

AKHBAR : KOSMO  
 MUKA SURAT : 4  
 RUANGAN : NEGARA



**PENGUNJUNG menikmati makanan di ruangan Empayar Makanan di MAHA 2022, Serdang kelmarin.** - GAMBAR HIASAN

## 4,896 kes, 18 kematian dicatat

**PUTRAJAYA** – Sebanyak 4,896 kes baharu Covid-19 termasuk dua kes import dicatatkan kelmarin menjadikan jumlah kumulatifnya kini mencecah 4,681,412.

Berdasarkan data *COVIDNOW*, sebanyak 1,905 kes aktif dilaporkan di seluruh negara dengan jumlah kumulatif kes aktif kini merekodkan sebanyak 44,622.

Sejumlah 2,979 kes sembuh juga telah direkodkan dengan jumlah keseluruhan pulih daripada Covid-19 kini seramai 4,638,716 orang.

“Selangor kembali mencatatkan jumlah kes harian tertinggi dengan 1,842 kes diikuti Kuala Lumpur (1,046), Perak (374), Sabah (369), Negeri Sembilan (253), Pulau Pinang (169), Melaka (148), Kedah (144) dan Johor (120).

“Turut menyumbang kepada peningkatan kes Covid-19 adalah Kelantan (99), Sarawak (89), Putrajaya (83), Pahang (80), Terengganu (37), Labuan (27) dan Perlis (16),” demikian perkongsian data tersebut semalam.

Pada masa sama, sebanyak 18 kematian dilaporkan dengan enam kes meninggal dunia di luar hospital atau *brought-in-dead* (BID) yang seterusnya menjadikan jumlah kematian sebanyak 36,056 dan BID 7,665.

Sebanyak 42,942 kes dikuarantin di rumah, 35 kes di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 (PKRC), 1,577 kes di hospital, 31 kes di Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) tanpa bantuan pernafasan dan 37 kes di ICU dengan bantuan pernafasan.



AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NATION

# 'No fear, campuses are safe'

## Universities say steps are in place to curb Covid-19 spread

By JUNAID IBRAHIM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Students attending university orientations should not be unduly worried about Covid-19 with the enrolment going back to physical mode after two years, say experts.

As the country is transitioning to the endemic phase, everyone is expected to live with the virus, including university students, said Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming of Universiti Malaya's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

Acknowledging the pros and cons of the move, she said a physical mode of orientation would provide better social connection among the students.

"We are aware of the risks of a

full physical orientation.

"However, a hybrid orientation will not provide the same effect for those going online mode. Students feel less connected and not involved with the activities.

"We can't be holding hybrid activities forever, especially as we are moving towards an endemic phase," she said when contacted, adding that universities should put in place clear guidelines.

The risk of infection could be lowered by instantly isolating students who show Covid-19 symptoms, Prof Moy added.

"If all incoming students are fully vaccinated and tested negative before entering the campus, students with flu-like symptoms, even though tested negative, should not join the orientation.

"Face masks should still be worn indoors.

"If these measures are enforced, the risk of infection will be lessened," she said.

Some public and private universities will be handling their orientation, typically a one-week programme, physically again as more Covid-19 restrictions for mass gatherings have been lifted.

Over the past two years, universities have been exploring ways of conducting the programme which includes the use of online video platforms and social media.

Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said with the vaccines and current recommended standard operating procedure (SOP), there should be no problem for face to

face methods.

"I think they should proceed with face to face learning methods. Online or hybrid can be reserved for other technical purposes.

"The situation now is safe for physical activities provided the students comply with the recommended SOP and are vaccinated," she said.

Dr Malina also called for the community to be empowered when it comes to practicing public health advice while avoiding unnecessary worries pertaining to the virus.

"We have to understand that vaccines work and compliance with the SOP is important.

"As long as these two are followed strictly, the pattern of risk of infection remains the same," she said.

## Experts welcome move to focus on severity of cases

**PETALING JAYA:** The move to give more emphasis on the severity of Covid-19 cases instead of daily numbers has been welcomed by medical experts, who say that it is a way for Malaysians to learn to live with the disease.

However, they advised the public to continue adhering to self-precautionary measures such as isolating when infected to avoid causing a risk to vulnerable groups.

"Most Covid-19 patients have mild symptoms and they need to be socially responsible. They should quarantine themselves, inform their friends and colleagues who are their close contacts.

"If these measures are practised, we may be able to contain the infections, especially to the high risk groups," said Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming of Universiti Malaya's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine.

She said the decision to monitor hospitalisation and death rates should be done as there were fewer people reporting their Covid-19 status.

