

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

# Kebanyakan negeri catat pertambahan kes baharu

2,717 jangkitan direkod, Selangor kekal catat angka tertinggi

Oleh Noor Atiqah Sulaiman  
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**Putrajaya:** Sebanyak 2,717 kes baharu jangkitan COVID-19 direkodkan semalam, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes di negara ini sebanyak 390,252 kes.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata daripada jumlah kes baharu itu, Selangor kekal mencatatkan kes harian tertinggi dengan 768 kes baharu.

Katanya, enam lagi negeri yang mencatatkan kes baharu tiga angka ialah Sarawak sebanyak 570 kes, Kelantan (518) Kuala Lumpur (240); Pulau Pinang (134); Sabah (132) dan Johor (126).

"Selain itu, negeri yang turut mencatatkan pertambahan kes baharu hari ini (semalam) adalah Perak dengan 54 kes, Terengganu (50); Kedah (34); Melaka (30); Negeri Sembilan (27) dan Pahang (22).

"Turut mencatatkan pertambahan kes, Putrajaya dengan 11 kes serta satu kes di Perlis. Hanya Labuan tidak melaporkan sebarang kes baharu," katanya di Facebook, di sini, semalam.

Sementara itu, Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, berkata sebanyak 495,750 in-



Penguatkuasa Pejabat Kesihatan Daerah Kuantan memantau pematuhan orang ramai di sebuah pusat beli-belah di Kuantan, semalam.

(Foto Farizul Hafiz Awang/BH)

dividu sudah melengkapkan dua dos suntikan vaksin menerusi Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan (PICIK) setakat kelmarin.

Katanya, bagi tempoh sama, seramai 783,987 individu sudah menerima dos pertama menjadikan keseluruhan pemberian dos pertama dan kedua vaksin COVID-19 di negara ini berjumlah 1,279,737 dos.

Menerusi satu infografik yang dikongsikan melalui laman Twitter rasminya semalam, Dr Adham berkata, lima negeri menerima suntikan dos pertama vaksin tertinggi ialah Selangor

dengan 103,613, diikuti Kuala Lumpur (87,603), Sarawak (74,154), Johor (71,609) dan Sabah (65,940).

Lima negeri yang melengkapkan kedua-dua dos suntikan vaksin COVID-19 tertinggi setakat ini pula ialah Selangor dengan 70,468, diikuti Perak (49,958), Sarawak (48,444), Sabah (45,253) dan Kuala Lumpur (44,379).

Mengenai jumlah individu yang berdaftar untuk program imunisasi, Dr Adham berkata setakat kelmarin, sebanyak 9,225,268 atau 38 peratus daripada yang disasarkan sudah mendaftar dengan Selangor kekal mencatat angka tertinggi sebanyak

2,406,238 pendaftaran.

Mengikuti perancangan program imunisasi itu, tempoh pelaksanaan fasa pertama pemberian vaksin yang bermula Februari lalu hingga bulan ini, membabitkan 500,000 anggota barisan hadapan termasuk petugas kesihatan.

Fasa kedua bermula pada April hingga Ogos depan membabitkan 9.4 juta warga emas, kumpulan rentan dan orang kurang upaya (OKU), manakala fasa ketiga dijadual pada Mei hingga Februari 2022, membabitkan individu 18 tahun dan ke atas dengan sasaran 13.7 juta orang atau lebih.

## 268,800 dos vaksin AstraZeneca tiba di KLIA

**Kota Tinggi:** Malaysia menerima 268,800 dos vaksin COVID-19 jenis AstraZeneca yang tiba di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA), malam kelmarin.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba berkata vaksin berkenaan yang diperolehi melalui fasiliti COVAX tiba di KLIA pada 8.20 malam, iaitu penghantaran pertama bagi vaksin itu yang pembelannya dilaksanakan pada Disember lalu untuk kegunaan tiga peratus jumlah populasi negara.

"Pihak fasiliti COVAX menghantar vaksin ini dari Korea Selatan dan kita akan letak di gu-

dang yang ditetapkan," katanya pada sidang media selepas majlis penyampaian peruntukan Parlimen Tenggara di Pusat Khidmat Wakil Rakyat Ahli Parlimen Tenggara, Taman Daiman, di sini semalam.

Ditanya kebimbangan masyarakat terhadap vaksin berkenaan, Dr Adham yang juga Ahli Parlimen Tenggara, berkata Jawatankuasa Khas Jaminan Akses Bekalan Vaksin COVID-19 (JKJAV) membuat ke-



Dr Adham Baba

putusan untuk membeli vaksin itu hanya selepas mendapat kelulusan Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (MPRA).

Beliau berkata, berdasarkan penelitian terhadap semua data daripada pengeluaran dan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO), didapati kelebihan menggunakan vaksin berkenaan adalah lebih mudah.

"Pandangan kita, vaksin AstraZeneca ada kebaikan apabila digunakan terhadap kumpulan (pe-

nerima) tertentu, (sebab itu) kena banyakkkan jenis vaksin lagi kerana keperluan vaksin ada yang boleh serasi dengan kumpulan-kumpulan itu. Sekarang kita dah ada Pfizer-BioNTech, Sinovac dan AstraZeneca," katanya.

Ketika ditanya mengenai kumpulan pertama yang akan menerima vaksin berkenaan, beliau berkata, satu pengumuman akan dibuat pada Isnin ini.

"Pihak JKJAV, pakar klinikal dan pakar jangkitan akan memberi saranan kepada kumpulan yang akan kita berikan dan kenyataan mengenainya akan dibuat Isnin ini," katanya.

BERNAMA

AKHBAR : KOSMO AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEGARA

Sebanyak 21 kes dikesan setakat ini melalui surveilan genomik yang dilakukan

## 4 lagi kes varian South African B.1.351

Oleh SITI A'ISYAH SUKAIMI

**PUTRAJAYA** - Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) melalui Institut Penyelidikan Perubatan (IMR) mengesan empat lagi kes tempatan dijangkiti varian South African B.1.351 menjadikan jumlah terkini sebanyak 21 kes.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, empat kes tersebut dikesan melalui surveilan genomik yang dijalankan dari 15 sehingga 23 April.

"Tiga dilaporkan di daerah Kuala Langat, manakala satu kes lagi merupakan kes pertama di luar Selangor iaitu yang disahkan di Hospital Tuanku Jaafar Seremban, Negeri Sembilan.

"Dua daripada kes tersebut ditemui dalam Kluster Teknologi Emas, satu saringan kontak-rapat, manakala satu lagi punca kes masih dalam siasatan," katanya dalam kenyataan akhbar semalam.

Katanya, melalui surveilan genomik terkini bagi tempoh yang sama, sebanyak 29 kes telah



**SUASANA di kaunter tiket bas Terminal Bersepadu Selatan di Bandar Tasik Selatan, Kuala Lumpur lengang berikutan larangan rentas negeri masih dikekalkan.** - AMIR KHALID

menjalani jujukan genom penuh merangkumi Johor, Selangor, Putrajaya, Sabah, dan Sarawak.

"Data genom SARS-CoV-2 bagi kes-kes ini menunjukkan kitaran lineage yang lazim dijumpai iaitu Malaysian B.1.524 di Semenanjung

Malaysia dan B.1.466.2 di Sarawak yang dikategorikan sebagai bukan *variant of concern*.

