

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Seri Paduka nasihati rakyat terus patuhi SOP

Kuala Lumpur: Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah menzahirkan kegunaan terhadap penularan varian baharu COVID-19, Omicron yang kini mula merebak di banyak negara.

Baginda bimbang susulan keputusan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Dunia (WHO) yang mengkategorikan Omicron sebagai 'variant of concern', lebih berbahaya dan cepat merebak, selain mempunyai risiko lebih tinggi bagi jangkitan semula dan berpotensi mengurangkan keberkesanan vaksin.

Datuk Pengelola Bijaya Diraja Istana Negara, Datuk Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin dalam kenya-

taan semalam, ekoran perkembangan terkini itu, Yang di-Pertuan Agong menasihati rakyat terus beristiqamah dalam kawalan sendiri dan berdisiplin mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) ditetapkan kerajaan.

"Baginda juga menyeru rakyat sentiasa berwaspada dan tidak alpa dalam menjalankan aktiviti harian dengan norma baharu bagi memastikan penularan wabak COVID-19, khususnya Omicron dapat dibendung walaupun tiada kes varian itu dilaporkan di Malaysia.

"Baginda turut menasihati rakyat melengkapi suntikan dos vaksin COVID-19 dan mendapatkan dos penggalak bagi

melindungi dan memelihara kesihatan serta keselamatan diri, ahli keluarga tersayang dan masyarakat," katanya.

Baginda turut bertitah agar rakyat melaksanakan tanggungjawab sosial iaitu segera mendapatkan pemeriksaan dan rawatan jika bergejala, malah mengasingkan diri jika disahkan positif atau ditakrif sebagai kontak rapat meskipun tidak bergejala.

Yang di-Pertuan Agong berpandangan, pengorbanan dan usaha bersama pihak berkuasa serta petugas barisan hadapan selama ini dalam memerangi COVID-19 akan menjadi sia-sia sekiranya negara menghadapi ancaman gelombang baharu pe-

nularan wabak berkenaan.

Baginda juga menzahirkan sokongan penuh terhadap tindakan tegas kerajaan, khususnya Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) dan Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) untuk mempertingkatkan langkah pencegahan, kawalan sempadan dan survelan COVID-19 bagi pengembara yang tiba di pintu masuk, khususnya dari negara melaporkan varian Omicron.

"Baginda turut menzahirkan penghargaan terhadap langkah-proaktif diambil KKM dalam mempertingkatkan kesiapsiagaan di hospital dan klinik kerana dijangkakan bilangan kes harian COVID-19 akan meningkat sekiranya Omicron

menembusi kawalan sempadan dan menular dalam negara," katanya.

Ahmad Fadil berkata, Al-Sultan Abdullah yakin bahawa dengan kerjasama dan komitmen tinggi antara rakyat serta kerajaan, penularan jangkitan COVID-19 khususnya varian baharu itu dapat dikekang demi keselamatan diri serta kesejahteraan negara.

"Baginda mengajak rakyat untuk bersama-sama mendoakan agar rakyat Malaysia serta negara sentiasa berada dalam lindungan Allah SWT, dijauhi dari sebarang musibah dan wabak COVID-19 dapat dibendung serta diakhiri dengan segera," katanya.

Penularan COVID-19

6 langkah proaktif kekang kemasukan varian Omicron

**KKM nasihat
warga emas,
individu dengan
komobiditi tak
pergi luar negara**

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Putrajaya: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) melaksanakan enam langkah proaktif berkuat kuasa serta-merta, dalam usaha mengekang kemasukan varian Omicron COVID-19 yang kini dikesan di 18 negara dunia, daripada masuk ke negara ini.

Langkah itu merangkumi sekatan perjalanan sementara, memantau dan mengemaskini senarai negara melaporkan kes Omicron, mengukuhkan kawalan pintu masuk antarabangsa, menagih kemasukan kemasukan pelajar dan pekerja asing serta pengawasan gelembung pelancongan antarabangsa.

Selain itu, KKM juga memperkukuhkan tindakan kesihatan awam dengan memberi nasihat tegas kepada warga emas dan individu dengan komobiditi, supaya tidak membuat perjalanan ke luar negara kerana penularan Omicron, selain meng-

elakkan hadir di tempat awam yang sesak.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, berkata Malawi menjadi negara terkini dimasukkan dalam senarai sekatan perjalanan ke Malaysia selepas Afrika Selatan, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia dan Zimbabwe.

Katanya, sekatan itu turut merangkumi pengembara yang mempunyai sejarah perjalanan ke semua negara terbahit dalam tempoh 14 hari sebelum ketibaan.

"Walaupun tiada sekatan kepada warga Malaysia dan pemegang pas lawatan jangka panjang, tetapi mereka perlu menjalani kuarantin wajib tanpa mengira status vaksinasi, menjalani ujian RT-PCR 72 jam sebelum tiba di Malaysia dan pada hari ke-10 ketika dalam tempoh kuarantin wajib yang boleh dilanjutkan jika bergejala.

