covid-19 to date, compared with the BA.1 and BA.2 Omicron subvariants.

"BA.5 can infect those who have been infected with the Omicron variant. It has immune-escaping properties. That is why a good deal of reinfections happen in a short time."

He advised the public to continue practising public health measures and TRIIS (test, report, inform, isolate and support).

He said it was crucial to continue reporting positive cases in the MySejahtera app so that the ministry had an accurate picture of the number of cases.

He said up to Thursday, a total of 41,297 people who underwent tests had reported their results, and of the number, 4,874 were RT-PCR tests, 25,217 were RTK-Anti-



People wearing face masks as they shop for necessities ahead of Hari Raya Aidiladha at Pasar Batu Lanchang in George Town yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

gen tests and 10,711 were self-tests. "This data is important. If we do not get it, we will not know the real positivity rate."

He said it was hard to predict the peak of the fourth wave as the number of RT-PCR tests done had been reduced, resulting in fewer genomic sequencing being done.

"When the number of RT-PCR testing and genomic sequencing decreases, we will not know the prevalence of BA.5 and the information may not be up to date. "But I expect that cases will peak in three months."

As the BA.5 subvariant spreads, Khairy advised people aged 60 and above and those who have health conditions to get a second Covid-19 vaccine booster dose.

He said individuals aged 60 and above could make appointments for a Covid-19 booster dose through the MySejahtera app.

"Based on the latest developments in Covid-19 infections, I urge individuals who have not yet received a booster dose as well as a second booster dose to get it immediately, especially for high-risk individuals."

For high-risk individuals such as the elderly, frontline workers or individuals with co-morbidities who have received a first booster dose, he urged them to obtain a second booster dose six months after the first one.

"The second booster is available for free at registered private vaccination centres listed at vaksin-covid.protecthealth.com.my/find."

The public is advised to contact vaccination centres in advance for an appointment.

Khairy said the Health Ministry was looking into recommending a second booster dose for indi-

viduals aged 60 and below who have no health problems.

He said a request had been made to the Technical Working Group to lower the eligible age for the second booster dose to 50 to allow more individuals to receive it.

"People have been using travelling abroad as a loophole to get the second booster dose.

"We leave it to medical officers at vaccination centres to evaluate people who claim they are travelling (abroad) and are requesting the booster shot.

"It is better to wait for the ministry's recommendations on the booster dose (for people under age 60) to better understand the timing and efficacy of the dose."

Khairy said an announcement on the matter would come in one to two weeks.

He said if infections continue to spike, the ministry might reintroduce compounds for failure to wear face masks in closed spaces.

He said the ministry observed that people had begun to stop wearing face masks when it was still compulsory.

"If cases continue to rise and increases sharply, the Health Ministry does not discount the possibility of reinforcing Act 342, especially on those who refuse to wear face masks indoors.

"I urge for community solidarity and individual empowerment to wear face masks in closed spaces, except when giving a speech, eating or taking a picture. It is still an effective way to reduce infections." **Additional reporting by Katbana Perimbanayagam**

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

4 | NEWS / Nation

FIRST IN THE WORLD

MINISTRY TO PUSH TOBACCO BAN BILL

Khairy says crucial to convince ministers that it's the best way to prevent youths from smoking

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THE Health Ministry will table a memorandum at the cabinet meeting next week to ensure that the proposed law to ban smoking and possession of tobacco products for people born after 2005 may be tabled for the first reading in Parliament this month.

Health Minister Khairy Ja-

maluddin said it was crucial to convince cabinet members that the move was the best way to ban access to tobacco and nicotine for Malaysian youth and future generations.

"The country has for too long had no comprehensive law regulating tobacco and smoking, including electronic cigarettes.

"We are in need of a comprehensive law to regulate this, especially electronic cigarettes, which are increasingly unregulated because some traders are marketing them to children," he said in his speech at the launch of the Generational Endgame Advocacy Road Show (GEGAR-WANITA) yesterday.

Present was Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Rina Harun.