Berhubung kes harian pula, ujarnya, 11 kematian dilaporkan di Sarawak, Selangor, Sabah dan Kuala Lumpur memabitkan tu-

COVID-19	
Angka terkini kes Covid-19 di Malaysia sehingga semalam	
Jumlah	
Kes baharu	2,717
Importasi	26
Tempatan:	2,691
Pulih	2,292
Kematian	11
Masih dirawat	22,926
Jumlah kes sembuh	365,900
Jumlah Kematian	1,426
Jumlah kes keseluruhan	390,252

"Kluster tempat kerja yang dikesan ialah Kluster Jalan Abdul Karim di Klang, Selangor dengan 11 kes, Kluster Jalan Melor di Hulu Selangor dengan tujuh kes serta Kluster Lebuah Ipoh-Lumut di Kinta dan Perak Tengah, Perak dengan 17 kes.

"Seterusnya, Kluster Jalan Datoh di Kinta dengan 12 kes, Kluster Tingkat Mak Manding di Seberang Perai Utara, Pulau Pinang dengan 13 kes, Kluster D'lahar di Besut, Terengganu dengan 40 kes serta Kluster Desa Mawar di Rompin, Pahang dengan sembilan kes," katanya.

Ujarnya, dua kluster komuniti ialah Kluster Jalan Kolam Dua di Larut, Matang dan Selama, Perak dengan lapan kes dan Kluster Dambai Inanam di Kota Kinabalu, Kuala Penyu dan Putatan, Sabah dengan 19 kes.

Tambahnya, kluster pendidikan KPM pula ialah Kluster Jalan St. Thomas di Kepong, Cheras dan Titiwangsa, Kuala Lumpur serta Gombak, Hulu Langat dan Petaling serta Raub, Pahang dengan 11 kes.

## 268,800 dos AstraZeneca tiba

**KOTA TINGGI** - Sebanyak 268,800 dos vaksin jenis AstraZeneca selamat tiba di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA) kelmarin.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr. Adham Baba berkata, penghantaran pertama vaksin berkenaan yang diperolehi melalui fasiliti COVAX selamat tiba pada pukul 8.20 malam.

"Ini merupakan penghantaran pertama melibatkan 268,800 dos melalui pembelian yang kita telah laksanakan pada Disember lalu melalui fasiliti COVAX untuk dapatkan tiga peratus jumlah populasi negara.

"Ini melalui solidariti *fund* yang kita masuk dalam fasiliti COVAX dan pihak fasiliti COVAX menghantar vaksin ini dari Korea Selatan.

"Kita akan letak (vaksin ini) di gudang kawasan yang telah ditetapkan. Jadi untuk itu kita telah ada calon-calon vaksin dalam negara kita seperti Pfizer-BioNTech dan Sinovac," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian selepas menyerahkan peruntukan kepada badan bukan kerajaan (NGO) pada Majlis Penyampaian Peruntukan Parlimen Tenggara di Pusat Khidmat Wakil Rakyat Ahli Parlimen Tenggara, Taman Daiman, Kota Tinggi, semalam.



**VAKSIN Covid-19 AstraZeneca selamat tiba di Malaysia kelmarin.** - AFP

Mengulas lanjut kebimbangan masyarakat terhadap vaksin jenis itu, Dr. Adham berkata, Jawatankuasa Khas Jaminan Akses Bekalan Vaksin (JKJAV) telah membuat keputusan untuk membeli vaksin itu hanya selepas mendapat kelulusan Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (NPRA).

Katanya, penelitian terhadap semua data-data daripada pengeluaran termasuk daripada Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) bahawa kelebihan menggunakan vaksin tersebut adalah

melebihi kemudatan.

"Pandangan kita ada kebaikan vaksin AstraZeneca - bila guna kepada kumpulan-kumpulan tertentu. (Sebab itu) kena perbanyak calon vaksin kerana keperluan vaksin ada yang boleh serasi dengan bentuk-bentuk vaksin seperti ini," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan lain ketika ditanya berkenaan adakah rentas negeri dibenarkan sekiranya kes harian Covid-19 menurun beliau berkata, perkara itu akan diperhalusi berdasarkan beberapa indikator.

## Jumpa anak di asrama punca penularan Covid-19 di sekolah

**ALOR SETAR** - Tindakan sege-lintir ibu bapa bergejala bertemu dengan anak mereka di asrama bagi menghantar makanan merupakan punca penularan Covid-19 dalam kalangan pelajar di Baling, baru-baru ini.

Menteri Besar Kedah, Muhammad Sanusi Md. Nor berkata, pihak sekolah dan Jabatan Pendidikan Negeri sebelum ini telah menetapkan prosedur operasi standard (SOP) bertujuan menghalang ahli keluarga memasuki kawasan sekolah.

Namun, katanya, pelanggaran SOP tersebut oleh ibu bapa didapati masih berlaku sehingga menyebabkan tercetus penularan Covid-19 di sekolah.

"Terdapat ibu bapa pelajar terlibat yang menjalani ujian saringan Covid-19 selepas itu disahkan positif.

"Pada masa sama, ujian saringan ke atas anak-anak mereka di asrama pula didapati turut positif bersama rakan-rakan lain," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika ditemui pemberita selepas berbuka puasa bersama warga

Ibu Pejabat Polis Kontinjen Kedah, di sini kelmarin.

Beliau mengulas mengenai beberapa buah sekolah di Baling, Kulim dan Alor Setar kini berdepan ancaman Covid-19 melibatkan pelajar sekolah.

Keadaan itu turut menyebabkan dua sekolah di Baling iaitu Maktab Mahmud dan Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Baling, ditutup bagi tujuan kerja-kerja isolasi pada 18 dan 22 April lalu.

Muhammad Sanusi dalam pada itu tidak menolak kemungkinan penularan Covid-19 dalam kalangan pelajar di sekolah-sekolah lain dalam negeri ini, turut berpunca daripada pertemuan antara murid dan ibu bapa.

"Jadi saya harap amalan yang sering dibuat dulu seperti menghantar makanan kepada anak-anak, tidak perlulah dibuat dalam norma bakan lain," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika ditemui pemberita selepas berbuka puasa bersama warga

AKHBAR : MINGGUAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

# Sudah lebih setahun kami tersisih kerana Covid-19

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**PASIR PUTEH:** Golongan warga emas yang mendaftarkan diri dengan Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) teruja apabila menerima suntikan vaksin pertama sejak semalam.

Rata-rata mereka yang ditemui Utusan Malaysia berharap ancaman pandemik tersebut segera reda supaya semua orang dapat menjalani semula kehidupan normal terutama dapat bersama keluarga masing-masing.

Paling tidak, mereka berharap prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang kebanyakannya seolah-olah 'menyisihkan' golongan warga emas dalam apa sahaja aktiviti cepat-cepat ditamatkan.

Abdul Ghani Jusoh, 71, dari bandar Pasir Puteh berkata, paling ditunggu-tunggu sejak lebih setahun lalu ialah untuk bertemu semula 31 cucu yang terpisah dengannya sejak virus tersebut menular di negara ini.

Selain itu katanya, dalam tempoh sama, warga emas berusia 60 tahun ke atas dilarang masuk ke pasar raya serta premis-premis lain selain tidak dibenarkan bergerak bebas di tempat awam.

"Bagi warga emas yang tidak ada anak atau cucu di sisi, kami terpaksa mendapatkan bantuan orang kampung untuk membeli barangan keperluan terutama ketika Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP). Sudah lebih setahun kami hidup tersisih begini.