At the same time, she also urged the government to issue constant reminders to the public to stay on alert although the national Covid-19 situation is now under control.

Universiti Putra Malaysia epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman welcomed the move to focus on mortality and hospital admissions.

Since a majority of Malaysians have been inoculated, she said medical consequences due to the virus have slowly become less serious compared to the early days of the pandemic.

"There is lesser (health) impact towards the public as the majority of our population have been vaccinated.

"The situation now is very much different than the earlier period during this pandemic," she said.

She was commenting on Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, who said on Tuesday that the government is phasing out the emphasis on daily infection numbers to be in line with the transition to endemicity.

He added that due to the relaxation of Covid-19 testing protocols, the number of actual cases is also bound to be more than reported.

According to CovidNow portal, as of Wednesday, the number of hospitalisations stood at 74.8% and intensive care unit utilisation was at 64.9%, which included non-Covid-19 cases.

Meanwhile, the seven-day average death rate stands at 0.8% as of Aug 2.

Dr Malina said that the pattern of infection and risk of transmission indicated that the Covid-19 situation in the country is stable and well-controlled.

"In my opinion, with vaccines, the risk of Covid-19 infection and its severity is more or less now within manageable numbers."

# KJ: Second booster take-up rate still low

By FAZLEENA AZIZ  
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**KUALA LUMPUR:** Only 5% of Malaysians aged between 70 and 79 have taken their second booster shots, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said.

As for those 80 years old and above, only 4.5% have taken the second booster jab.

"It is still low, but we anticipated that the take-up for the second booster shot would not be high. So we will continue to assure those aged 50 and above, especially those with health issues, to take the second one.

"But for now, it is still at the encouragement level, and there will not be any compulsion. Many people are aware of Covid-19 and the benefits of vaccination," he said yesterday.

He added that the ministry is not setting any targets, but they will continue to encourage people.

Khairy said the ministry was coming up with a yearly strategy for vaccination policy.

"We will refer to specialists on



**Early detection is key:** Khairy (centre) at the launch of the BEAUTY & HEALTH Programme in Kuala Lumpur. — ONG SOON HIN/The Star

the stand we should take, like offering vaccination to those who are elderly and with illness."

"It does not seem we will offer everyone. I don't think that is very likely unless there is a new severe variant.

"But I will be announcing our policy once we have clarity on what

it is," he said.

Earlier, Khairy launched BEAUTY (Bringing Education and Understanding to You) and HEALTH, a community-based digitally driven intervention for improving cancer-specific health knowledge, literacy, and risk-reduction practices based within community barber-

shops and beauty salons in Malaysia for screenable male and female cancers and other non-communicable diseases.

BEAUTY and HEALTH is a joint project by the National Cancer Society of Malaysia and the Asia Cancer Forum (Japan).

The local barbershops and beauty salons will act as a health communication platforms for cancer prevention and screening.

In his speech, Khairy said that only 600,000 people of the 6 million who qualified for free screenings under the Health Care Scheme of the B40 Group (PeKa B40) in the last three years had used the service.

He said people's reluctance stemmed from cultural norms, as some felt it unnecessary to do health screenings since they seemed and looked healthy and they fear bad news.

However, he said early detection provided a better outcome for the future.

Watch the video  
TheStarTV.com



# Reinfection cases up significantly, says Health DG

By RAGANANTHINI VETHASALAM  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Covid-19 reinfection cases were almost seven times higher during the Omicron wave than the Delta wave, says Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

"The cumulative number of Covid-19 reinfection cases from Feb 18 to Aug 6 is about 18,799 cases," he told The Star.

The first Omicron case was detected in Malaysia in December last year. In January, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the Omicron wave had begun in Malaysia.

Citing the ministry's data, Dr Noor Hisham said 64% of reinfections occurred after six months of

the first infection.

"Reinfection with the virus that causes Covid-19 means a person was infected, recovered, and then later became infected again."

A second infection is considered "reinfection" when the duration between the first and second infection is more than three months.

"Research shows that recovered Covid-19 patients can be reinfected, as is common with other viruses too," he added.

Dr Noor Hisham noted that the causes and risk factors of reinfection are not fully understood.

However, the waning of immunity that people gained through natural infection or vaccination and the emergence of the new variants may circumvent the immune protection," he said.

"A previous SARS-CoV-2 infection provides high protection against reinfection with variants of concern (VOCs) such as Alpha and Delta, which have limited immune escape," he added.

According to Dr Noor Hisham, Malaysia currently reports 3,000 to 5,000 Covid-19 cases. However, hospital admissions have remained stable with no significant increase.

He added that the health system's capacity is sufficient to cope with the current situation of Covid-19.