Khairy said once the law was passed, Malaysia would become

the first country in the world to enact a tobacco generational endgame legislation.

He said if nothing was done to overcome the smoking problem in the country, the habit would cost the government RM8 billion to treat lung cancer, heart problems and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease by 2030.

At the press conference, Khairy said the Health Ministry had received feedback on the matter from other ministries and was preparing answers to discuss at the cabinet meeting.

"Once the cabinet gives its approval, the bill will be brought to the Dewan Rakyat and Dewan Negara," he said, adding that he was confident it would get the support from cabinet members and members of parliament.

He said the ministry had held discussions with several min-



A Health Ministry officer showing a cigarette stub during an anti-smoking operation in Penang. FILE PIC

istries and agencies, such as the Education Ministry, Higher Education Ministry and Islamic Development Department Malaysia, regarding the bill.

Under the proposed act, people born in and after 2005 would be prohibited from smoking, buying or possessing any type of smoking products, including electronic cigarettes or vape products, even after they reached 18 years old.

Traders and cigarette vendors would not be allowed to sell smoking products to the people covered by the ban.

Rina, in her speech, said the Women, Family and Community Development Ministry fully supported the memorandum on the proposed law that would be

raised by Khairy.

She assured Khairy that the bill would get the support it needed from cabinet members.

"I will convince cabinet members so that the bill can be tabled in Parliament."

She said the bill, once passed in the Dewan Rakyat, would bring about a generational endgame to smoking. She also called on women to take part in awareness programmes to combat smoking.

"As women and mothers, it is important not to permit anyone to smoke or vape at home. It should start from the home.

"It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children are not exposed to unhealthy practices."

COVID-19

Daily infections breach 4,000 on Thursday

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's daily new Covid-19 cases have breached the 4,000 mark, with 4,020 fresh infections reported on Thursday.

Of the total cases, nine were imported and 4,011 were local transmissions.

The last time the country hit the 4,000 daily new infections mark was on April 24, with 4,006 cases.

Malaysia had been seeing a steady rise in daily coronavirus cases since Monday, with 1,918 infections, followed by 2,932 on Tuesday and 3,561 on Wednesday.

Selangor and Kuala Lumpur continued to report the highest number of daily cases at 1,630 and 1,049 cases, respectively.

Perak reported 295 cases, followed by Sabah at 205; Negri Sembilan (197), Penang (128), Melaka (107), Putrajaya (90), Jo-



Passengers preparing to board buses at the Kuala Terengganu City Council bus station on Thursday. Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin reminded the people to stay vigilant during Hari Raya Aidiladha celebrations to prevent the spread of Covid-19. BERNAMA PIC

hor (80), Pahang (62), Kedah (60), Sarawak (57), Kelantan (21), Terengganu (20) and Labuan (12). Only Perlis recorded single-digit infections at seven cases.

Since the pandemic struck in 2020, 4,586,322 people nationwide have been infected and 35,795 had succumbed to the coronavirus.

Currently, there were 33,839 active cases after 1,718 patients recovered yesterday.

Some 96.4 per cent or 32,617 of the cases were undergoing home quarantine, 1,156 were receiving treatment at hospitals, 45 were placed at intensive care units (ICU) and 21 were in Covid-19 quarantine and treatment centres.

Of the 45 ICU cases, 23 required ventilator support.

On Thursday, 480 Covid-19 patients were admitted to hospitals.

On that day, 18.1 per cent of the

normal Covid-19 beds were used in hospitals nationwide, and 10.9 per cent of the Covid-19 ICU beds were occupied.

Three deaths were reported on Thursday in Johor, Perak and Selangor. Of the Covid-19 deaths reported, two were classified as brought-in-dead cases. The country's Covid-19 death toll now stood at 35,795.

Yesterday, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin reminded the

people to stay vigilant during the Hari Raya Aidiladha celebrations, practice TRIIS (Test, Report, Isolate, Inform and Seek) and perform a Covid-19 self-test before embarking on their journey home.