"Dengan adanya suntikan vaksin, saya harap semuanya kembali menjadi normal," katanya ketika ditemui selepas menerima suntikan pertama sempena PICK di



**KAMARUZAMAN Ab. Wahab (kiri) meninjau keadaan warga emas yang menerima suntikan di Pasir Puteh, Kelantan. - MINGGUAN/TOREK SULONG**

Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) di Dewan Maritim Malaysia Kelantan di sini semalam.

Wan Khadijah Wan Khalid, 81, pula berkata, kesepian yang ditanggung warga emas diharapkan segera berakhir selepas program imunisasi vaksin Covid-19 dilaksanakan.

"Kami bagaikan tersisih apabila tidak dibenarkan solat berjemaah di masjid hanya kerana

usia yang lanjut tanpa merujuk kepada status kesihatan semasa.

"Sebab itu semua warga emas perlu tampil mendaftar dengan PICK. Jangan terpengaruh dengan kumpulan antivaksin sehingga menyebabkan kita terperap di rumah, dihalang ke pasar dan masjid," ujarnya.

Sementara itu, Timbalan Pengerusi Jawatankuasa Bencana Jajahan, Mohd. Kamarulzaman

Ab. Wahab yang meninjau proses vaksinasi tersebut berkata, seramai 120 warga emas di seluruh daerah ini menerima suntikan vaksin Sinovac semalam.

Setakat ini katanya, hanya 18,000 daripada 90,000 penduduk di Pasir Puteh yang berusia 60 tahun ke atas sudah mendaftarkan diri dengan PICK bagi mendapatkan suntikan vaksin Covid-19.

## Kes positif hampiri 3,000 kes

**PUTRAJAYA:** Malaysia terus merekodkan peningkatan kes positif baharu Covid-19 menghampiri 3,000 kes iaitu 2,717 kes mengatasi kes sembuh 2,292 kes.

Sebanyak 11 kematian dan 10 kluster direkodkan manakala kes aktif terus menunjukkan peningkatan iaitu 22,926 kes berbanding semalam, 22,512 kes.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr. Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, sebanyak 272 kes memerlukan rawatan di Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) manakala 124 kes memerlukan bantuan pemafasan.

Katanya, Selangor terus kekal menjadi negeri tertinggi merekodkan kes positif baharu iaitu 768 kes diikuti Sarawak, 570 kes; Kelantan, 518 kes; Kuala Lumpur, 240 kes; Pulau Pinang, 134 kes; Sabah, 132 kes dan Johor, 126 kes.

"Baki negeri merekodkan kes dua angka iaitu Perak, 54 kes; Terengganu, 50 kes; Kedah, 34 kes; Melaka, 30 kes; Negeri Sembilan, 27 kes; Pahang, 22 kes dan Putrajaya, 11 kes.

"Hanya Perlis merekodkan satu kes manakala Labuan, sifar kes," katanya dalam kenyataan semalam.

Dr. Noor Hisham berkata, 11 kes kematian iaitu lima kes di Sarawak, tiga kes di Selangor, dua kes di Sabah, dan satu kes di Kuala Lumpur melibatkan 10 kes warga tempatan dan satu warga asing.

"Kes melibatkan tujuh lelaki termasuk warga asing dan empat wanita berusia antara 36 hingga 80 tahun.

"Pelbagai latar belakang penyakit dikesan melibatkan jantung, strok, obesiti, kencing manis, darah tinggi, dislipidemia, asma dan buah pinggang kronik," katanya.

Mengulas mengenai melibatkan 10 kluster baharu, beliau berkata, ia melibatkan tujuh kluster tempat kerja, dua kluster komuniti, dan satu kluster sekolah/institusi pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan.

## 2,000 jalani saringan di Madinah Ramadan

**KOTA BHARU:** Sebanyak 2,000 individu menjalani ujian saringan Covid-19 dalam tempoh tiga hari sejak Selasa lalu hingga semalam di Madinah Ramadan di sini, yang baru sahaja dijadikan Pusat Saringan Covid-19.

Pengarah Kesihatan negeri, Datuk Dr. Zaini Hussin berkata, semua individu terbabit perlu melakukan ujian selepas mempunyai kontak rapat dengan ahli keluarga, sekolah dan tempat kerja.

"Secara purata lebih kurang 700 individu membuat ujian sari-

ngan di Madinah Ramadan setiap hari, melibatkan kanak-kanak, dewasa dan warga emas kerana mempunyai kontak rapat dengan pesakit Covid-19.

"Seramai 60 kakitangan Jabatan Kesihatan negeri ditempatkan di situ setakat ini," katanya ketika dihubungi *Mingguan Malaysia* di sini semalam.

Semalam tular dalam media sosial gambar memaparkan ratusan individu menunggu giliran di sekitar Madinah Ramadan yang terletak di pekarangan Stadium

Sultan Muhammad IV bagi menjalani ujian saringan Covid-19.

Tinjauan turut mendapati ibu bapa menemani anak masing-masing untuk menjalani ujian saringan itu.

Seorang ibu yang enggan dikenali mendakwa, anaknya baru berusia tujuh tahun terpaksa menjalani ujian tersebut selepas mempunyai kontak rapat di sebuah sekolah di daerah ini. "Anak saya selesai menjalani ujian saringan dan diberi surat serta perlu memakai gelang berwarna me-

rah jambu selama tiga hari. Jika negatif barulah gelang itu dicabut selepas tiga hari.

"Saya berharap keputusannya negatif kerana anak saya tidak menunjukkan sebarang gejala atau tanda-tanda dan dia kini di-kuarantin di rumah," katanya.

Seorang lagi ibu yang turut menemani anak berusia sembilan tahun pula kesal apabila anaknya menjadi kontak rapat seorang murid lain yang dijangkiti Covid-19, biarpun diberi jaminan kononnya sekolah adalah lokasi selamat.

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 10

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

# 10 kluster baharu dikesan

2,717 kes baharu dicatatkan dengan Selangor rekod kes tertinggi

Oleh MUHAMMAD YUSAINY MOHAMAD YUNUS

**SHAH ALAM**

Sebanyak 10 kluster baharu dikenalpasti pada Sabtu melibatkan tujuh kluster tempat kerja, satu sekolah atau institusi pendidikan Kementerian Pendidikan Malaysia (KPM) dan dua komuniti.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, tujuh kluster di tempat kerja melibatkan Kluster Jalan Melor dan Jalan

Abdul Karim di Selangor, Kluster Tingkat Mak Mandin (Pulau Pinang), Kluster D'Lahar (Terengganu), Kluster Desa Mawar (Pahang), Kluster Jalan Datoh serta Kluster Leboh Ipoh-Lumut (Perak).

"Satu kluster sekolah atau institusi pendidikan KPM dikesan iaitu Kluster Jalan St Thomas (Kuala Lumpur) manakala dua kluster komuniti adalah Kluster Jalan Kolang Dua (Perak) serta Kluster Dambai Inanam (Sabah)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan pada Sabtu.

Mengulas lanjut, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, sebanyak 2,717 kes baharu dilaporkan menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes 390,252.

Menurutnya, Selangor merekod-



DR NOOR HISHAM

kan kes baharu tertinggi dengan 768 diikuti Sarawak (570), Kelantan (518), Kuala Lumpur (240), Pulau Pinang (134) dan Sabah (132).