"Pada masa sama, pengembara warga Malaysia yang merancang melawat negara yang melaporkan penularan Omicron atau berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan adalah tidak dibenarkan meneruskan perjalanan. Malaysia juga menangguhkan rancangan mewujudkan Perjalanan Lengkap Vaksin (VTL) dengan negara penularan atau berisiko tinggi.

"KKM juga akan menyediakan senarai nama negara yang melaporkan kes atau berisiko berlaku penularan Omicron secara

harian untuk diedarkan kepada Kementerian Luar, Jabatan Imigresen (JIM), Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN), Kementerian Pengangkutan dan Kementerian Pelancongan, Seni dan Budaya (MOTAC) melalui Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN)," katanya dalam sidang media semalam.

Serentak itu juga, Khairy berkata, sistem pagar automatik 'autogate' Jabatan Imigresen di pintu masuk antarabangsa akan dihentikan sementara serta-merta, bagi membolehkan pegawai imigresen menyoal setiap pengembara mengenai sejarah perjalanan masing-masing.

"Penerbangan dari negara yang melaporkan penularan atau berisiko tinggi, hanya dibenarkan masuk ke Malaysia menerusi Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA) sahaja dan Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) perlu menyediakan pintu dan laluan khas bagi penumpang penerbangan itu," katanya.

Beliau berkata, semua pelancong dari negara yang melaporkan penularan atau berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan Omicron dan mempunyai sejarah perjalanan dalam tempoh 14 hari juga tidak dibenarkan menyertai program Gelembung Pelancongan Antarabangsa Langkawi.

"Ramai yang tanya kenapa hanya negara berkenaan sahaja disekat, tetapi ada juga negara lain yang turut ada penularan Omi-



Khairy bersama Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah pada sidang media di Putrajaya, semalam. (Foto Aizuddin Saad/BH)

cron ini tetapi tidak disekat. KKM mengambil kira kewujudan varian Omicron di negara itu adalah kes import atau penularan dalam kalangan komuniti.

"Selain itu, kita juga menilai sama ada negara terbahit mempunyai penularan yang besar dalam tempoh terdekat dan tahap vaksinasi negara berkenaan. Sekiranya tahap vaksinasinya rendah dan ada penularan dalam komuniti, maka kita membuat penilaian risiko sebelum membuat sekatan," katanya.

Khairy berkata, pelancongan asing yang disahkan positif COVID-19 varian Omicron pula akan diasingkan untuk rawatan di hospital swasta dan perlu menanggung sendiri kos rawatan.

Katanya, pengembara yang menyertai VTL antara Malaysia dan Singapura, sama ada laluan darat atau udara perlu menjalani ujian sendiri sebaik tiba di negara ini dan melaporkan keputusan itu dalam aplikasi MySejahtera.

"Mereka digalakkan melakukan ujian pengesanan COVID-19 secara sendiri pada hari ketiga

dan ketujuh selepas ketibaan di Malaysia dan keputusan ujian pengesanan itu dilaporkan kepada aplikasi MySejahtera," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan berasingan, Khairy berkata, tiada keperluan mengantung sidang Parlimen yang sedang berlangsung dan tindakan menjadi langkah terakhir diambil KKM dalam membendung penularan COVID-19 di kawasan berkenaan.

"Kita kini sudah mempunyai kerangka bagaimana untuk menangani kes positif atau wujudnya kluster baharu, kita juga mempunyai pengalaman bagi situasi berkenaan. Jadi langkah menutup Parlimen adalah yang terakhir akan diambil.

"Ini kerana individu yang memasuki kawasan berkenaan perlu menjalani ujian saringan setiap dua hari.

Menerusi langkah itu, kita dapat mengesan penularan kes dengan cepat, serta boleh mengasingkan individu yang positif COVID-19. Jadi tiada keperluan menutup perjalanan Parlimen itu," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
 MUKA SURAT : 6
 RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Vaksinasi lengkap syarat berurusan dengan orang awam

Kakitangan kerajaan tidak terima suntikan berdepan tindakan tegas

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Selangor: Penjawat awam yang sudah menerima vaksinasi lengkap sahaja dibenarkan berurusan secara terus dengan orang ramai.

Ketua Pengarah Perkhidmatan Awam, Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman, berkata ia seiring dengan syarat vaksinasi COVID-19 lengkap, yang ditetapkan kepada orang awam untuk berurusan di pejabat kerajaan.

Beliau berkata, syarat vaksinasi lengkap itu bukan sahaja membabitkan kakitangan di barisan hadapan atau kaunter, malah merangkumi semua penjawat awam.

"Kita minta yang berada di hadapan supaya divaksin, begitu juga yang di belakang kaunter.

Takkan di bahagian depan, divaksin, yang belakang kaunter

tidak divaksin.

"Masuk pejabat kerajaan semua kena vaksin, takkanlah penjawat awam tidak divaksin?"