Khairy said daily cases had soared to 3,410 during Hari Raya Aidilfitri on May 12. Among the factors that caused the surge was the increasing movement of people in the community.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NATION

Latest Omicron variant has landed

Health Ministry expects infections to rise in the next few weeks

KUALA LUMPUR: Five cases of the fast-spreading Covid-19 Omicron BA.5 variant have been detected in the country, says Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

He warned the public that the ministry expected the number of Covid-19 cases to rise in the next few weeks as the newer Omicron variants spread easily.

Apart from these five cases, other cases of Omicron sub-lineage variants that have been detected were six cases of BA.2.12.1 and two incidents of BA.5.2.

"All these cases were detected between May and June. However, there are no cases of sub-lineage Omicron BA.4 recorded so far.

"We are expecting that new infections will increase due to Omicron BA.4 and BA.5, especially the BA.5. This is because Omicron BA.5

spreads easily compared with previous Omicron variants BA.1 and BA.2," he told a press conference here yesterday.

Khairy said the new Covid-19 wave should not be taken lightly as 4,020 cases were reported just on July 7.

From July 3 to 7, the ministry had already recorded 14,967 cases, which is an increase of 31% compared with the previous week's 11,394 cases, he added.

There was also a 13.7% increase in hospital admissions to 968 patients during this period from the 835 patients in the previous week. Ten deaths were recorded.

He added that those who have completed their Covid-19 vaccination or had been infected previously could also be infected with this variant.

"Those who have not taken their booster, especially senior citizens and people who have comorbidities, should get their booster shot, as it is vital against the new wave of Omicron BA.5.

"A total of 7,393,199 (31.40%) people have not taken their first booster shot while 151,018 (6.06%) individuals have received their second booster shot as at July 7," he said.

Khairy also said that the ministry's technical committee was still looking into the need for a second booster shot among those aged 60 and below without any illnesses, while vaccination for those aged five years and below was still not recommended.

However, he said there were some people who used a loophole with the excuse of travelling to get a second booster shot.

The second booster is available free of charge at registered private vaccination centres listed at <https://vaksinCovid.protecthealth.com.my/find>.

For those aged 18 to 59 in the immunocompromised category, Khairy advised they undergo an evaluation first before getting the second booster shot.

He also said that as at July 3, 4,001 patients who have taken the Paxlovid antiviral medicine showed no serious side effects.



Watch the video
TheStarTV.com

KJ: We may issue compounds if cases spike

KUALA LUMPUR: The Health Ministry is not ruling out the possibility re-enforcing the issuance of compound notices under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 (Act 342) if Covid-19 cases continue to rise in the country.

Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said members of the public had become increasingly complacent with the Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP), especially wearing face masks in indoor areas.

"Many people are no longer wearing face masks though they were reminded that it is still mandatory in enclosed premises. The only thing was that since April 17, we no longer issue compound notices because the MOH had by then, made a decision in line with the Transition to Endemic Phase by prioritising community empowerment and individual responsibility.

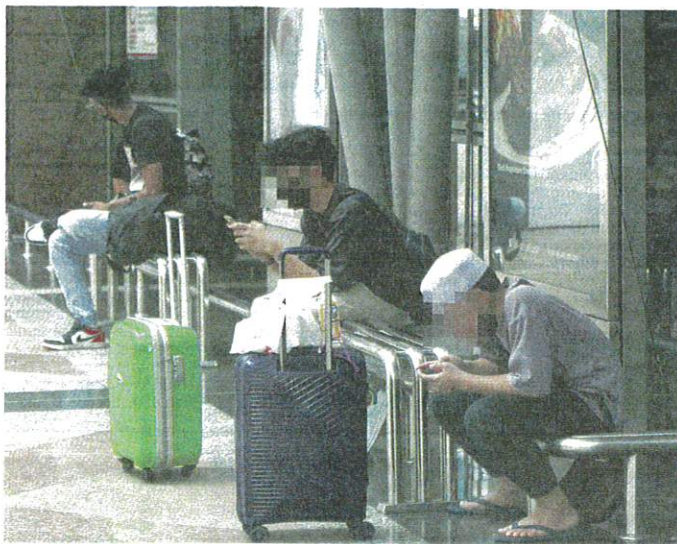
"However, if the number of cases continues to surge at an alarming rate, the MOH will not hesitate to reinstate Act 342, especially for those who refuse to wear face masks in indoor places," he told a press conference at the Parliament building here yesterday.