"Sebanyak 126 kes direkodkan di Johor, Perak (54), Terengganu (50), Kedah (34), Melaka (30), Negeri Sembilan (27), Pahang (22), Putrajaya (11), Perlis (satu) selain tiada kes baharu di Labuan," kata beliau lagi.

Beliau berkata, sebanyak 11 kematian direkodkan melibatkan 10 warganegara dan satu bukan warganegara.

"Sejumlah 272 kes dirawat di unit rawatan rapi (ICU) dengan 124 daripadanya memerlukan bantuan pernafasan," katanya.

Pengembara dari negara lapor virus VOC wajib jalani kuarantin 14 hari

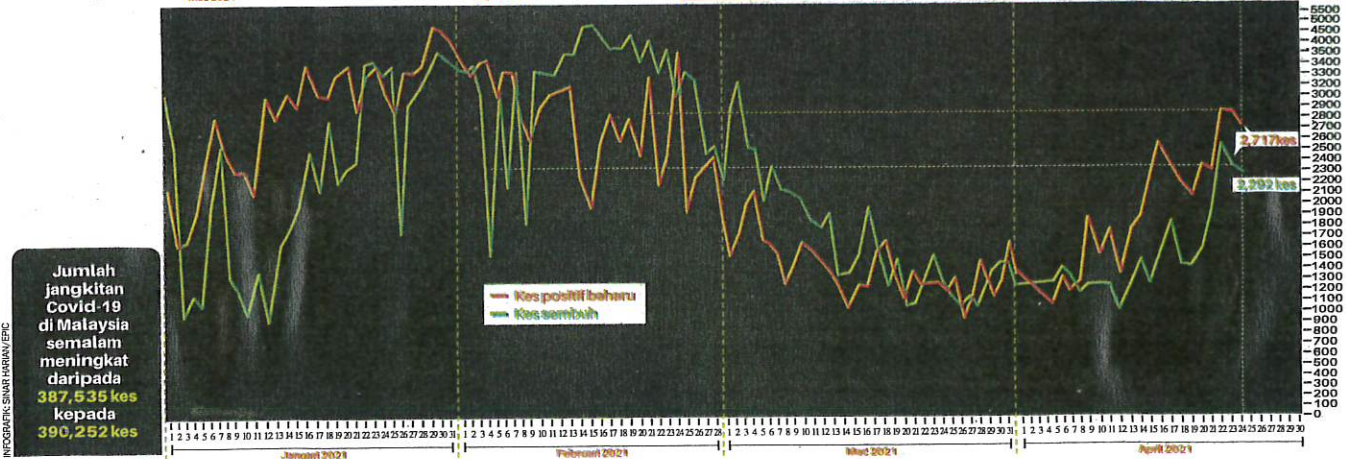
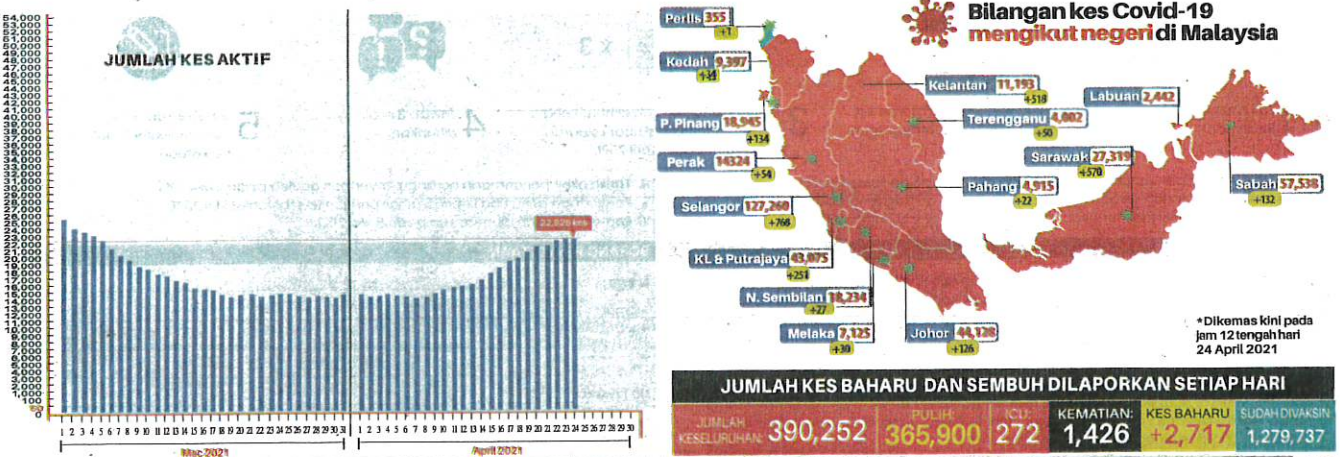
**KUALA LUMPUR** - Pengembara yang baru tiba dari negara yang melaporkan penularan virus Covid-19 Varian Yang Membimbangkan (VOC) jenis baharu perlu menjalani tempoh kuarantin wajib yang dipanjangkan kepada 14 hari berbanding 10 hari sebelum ini.

Menteri Kanan (Keselamatan), Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob berkata, arahan itu sebagai langkah berjaga-jaga bagi mengelakkan penularan VOC jenis baharu di Malaysia memandangkan ada dalam kalangan varian itu telah pun dikesan di negara ini misalnya varian B.1.351 atau South African variant.

"Melihat kepada perkembangan pelaporan beberapa jenis VOC baharu di negara luar, adalah dikhuatiri varian ini kemungkinan boleh dibawa masuk oleh pengembara yang mengembara ke Malaysia," katanya dalam satu kenyataan pada Sabtu.

Beliau berkata, berdasarkan laporan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO), terdapat tiga varian yang membimbangkan iaitu B.1.351 yang mula dilaporkan di Afrika Selatan, B.1.1.7 dari United Kingdom dan B.1.1.28 atau P1 dari Brazil dan Jepun. *- Bernama*

**SITUASI TERKINI KES COVID-19 DI MALAYSIA**



INFOGRAFIK SMART HARAPAN/EPIC

AKHBAR : SINAR AHAD

MUKA SURAT : 11

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Kumpulan pertama yang akan terima vaksin itu akan diumumkan Isnin ini

KOTA TINGGI

**M**alaysia menerima 268,800 dos vaksin Covid-19 jenis AstraZeneca di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA) pada malam Jumaat.

Menteri Kesihatan, Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba berkata, vaksin berkenaan yang diperoleh melalui fasiliti Covax tiba di KLIA pada jam 8.20 malam.

Beliau berkata, ini merupakan penghantaran pertama bagi vaksin itu yang pembeliannya dilaksanakan pada. Disember lepas bagi kegunaan tiga peratus jumlah populasi negara.

"Pihak fasiliti Covax menghantar vaksin ini dari Korea Selatan dan kita akan letak di gudang yang telah ditetapkan," katanya pada sidang media selepas majlis penyampaian

peruntukan Parlimen Tenggara di Pusat Khidmat Wakil Rakyat Ahli Parlimen Tenggara, Taman Daiman di sini pada Sabtu.

Sementara itu, ditanya mengenai kebimbangan masyarakat terhadap vaksin berkenaan, Dr Adham berkata,

Jawatankuasa Khas Jaminan Akses Bekalan Vaksin Covid-19 (JKJAV) telah membuat keputusan untuk membeli vaksin itu hanya selepas mendapat kelulusan Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (MPRA).