He said the best way to fend off reinfection is the same way we avoid infection in the first place.

He reminded people to "wash their hands often, wear a mask indoors and in crowded places, avoid sick people and, most importantly, get vaccinated and boosted

even if you've already had Covid-19," he said.

On Wednesday, Malaysia recorded 4,896 new Covid-19 cases, bringing the total number of cases in the country to 4,719,394 infections since the pandemic began.

The Health Ministry's CovidNow portal reported that 4,894 of Wednesday's new Covid-19 cases were local transmissions, while two imported infections were logged.

There were 2,979 recoveries on Wednesday, bringing Malaysia's cumulative number of recoveries to 4,638,716.

The portal reported there were 44,622 active cases in the country, with 42,942, or 96.2%, observing home quarantine and 35 individuals, or 0.1%, admitted to low-risk quarantine and treatment centres.



AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

# 'Promote awareness towards healthy lifestyle'

► Educating public to be proactive in managing health can help fight rising number of non-communicable diseases cases: MP

■ BY RAJVINDER SINGH  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Education about a healthy lifestyle will help fight and reduce the growing number of non-communicable diseases (NCD) cases in the country, especially in three categories - cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular disease (CVD).

Former deputy health minister, Lee Boon Chye, said while vaccines have helped reduce most infectious diseases, NCD are growing and becoming a significant healthcare threat.

"The public must be educated about the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and fight obesity by following a healthy diet. There is also the need to catch NCD at an early stage to prevent it from taking hold.

"Free medical check-ups for the B40 group will help the Health Ministry keep track of NCD among those from the lower income. The network of government clinics nationwide can play an important role in combating NCD, by advising the most vulnerable."

Lee, who is Gopeng MP, said the ministry

needs to go all out to promote a healthy lifestyle through the ministry's Health Education Division.

"People should be encouraged to exercise, such as taking 10,000 steps a day. Parents and primary school children need to learn how a healthy lifestyle can help prevent NCD."

Lee said educating children from young about healthy living will save the ministry money in the long term as fewer people will fall victim to NCD.

The total direct healthcare costs of the three NCD categories were estimated at RM9.65 billion in 2017. The total healthcare cost for diabetes was RM4.38 billion; followed by CVD, with RM3.93 billion; and cancer, RM1.34 billion. Hospitalisation costs for the three categories totalled RM1.58 billion.

With these estimated costs, coupled with the loss of productivity costs of RM12.88 billion, the combined cost burden was RM22.53 billion to the Malaysian economy. This is equivalent to 1.56% of Malaysia's 2017 gross domestic product.

Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai said prevention is the best

way to reduce the costs of treatment for NCD. Awareness of the impact of one's lifestyle on health and policies that support a healthy lifestyle is necessary.

"The public should see their family doctor for a medical check-up at least once a year to check their health status. This simple habit of managing health will show that better outcomes can be achieved by being proactive.

"Healthy lifestyle habits should be adopted while a person is still healthy. Many only start thinking of their health when they have an issue. We need to move towards becoming more prevention-centric."

He said the problem of obesity in Malaysia is worrying as it can lead to many other serious issues such as type 2 diabetes, hypertension, heart disease and certain cancers.

"Obese individuals must know that lifestyle changes are important to manage this condition. Awareness is also important or they may not see it as a problem. We know the main contributor to obesity is poor eating habits."

Koh said it does not help that eateries in our country are mushrooming, but with certain lifestyle adjustments, people's health conditions can improve.

He advised those wanting to join any weight loss programme to first seek medical advice.

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

## 32.8% of Sarawak Covid-19 cases due to BA.5 subvariant

**KUCHING:** The BA.5 subvariant accounted for 32.8% or one-third of the Covid-19 cases in Sarawak from June, according to the Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UniMas) Institute of Health and Community Medicine (IHCM).

This was stated in a report submitted to the State Disaster Management Committee chairman Datuk Amar Douglas Uggah Embas.

UniMas IHCM director Prof Dr David Perera said a total of 165 samples obtained statewide

were sequenced from April 3 to July 13, all of which were detected to be from the B.1.1.529, Omicron variant of concern.

He said from these samples, 121 were multiple minor sub-lineages of BA.2 subvariant, 43 of the BA.5 subvariant and a first reported BA.4 case.

"While the BA.2 continues to be the predominant detected subvariant, a rapid increase in infections of the BA.5 subvariant

was observed.

"From early June, approximately one third (32.8%) of all detections were of the subvariant BA.5," he said.

Perera added this was consistent with the global distribution of the highly infectious Omicron, which has seen a rapid increase in detection rate in many countries.

"The public is strongly advised to be aware of the heightened risk," he added. - Bernama