Under Act 342, individuals found guilty of violating the rules can be fined not more than RM1,000 or be imprisoned for a term not exceeding six months.

As such, Khairy called on all Malaysians to abide by the SOP, especially wearing face masks in enclosed and public areas as it is an effective measure to reduce Covid-19 infection.

Asked whether the MOH has determined the Covid-19 infection threshold for the re-issuance of the compound notices, Khairy said the matter had not been decided.

"We, at the MOH also do not want to revert



Stay safe: Khairy has called on all Malaysians to abide by the SOP, especially wearing face masks in enclosed and public areas as it is an effective measure to reduce Covid-19 infection. — ART CHEN/The Star

(to previous measures), we have now dropped the other agencies from Act 342... only the MOH is left to issue notices (compounds) in relation to face masks and so on.

"When we entered the Transition to

Endemic Phase, all other agencies especially the police, urged that we stop the devolution of law enforcement (issue of compound notices) because they have other work to do and the MOH agreed," he added. — Bernama

Bracing for another wave of Covid-19 infections

PETALING JAYA: It is better to be safe than sorry, say health experts, telling members of the public to continue observing the standard operating procedures (SOP), especially wearing face masks, in anticipation of a surge in Covid-19 infections.

Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia president Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah said people must constantly be reminded that Covid-19 was still in the community and that they should not let their guard down.

"We should still follow the SOP such as physical distancing, good hygiene and wearing a face mask," he said.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said yesterday that Covid-19 infections could increase due to the Omicron BA.4 and BA.5 subvariants, especially the BA.5.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia health economics, hospital and health management's Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said self-testing and reporting should be made compulsory for meetings that involve a large number of people as a precautionary measure.

She added that this was because there was a possibility that several cases might have gone unreported as the country embarked on its transition to endemicity.

She also said there was a possibility that the number of cases could be 40% to 50% higher than the actual reported numbers.

"This is because of the transition to endemicity, whereby it's not compulsory to test, and tests are mainly unrecorded. In fact, some who are positive do not report their status as they might (fear) that their pay might be deducted.

"So, cases are definitely higher than reported. Self-testing is not mandatory at present, and only if we know the actual numbers can we then be better prepared to tackle the issue.

"Thus, I would encourage the implementation of compulsory self-tests for those who attend big meetings, schools and congregations, and report the outcome," she added.

Prof Sharifa Ezat also called for more stringent screening of travellers from countries with high Covid-19 case loads.

She proposed that certain SOP such as allowing employees, especially those who are at high risk, the option to work from home, segregation at schools to prevent crowding, and MySejahtera check-ins to be reinstated if cases continue to rise.

Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist Associate Prof Dr Malina Osman said the new wave might affect certain high-risk groups and not the population as a whole.

However, she said though cases might rise, the impact would not be very severe.

Many having second thoughts on second booster

PETALING JAYA: With the increase in the number of Covid-19 cases this past week, those who previously did not consider getting a second booster shot are now having a change of heart.

The number of cases shot up from 1,918 on Monday to 4,020 cases on Thursday, leading many to say there is now a greater sense of urgency to getting the fourth jab — after the first two to be fully vaccinated — as a safety precaution.

Some had even got the second booster several weeks before, in anticipation of rising cases.

A senior citizen who wished to remain anonymous said he might finally consider taking the second booster amidst the rising number of cases despite initially being on the fence.

"I did see various articles saying a second booster was unnecessary, but always did a fact check through news updates from primary media sources.

"Now that the number of cases is fast increasing, I will get my son to contact the nearest vaccination centre to check whether

they can accommodate my request for a second booster," he said.