Beliau berkata, berdasarkan penelitian terhadap semua data daripada pengeluaran dan



DR ADHAM

Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO), didapati kelebihan menggunakan vaksin itu adalah melebihi kemudharatan.

"Pandangan kita, vaksin AstraZeneca ada kebaikan apabila digunakan terhadap kumpulan (penerima) tertentu... (sebab itu) kena

banyakkan jenis-jenis vaksin lagi kerana keperluan vaksin ada yang boleh serasi dengan kumpulan-kumpulan itu... sekarang kita dah ada Pfizer-BioNTech, Sinovac dan AstraZeneca," katanya.

Bagaimanapun ketika ditanya kumpulan pertama yang akan menerima vaksin berkenaan, beliau berkata satu peng-

umuman akan dibuat pada Isnin ini.

"Pihak JKJAV, pakar klinikal dan pakar jangkitan akan memberi saranan kepada kumpulan yang akan kita berikan dan kenyataan mengenainya akan dibuat Isnin ini," katanya.

Sementara itu, beliau berkata, sebanyak 495,750 individu sudah melengkapkan dua dos suntikan vaksin menerusi Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan setakat Jumaat.

"Bagi tempoh sama, 783,987 individu menerima dos pertama menjadikan keseluruhan pemberian dos pertama dan kedua vaksin Covid-19 di negara ini berjumlah 1,279,737 dos," katanya.

Menerusi satu infografik yang dikongsikan melalui laman Twitter rasminya pada Sab-

tu, Dr Adham berkata, lima negeri menerima suntikan dos pertama vaksin tertinggi ialah Selangor dengan 103,613, diikuti Kuala Lumpur (87,603), Sarawak (74,154), Johor (71,609) dan Sabah (65,940).

Lima negeri yang melengkapkan kedua-dua dos suntikan vaksin Covid-19 tertinggi setakat ini pula ialah Selangor dengan 70,468, diikuti Perak (49,958), Sarawak (48,444), Sabah (45,253) dan Kuala Lumpur (44,379).

Mengenai jumlah individu yang berdaftar untuk program imunisasi, Dr Adham berkata, setakat Jumaat, 9,225,268 atau 38 peratus daripada disasarkan telah mendaftar dengan Selangor kekal mencatat angka tertinggi sebanyak 2,406,238 pendaftaran. -Bernama

## Malaysia terima 268,800 dos vaksin AstraZeneca

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

BLOOD CLOT CONCERNS

# ASTRAZENECA RECIPIENTS TO BE KNOWN TOMORROW

268,800 doses have arrived; WHO says job's benefits outweigh risks

KOTA TINGGI

**T**HE first group of recipients of the AstraZeneca Covid-19 vaccine will be announced tomorrow following the arrival of the first batch of 268,800 doses of the vaccine on Friday night.

Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba said despite blood clot concerns, an analysis of the data from the vaccine manufacturer and World Health Organisation (WHO) found that its benefits outweighed the risks.

He said the Special Committee for Ensuring Access to Covid-19 Vaccine Supply (JKJAV) decided to procure the vaccine only after it was approved by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPR), which is under the Health Ministry.

"Our view is that the AstraZeneca vaccine is beneficial for use by certain groups... (We) need to have more brands of vaccine as some people may be compatible with this vaccine."

The vaccine, purchased through the Covax facility, arrived at Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 8.20pm, Bernama reported.

Dr Adham said Malaysia signed an agreement in December to procure the Covid-19 vaccine to cover three per cent of the country's population.

"The Covax facility sent the vaccine from South Korea, and we will keep it at the designated storage centre," he said after the presentation of allocations for the Tenggara parliamentary constituency in Taman Daiman here yesterday.

On April 8, Coordinating Minister for the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Khairy Jamaluddin had said JKJAV would review the use of the vac-

cine after the European Medicines Agency (EMA) found that unusual blood clots with low blood platelets should be listed as a very rare side effect of the jab.

"We take note of the EMA's announcement on the AstraZeneca vaccine.

"JKJAV will deliberate on the matter and decide if we will go ahead with using AZ (AstraZeneca) in our portfolio of vaccines. Safety is paramount," he said on Twitter.

The EMA's Safety Committee had shared its conclusion on its review of the vaccine and confirmed that its benefits in preventing Covid-19 outweighed the risks of side effects.

According to the Bernama report, the EMA reminded healthcare professionals and people receiving the vaccine to remain aware of the possibility of very rare cases of blood clots combined with low levels of blood platelets within two weeks of vaccination.

"So far, most of the cases [are] reported to have occurred in women under 60 years of age within two weeks of vaccination.

"Based on the available evidence, specific risk factors have not been confirmed," the EMA said on its website.

The committee said it had reviewed 62 cases of cerebral venous sinus thrombosis and 24 cases of splanchnic vein thrombosis reported in the European Union drug safety database up to March 22, where 25 million had received the vaccine, with 18 fatalities.

Meanwhile, Dr Adham said 495,750 people had received both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme up to Friday, while 783,987 people had received the first dose, bringing the total number of shots administered in the country to 1,279,737.

In an infographic shared on his Twitter page yesterday, the five states with the highest number of recipients of the first dose of vaccine were Selangor at 103,613 people, followed by Kuala Lumpur



(87,603), Sarawak (74,154), Johor (71,609) and Sabah (65,940).

The five states with the highest number of recipients of both doses of vaccine were Selangor at 70,468 people, followed by Perak (49,958), Sarawak (48,444), Sabah (45,253) and Kuala Lumpur (44,379).

Up to Friday, 9,225,268 people, or 38 per cent of the population, had registered for vaccination, with Selangor topping the list at 2,406,238 registrants.

The first phase of the immunisation programme, from February to this month, involves 500,000 frontliners, mainly health workers.

The second phase, from this month to August, will involve 9.4 million senior citizens age 65 and above, vulnerable groups with morbidity problems and the disabled.

The third phase, from next month to February, involves those age 18 and above, targeting almost 14 million people.

In a separate interview with the *New Sunday Times*, Dr Adham said during its meeting on Thursday, JKJAV had deliberated on requests from several state governments to procure their own Covid-19 vaccines.

"In principle, JKJAV has no objections to the requests from the state governments.

"Those wishing to buy vaccines

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION



Nonagenarians Tan Phua Eng (seated, left) and Chan Sui Guan (seated, right) pose for a picture with healthcare workers after receiving their vaccination at the Stadium Perpaduan vaccination centre in Petra Jaya, Kuching, on Friday. PIC BY NADIM BOKHARI

## 'Misinformation big hurdle in vaccine drive'

**KUALA LUMPUR:** As the government races against time to deliver Covid-19 vaccines and brace for a possible fourth wave of infections, experts say the biggest hurdle may be misinformation and misconceptions that lead to vaccine hesitancy among people.

Professor Datuk Dr Adeeba Kamarulzaman, from Universiti Malaya, said doubts about Covid-19 vaccines rose after reports of healthcare workers getting infected with Covid-19 after completing their vaccination last week.

She said while no vaccine or treatment could offer total protection, statistics had shown that inoculation had lowered the number of infections.

"Less than one per cent of those vaccinated against Covid-19 were infected, with only nine healthcare workers infected after receiving their second dose.

"A study in England made an observation of more than 23,000 healthcare staff. Prior to the vaccination drive, 977 were infected with Covid-19, but the number dropped to 71 cases after the first dose was given.