A retiree, who wished to be known only as Hong, said he took his second booster early last week in anticipation of a potential increase in cases.

"I saw an upward trend towards the end of June and decided to take the second shot for my own good.

"I contacted a vaccination centre in Petaling Jaya to inquire whether they offered it, and upon their confirmation, proceeded to walk in for my booster," he said.

Hong added that despite already having got his second jab, he had opted to leave his house only when necessary and to continue practising physical distancing.

Ayesha, 65, said she would now proceed to get her booster shot as Covid-19 infections were likely to rise.

"I have underlying health conditions such as diabetes and a heart problem. I was initially hesitant as I was a bit unsure about the implications of the second booster dose," the retiree from Petaling Jaya said.

She added that she would consult her doc-

tor prior to getting her second booster dose.

"I don't want to take the risk and it is better to be safe.

"I'll go ahead with the shot if my doctor gives the nod," she said.

She felt that it was best to take precautions as the situation remained fluid and uncertain, especially with the emergence of new subvariants.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin advised senior citizens aged 60 and above as well as those who have underlying medical conditions to get their second Covid-19 booster dose, as an Omicron BA.5 variant wave of infections was expected.

As at July 7, only 151,018 out of the 2.49 million individuals eligible for the second booster shot have taken it.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NATION

New start soon with endgame law

Bill on generational smoking ban waiting for Cabinet green light

By FAZLEENA AZIZ
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SERDANG: The Health Ministry hopes to regulate the use of vape and e-cigarettes in the country once it receives the nod from the Dewan Rakyat through the new Bill to ban smoking among those born in 2005 and later, says Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

For the first time there will be regulations imposed on the vape and e-cigarettes industry through the "generational endgame Bill", he added.

He said the vape industry had been out of control for several years as these products had been marketed to teenagers and children.

"We will be able to strictly control all sales of vape and electronic cigarettes, regulate what they put in the vape," he told the press after launching the Generational Endgame Advocacy Roadshow (Gegar) Wanita programme here yesterday.

The Health Ministry will be handing over a memorandum to the Cabinet meeting next week on the



Dousing the flames: Khairy (fourth from left) and Rina (fifth from left) posing for a group photo after launching Gegar Wanita in UPM, Serdang.

draft Bill to ban smoking among those born in 2005 and later.

If it is approved at the Cabinet meeting, Khairy said he hoped to table the new law in Parliament this month.

Once approved, he wanted the law to be implemented quickly.

Prior to this, vape and e-cigarettes were outside the purview of any law, so once the new legislation comes into effect, taxes can be collected for these items, he added.

Khairy also said his ministry had received feedback from other ministries and would present responses

to them during the Cabinet meeting.

"Through our ministry and officers, we have conducted several engagements sessions with relevant parties as well as Members of Parliament. I will be conducting briefings on the new Bill and its impact after the passing.

"I am confident that we will get the support to pass this Bill," Khairy said.

He added that the ministry was aiming to reduce smoking prevalence among Malaysians to 5% by 2040.

When asked about the lack of support from other ministries due to its economic impact, Khairy said the Cabinet meeting would be a great platform to exchange views and convince them.

He added that the Health Ministry had already been working with the Education and Higher Education ministries as well as the Malaysian Islamic Development Department (Jakim) on several programmes in relation to the new Bill and its advocacy.

Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri

Rina Mohd Harun, who was also present for the launch, said her ministry fully supported the new Bill.

She said her ministry would continue to garner further support from other quarters to ensure that the new Bill gets the seal of approval.

"We will try to ensure that this Bill gets tabled in Parliament as we fully support it.

"We also support the generational endgame on smoking and will continue to advocate for it," she added.

Under the proposed law, children born in 2005 and subsequent years are prohibited from smoking and buying or possessing any type of smoking product, including electronic cigarettes or vape products, even after reaching 18 years of age.

Apart from this, shopkeepers and cigarette vendors are also not allowed to sell smoking products to those covered by the ban.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com