"After the second dose, there were only nine infections. This is as good as it gets," she said in a Facebook live session organised by the Science Medical Centre Malaysia yesterday, moderated by *The Petri Dish* editor-in-chief Dr Mahaletchumy Arujan.

Dr Adeeba, recently appointed a member of the World Health Organisation (WHO) Science Council, said the benefits of Covid-19 vaccination greatly outweighed the risks.

She said 80 per cent of Covid-19 patients suffered mild symptoms like fever and loss of smell and taste, 20 per cent suffered lung inflammation, and five to 10 per cent of patients in Category 4 or 5 needed breathing assistance.

"Out of the 80 per cent of recovered patients with mild symptoms, 20 to 30 per cent suffer from long-term Covid-19 symptoms, including extreme fatigue, brain fog and breathing difficulty.

"All the more reason for us to be immunised, not only to prevent severe symptoms, but hopefully, to protect from the infection's long-term effects as well.

"It was reported that some healthcare workers in the United States suffered from this and couldn't function due to long-term (effects)."

Besides doubts about vaccines, health experts were also concerned about the rising number of cases and the possibility of not having enough hospital beds for patients, she said.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah last week said 31 healthcare workers were infected less than two weeks after the second vaccine dose, while nine others were infected more than two weeks after.

Meanwhile, medical pathology (microbiology and immunology) expert from the Institute for Medical Research, Masita Arip, in addressing public concerns about blood clots in those who have been inoculated against Covid-19, said such complications were also detected among patients.

Symptoms of blood clots were breathing difficulty, chest pain, swollen feet, severe and prolonged stomach pain, headache and blood spots on the skin, she said.

"A study in the United Kingdom revealed that only four in one million Covid-19 vaccine doses, or 0.0004 per cent of people below 60 years, have suffered this. However, further studies are needed.

"Some people are not aware of the symptoms. If you notice them after being vaccinated, head to the emergency room immediately and seek medical attention as they can be treated."

Dr Adeeba and Masita agreed that while vaccination drives were not new, Covid-19 presented a different set of challenges due to the intensity of the inoculation programme and widespread fake news.

Masita said: "Also, some people are less convinced with Covid-19 vaccines as their effectiveness is based on clinical trials and not at a population level.

"That is why we need to play our role so that we can achieve herd immunity, not only to protect ourselves, but our family and others."

Dr Adeeba said healthcare workers were working hard for the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme and that setting vaccination appointments for the targeted 23 million people was a complicated process.

"While I'm not directly involved with the process, I have learnt about it from my colleagues.

"It will be utter chaos for logistics if everyone changes appointments or chooses the vaccine type they get administered with.

"Bear in mind, there are specific time gaps between the first and second dose.

"While waiting to be vaccinated, we must prevent infection by avoiding crowded places, among other prevention measures.

"At any social event with 10 or more people in a confined area, there is a possibility that the virus is present." **By Nuradzimmah Daim**

## Schools in 7 Kelantan districts to stay closed till May 1

**KOTA BARU:** The closure of schools in seven Kelantan districts for a week has been extended for another week.

State Education director Zulkarnai Fauzi said the initial directive, which was for all schools in districts placed under the Movement Control Order to be closed from April 18 to 24, would continue due to a spike in Covid-19 cases.

The schools will stay closed

until May 1.

He said schools in three other districts — Jeli, Kuala Krai and Gua Musang — which were not under the MCO and not closed, would operate as usual.

"With the new directive, teachers have been told to continue with home-based teaching and learning.

"Students at school hostels have been told to remain at their schools."

Kelantan recorded 476 Covid-19 cases up to Friday, bringing the cumulative figure to 10,675.

Of the total, 230 involved close contacts, 167 from clusters and 67 from screening tests.

Two new Covid-19 deaths were reported on Friday, bringing the death toll to 31.

A new cluster, Gong Dermin, was recorded on Friday, bringing the total number of active clusters in the state to 32.

need to submit their requests officially to JKJAV and indicate the amount of vaccines needed.

"Purchases for state governments will be done through the federal government to streamline Covid-19 vaccines brought into Malaysia."

He said only vaccines approved by the NPRA could be brought into the country, adding that vaccines by Pfizer, Sinovac and AstraZeneca had been approved.

He said while there was no limit on the number of vaccine doses

for state governments, the amount that could be procured would depend on the quantity offered by vaccine manufacturers.

"State governments buying their own vaccines will speed up the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme.

"These vaccines can be used immediately to vaccinate people in areas that have shown a marginal increase in Covid-19 cases."

Besides Sarawak, he said, the Penang government had notified the Health Ministry of its inten-

tion to bring in vaccines sponsored by the private sector.

Sarawak Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Douglas Uggah Embas, who is state Disaster Management Committee chairman, had said vaccines procured by the state would be "used as reserve in case there is any problem with the supply from the federal government".

He said the state Covid-19 Advisory Group was tasked with discussing the purchase with vaccine suppliers.

AKHBAR : NEW SUNDAY TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

# NEW S.O.P. FOR RETURNEES

Swab test, 14-day quarantine for those coming in from countries reporting variant of concern

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**T**HE government has introduced new standard operating procedures (SOP) for returnees from countries with reported SARS-CoV-2 Variant of Concern (VOC).

The SOP will be effective immediately.

The returnees need to take a swab test three days before the

trip to Malaysia and undergo quarantine at designated centres with the 10-day quarantine period to be extended to 14 days.

The returnees must also download and use the MySejahtera app once they arrive and must undergo another swab test on the 10th day of quarantine, Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said in a statement.

He said the three variants reported under the VOC according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) are B.1.351 from South Africa, B.1.1.7 from the United Kingdom, and B.1.1.28 or P1 from Brazil and Japan.

"The concern over the VOC is because the resulting infection was found to be rapid and results in severe symptoms that require immediate admission into the intensive care unit, besides result-

ing in death.

"Vaccines are less effective (on the VOC variants). They (the variants) are also difficult for some laboratories to detect."

At the same time, the Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) has been extended at three zones in Sabah and Sarawak for another two weeks.

The two zones in Sabah are Bandar Sri Indah and Kampung Titingan in Tawau; the one in Sarawak is at Sungai Passin in Matu.

Ismail Sabri said the EMCO at the three zones was scheduled to end today.

However, the Health Ministry detected the emergence of new cases in these areas.

"Eighty-one Covid-19 cases were detected from 607 individuals screened at the zones in Sabah.

"At Sungai Passin, out of 442 individuals screened, 49 Covid-19 cases were detected.

"Upon risk analysis by agencies under the technical committee, the government agreed to extend the EMCO there from April 26 until May 9."

The EMCO at six other zones in Tawau will end today as scheduled.

The six zones are Taman Cahaya, Jalan Tengku Osman, Kuarters Bomba Tawau, Jalan Mesra, Taman Golden Hill and Taman Sri Bukit.

"The Health Ministry found that the remaining cases showed a downward trend.

"Those who tested positive have undergone treatment and their close contacts have been isolated.

"Upon risk analysis, the government agreed to end the EMCO

tomorrow (today) as scheduled." Meanwhile, 269 people were nabbed on Friday for flouting the SOP to prevent the spread of Covid-19.

Ismail Sabri said 250 of them were issued with compounds, 16 were remanded and the remaining three were released on bail.

Activities at entertainment outlet top the list with 74 cases.

"The offences also include failure to register when entering premises (84), not wearing face masks (45) and others (66)."

Ismail Sabri also said 573 foreign workers were screened on Friday, with two testing positive for Covid-19.

To date, 688,380 foreign workers have been screened involving 35,541 employees. A total of 10,229 tested positive for Covid-19.

## 4 S. African Covid-19 variant cases detected

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The Health Ministry has detected four more cases of the South African Covid-19 variant B.1.351 in Malaysia.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the cases were detected through genomic surveillance conducted from April 15 to 23.

These four cases, which were all local transmissions, were confirmed by the Institute for Medical Research (IMR).

"These latest infections bring the total to 21 cases involving the South African variant B.1.351.

"Three cases were reported in the Kuala Langat district (Selangor), while another case is the first of its kind detected outside of Selangor as it was recorded at the Tuanku Jaafar Hospital in Seremban, Negri Sembilan," he said in a statement yesterday.

The three South African variant cases reported in the Kuala Langat district comprised two cases from the Teknologi Emas Cluster, and a third case who was a close contact.

Dr Noor Hisham said samples from 29 cases underwent full genomic sequencing.

These samples came from cases recorded in Johor, Selangor, Putrajaya, Sabah and Sarawak.

"The SARS-CoV-2 (Covid-19) genome data obtained from these cases revealed the common lineage cycles found in Malaysia, namely the B.1.524 in the peninsula and B.1.466.2 in Sarawak and these are not categorised as Variants of Concern (VOC)."

Out of the 29 cases, 23 were under the "Selangor B.1.524 Lineage" which was traced in Selangor (12), Putrajaya (three), Sabah

(four) and Johor (six); another four cases were under the "Sarawak B.1.466.2 Lineage".

Dr Noor Hisham said three states recorded more than 500 new Covid-19 cases yesterday, with Selangor accounting for the highest number at 768.

Out of those cases, 567 were from clusters and close contact tracing.

Sarawak and Kelantan recorded 570 and 518 new cases respectively.

Other states that recorded three-digit infections were Kuala Lumpur (240), Penang (134), Sabah (132) and Johor (126).

"A total of 21 cases were reported to be clusters in prisons and detention centres or depots such as the Tembok Choh Dua cluster (12), and Tembok Pengkalan Chepa cluster (nine)."

Overall, Malaysia recorded 2,717 new Covid-19 infections yesterday, bringing the tally of positive cases to 390,252 since the pandemic hit Malaysian shores. There are currently 22,926 active cases.

Dr Noor Hisham said of the new cases, 2,691 were local transmissions involving 2,493 locals and 198 foreigners. Twenty-six cases were imported, with 24 being Malaysians.

He said 11 Covid-19 fatalities were recorded yesterday, involving 10 Malaysians and a foreigner. This brought Malaysia's overall Covid-19 death toll to 1,426.

He said the deaths were recorded in Sarawak (five), Selangor



Health Department staff conducting inspections at a department store in Kuantan, Pahang to ensure public compliance with the Covid-19 standard operating procedures. PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

(three), Sabah (two), and Kuala Lumpur (one).

The fatalities involved patients aged between 36 and 80 comprising seven men and four women.

Only two of those fatalities, involving people aged 36 and 39, had no underlying health conditions.

Dr Noor Hisham said while the country registered 2,292 more recoveries up to noon yesterday, 272 patients were being treated in intensive care units and 124 of them required breathing assistance.

The total number of Covid-19 recoveries is currently 365,900.

Seven out of 10 new Covid-19 clusters identified by the Health

Ministry yesterday involved workplaces, with a total of 109 infections recorded.

The clusters were identified in Selangor (Jalan Abdul Karim and Jalan Melor clusters), Perak (Lebuh Ipoh-Lumut and Jalan Datoh cluster), Penang (Tingkat Mak Mandin cluster), Terengganu (D'Lahar cluster) and Pahang (Desa Mawar cluster).

Dr Noor Hisham said two community clusters were detected, one each in Perak (Jalan Kolum Dua cluster) and Sabah (Dambai Inanam cluster).

He said only one education cluster was identified, known as Jalan St Thomas cluster in Kuala Lumpur.



AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NATION

## Another four South African variant cases detected

**PETALING JAYA:** Four new locally-transmitted South African Covid-19 variant (B.1.351) cases have been detected, says Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

The Health director-general noted three were reported in the Kuala Langat district along with the first case outside Selangor at Hospital Tuanku Jaafar Seremban, Negri Sembilan.

As of yesterday, a total of 21 cases of locally-transmitted South African Covid-19 variant had been detected.

Dr Noor Hisham also lauded Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob's announcement to increase the quarantine period from 10 days to 14 days for travellers from certain countries, to contain the spread of the variant.

Dr Noor Hisham said Malaysia

recorded 11 deaths and 2,717 new cases yesterday, bringing the total number of cases nationwide to 390,252 and fatalities to 1,426.

Selangor, Sarawak and Kelantan have the highest number of new cases at 768, 570 and 518.

There were 26 imported cases, of which 24 involved foreigners.

As of noon Saturday, there were 2,292 recoveries, bringing the total

recoveries to 365,900 cases.

He also said 10 new Covid-19 clusters have been identified, bringing the number of active clusters in the country to 352.

Seven of the new clusters were from the workplace, two from the community and one education institution.

The workplace clusters are the Jalan Abdul Karim cluster and Jalan

Melor cluster in Selangor, Leboh Ipoh-Lumut cluster and Jalan Datoh cluster in Perak, Tingkat Mak Mandin in Penang, D'Lahar in Terengganu and Desa Mawar in Pahang.

The community clusters are Jalan Kolang Dua in Perak and Dambai Inanam in Sabah, he said, adding that the Jalan St Thomas cluster came from a Kuala Lumpur school.

AKHBAR : SUNDAY STAR

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : NATION

Covid-19: Current situation (As at 7pm April 24, 2021)		Malaysia		New cases	Total cases	Total deaths	Total recovered																								
				2,717	390,252	1,426(+11)	365,900(+2,292)																								
	Perlis		Kedah		Penang		Perak		Selangor		Kelantan		Terengganu		Pahang		N. Sembilan		Melaka		Johor		Sabah		Sarawak		FT K. Lumpur		FT Putrajaya		FT Labuan
		+1	+34	+134	+54	+768	+518	+50	+22	+27	+30	+126	+132	+570	+240	+11	0														
<b>Asean+</b>		Indonesia		Philippines		Japan		Myanmar		S. Korea		China		Singapore		Thailand		Cambodia		Vietnam		Laos		Brunei							
Confirmed cases		1,636,792		989,380		551,898		142,704		118,243		90,575		60,966		53,022		8,848		2,832		247		223							
Deaths		44,500		16,674		9,800		3,206		1,812		4,636		30		129		61		35		0		3							
Recovered		1,492,322		883,221		494,882		131,925		107,781		85,634		60,613		30,566		3,148		2,490		49		210							
<b>Global Top 10</b>		US		India		Brazil		France		Russia		Turkey		UK		Italy		Spain		Germany											
Confirmed cases		32,735,704		16,610,481		14,238,110		5,440,946		4,753,789		4,550,820		4,401,109		3,935,703		3,468,617		3,261,764											
Deaths		585,075		189,549		386,623		102,496		107,900		37,672		127,385		118,699		77,591		81,936											
Recovered		25,296,047		13,867,997		12,711,103		4,275,950		4,380,468		3,970,111		4,177,375		3,351,461		3,163,849		2,882,300											

# Need for 'self-regulation'

## Experts: Everyone has a role in curbing the spread

By DIYANA PFORDTEN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Here's what everybody can do to stop the daily number of Covid-19 cases from spiralling up further.

Health experts are urging the public to practise self-regulated movement restrictions and to avoid going out unnecessarily.

Daily Covid-19 cases have recorded more than 2,000 cases for the past eight days, while the current national infectivity rate (RO) is at 1.13.

Kelantan recorded the highest RO at 1.45, followed by Kuala Lumpur at 1.27 and Negri Sembilan at 1.23 as of Friday.

Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said to prevent a further rise in infection, the public should avoid going out and being involved in activities that require a person to be in a situation where they need to take off their masks.

"This is based on our self-assessment as well, and that we should only proceed with the activity if it is clear that it has a very minimal or no risk at all of Covid-19 transmission.

"Self-empowerment is preferable as this will avoid unnecessary stress or problems which most of us had to face in MCO 1.0 and 2.0," she said.

With the rise of clusters in schools, Dr Malina believed that schools should only be closed based on risk assessment and not through a blanket rule.

"Stricter measures on SOP compliance should be done and monitored in all schools. With the combination of proper SOP adherence and vaccination among teachers, I hope this issue will be solved soon," she said.

Dr Malina said work from home



**Gentle reminder:** Wearing of facemask is mandatory, says an electronic board targeting visitors at The Pavilion, Kuala Lumpur. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

policy should be imposed at workplaces in red zones and with tasks that could be done remotely.

"However, if attendance at the workplace is inevitable, proper adherence and monitoring of the SOP should be observed."

If such measures fail, Dr Malina proposed that targeted MCO be imposed at high-risk zones based on risk assessment.

With targeted movement control and self-discipline, she estimated that daily cases could be reduced to below 2,000 within four to six weeks.

She also expressed hope that the pace of vaccination would be increased further to help deal with the incoming new wave of infection.

"I'm also a bit worried as some countries are now struggling with emerging new variants and rapid transmission on the ground," she said.

Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar suggested that the Education Ministry rethink its strategy to reduce the number of cases involving the education sector.

"A combination of physical and online classes, as well as alternate sessions should be implemented to reduce the number of cases," he said, adding that blanket closures should be avoided as it would further impact students' education.

Dr Zainal also encouraged companies to tailor working arrangements based on the company's needs as well as for the safety of staff.

"The next three months is very critical as the measures will determine how Covid-19 cases in the country will progress," he said.

Malaysian Medical Association Datuk Dr Subramaniam Muniandy

said the government should put a stop to all mass gatherings due to the rising number of infections.

"The government should also rethink its decision in allowing Ramadan bazaars as there can be increased risk with poor crowd control.

"It would be okay if there is proper crowd control, but this has not been the case for a number of bazaars operating in the country.

"The idea of virtual bazaars or an app-based bazaar is a better option. Safety should remain our highest priority," he said.

Dr Subramaniam also believed that Hari Raya gatherings would increase the risk of infection as it involved close interaction among attendees.

He added that the Health Ministry should set clear guidelines and SOP for Hari Raya visits.

"Sitting down for a meal together with friends or family in a room with insufficient ventilation should be avoided as with the facemasks off, people can be exposed to tiny respiratory droplets in the air when having a conversation.

"Crowds must be avoided and all SOP observed," he said.

Dr Malina said those celebrating Hari Raya might need to have a modest celebration, similar to last year.

"If Hari Raya prayers are allowed in the mosque, similar measures should be observed as what is implemented during terawih prayers," she said.

Dr Zainal suggested that Hari Raya open houses be cancelled as it would cause a spike in community cases.

"Open houses should not be hosted, even by VIPs," he said, adding that there should be a limit on the number of people allowed in a house during Hari Raya visits.

# M'sia gets first batch of AstraZeneca vaccine

**KOTA TINGGI:** Malaysia has received its first batch of 268,800 doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine, says Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba.

He said the vaccine, which was purchased through the global vaccine sharing scheme Covax facility, arrived at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport at 8.20pm on Friday.

He said Malaysia had signed an agreement in December last year to procure the AstraZeneca vaccine to cover 3% of the country's population.

"The Covax facility sent the vaccine from South Korea, and we will keep it at the designated storage centre," he told reporters after the presentation of allocations for the Tenggara parliamentary constituency in Taman Daiman here yesterday.

Asked on concerns over the safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine, Dr Adham said the Special Committee for ensuring access to Covid-19 vaccine supply decided to procure the vaccine only after it was approved by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency.

He said an analysis of the data from the manufacturer and World Health Organisation found the vaccine offered more benefits than risks.

"Our view is that the AstraZeneca vaccine is beneficial for use by certain groups... (we) need to have more brands of vaccines as some people may not be compatible with this vaccine," he said.

Dr Adham said an announcement would be made tomorrow regarding the first group of recipients for the AstraZeneca vaccine. — Bernama

# Malaysia still a major education hub despite the pandemic

By CHRISTINA CHIN  
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**PETALING JAYA:** Despite the Covid-19 pandemic, Malaysia continues to attract international students with more applying to enter the country compared to previous years.

In March, the number of new applications increased by 120% compared to the same month last year.

Education Malaysia Global Services (EMGS) received 3,254 applications compared to 1,473 and 2,654 received in March 2020 and March 2019, said its chief executive officer Mohd Radzlan Jalaludin.

And, the number of postgraduate students coming here to do their masters and doctorates from Janua-

ry to March this year, also saw an upward trend compared to the same period in 2020 and 2019, he said.

Last year, a total of 1,555 PhD students applied to enter the country in the first three months of the year compared to 1,293 in 2019.

"From January to March this year, we processed 2,914 PhD student applications.

"That's an 87% increase compared to last year," he said, adding that there was also a 43% rise in the number of masters students this year compared to 2020.

There were 2,278 applications for masters from January to March.

During the same period last year, 1,589 applications were received while in 2019, there were 1,504.

"These numbers show that the

country is still a popular destination among international students," Mohd Radzlan said in an interview.

EMGS, which is under the Higher Education Ministry, is a body that manages international students in Malaysia.

On a recent quantitative research that examined the adverse effects of the pandemic on their international students, Mohd Radzlan said as a one-stop centre for international students pursuing higher education in Malaysia, EMGS was committed to making the process of studying in the country as smooth and convenient as possible.

"The impact of Covid-19 pandemic on international students' experiences in Malaysia" research jointly conducted by Universiti Malaya and

Xiamen University Malaysia found that foreign students have major concerns as a result of academic, administrative, social, financial and emotional challenges they have been facing due to the pandemic.

Addressing these challenges and concerns was of great importance to ensure that universities in Malaysia continue to appeal to international students, the research read.

"We are constantly improving our process based on the feedback from the higher education institutions and students.

"The pandemic has undoubtedly posed a challenge as movement is restricted and everything has to be done online.

"However, after a year of managing the global health crisis, we are

now much more prepared to better handle the issues facing our international students," Mohd Radzlan said, adding that EMGS received some 30,000 new applications for courses in local higher education institutions from January to December last year.

According to the EMGS website, effective January 2021, all international students (except from the United Kingdom) may enter Malaysia to continue their studies after a mandatory quarantine period.



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