"Jadi, kita minta ketua jabatan awam yang mana tidak divaksin ini dengan cara tersendiri. Ada yang kita pindahkan ke tempat lain," katanya kepada pemberita, semalam.

BH sebelum ini melaporkan Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) masih mengemas kini data penjawat awam yang belum mendapatkan vaksin COVID-19 selepas tarikh akhir untuk berbuat demikian tamat pada akhir bulan lalu.

Mohd Khairul Adib dilaporkan berkata, ketika ini, pihaknya sedang memadamkan data yang ada di JPA dengan data di Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM), termasuk nama penjawat awam yang

sudah mendaftar melalui MySejahtera, tetapi belum mendapatkan vaksinasi.

Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 4 tahun 2021 dikeluarkan JPA pada 18 Oktober lalu, menetapkan tindakan tata tertib atau ditamatkan perkhidmatan boleh diambil terhadap penjawat awam yang tidak mematuhi arahan daripada Ketua Jabatan untuk mendapatkan dos vaksin COVID-19 selepas 1 November.

Mengikut Peraturan-Peraturan Pegawai Awam (Kelakuan dan Tata tertib) 1993 (PU(A) 395/1993), antara bentuk hukuman tata tertib yang boleh dikenakan kepada pegawai awam adalah amaran, denda, dilucut hak emolument, tangguh pergerakan gaji, turun gaji, turun pangkat atau dibuang kerja.

Penjawat awam juga berdepan hilang kelayakan untuk dipertimbangkan kenaikan pangkat bagi tempoh tertentu mengikut jenis hukuman, seperti amaran (12 bulan), denda (18 bulan), lucut hak emolument (24 bulan), tangguh pergerakan gaji (30 bulan), turun gaji (36 bulan) dan turun pangkat (48 bulan).

JPA turut memaklumkan seramai 16,902 atau 1.6 peratus penjawat awam belum mendaftar bagi mendapatkan pelalian berkenaan setakat 30 Oktober lalu

5,439 kes baharu semalam

Putrajaya: Jangkitan harian COVID-19 di negara ini kembali melepasi angka 5,000 dengan 5,439 kes baharu dilaporkan setakat tengah hari semalam, menjadikan jumlah keseluruhan mencecah 2,638,221.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah dalam kenyataan semalam, berkata 5,418 kes baharu membabitkan penularan tempatan, manakala 21 lagi kes import yang mendapat jangkitan dari luar negara.

Daripada jumlah kes yang dilaporkan semalam, 5,334 adalah pesakit kategori satu dan dua, iaitu tiada gejala dan bergejala ringan, manakala 105 atau 1.9 peratus lagi adalah pesakit kategori tiga hingga lima, iaitu mempunyai radang paru-paru, memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan dan kritikal.

Mengenai jumlah kes aktif di negara ini, beliau berkata, sebanyak 500 pesakit sedang dirawat di unit rawatan rapi (ICU) membabitkan 400 kes disahkan COVID-19 dan 100 lagi disyaki, berkemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

"Bagi kes dirawat di ICU dan memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan, sehingga kini terdapat 258 kes iaitu 161 kes disahkan COVID-19 dengan 97 lagi masih disyaki, berkemungkinan dan dalam siasatan. Sebanyak 6,803 kes sembuh dilaporkan menjadikan keseluruhan 2,544,007 individu pulih sepenuhnya daripada virus ini," katanya.

Dr Noor Hisham juga memaklumkan, enam kluster baharu dikesan, menjadikan sehingga kini terdapat 226 kluster COVID-19 yang masih aktif di negara ini.

16,902

atau 1.6 peratus penjawat awam belum mendaftar bagi mendapatkan pelalian berkenaan setakat 30 Oktober lalu

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 5

RUANGAN : LOKAL

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Kerajaan melaksanakan sekatan perjalanan sementara kepada negara yang melaporkan kes varian membimbangkan (VOC) Covid-19 baharu, Omicron.

Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, 20 negara mengesan penularan Omicron seperti dilaporkan dalam laman web *Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID)*.

Menurutnya, varian itu mempunyai banyak mutasi dan berkembang semasa jangkitan kronik kepada individu yang mempunyai sistem imun rendah, menular pada kadar lebih pantas serta menyebabkan risiko lebih tinggi untuk jangkitan semula.

Justeru, katanya, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) mengambil langkah kawalan dengan mengenakan sekatan penerbangan terus atau transit dari negara yang melaporkan penularan Omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan.

"Antara negara disenaraikan adalah Afrika Selatan, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe dan Malawi."

"Sekatan perjalanan di-

Sekat seketika pengembara 20 negara

Elak penularan jangkitan varian Omicron

buat kepada pengembara bukan warganegara Malaysia dari negara melaporkan penularan Omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan termasuk pengembara mempunyai sejarah perjalanan ke negara berkenaan dalam tempoh 14 hari sebelum ketibaan.

"Mereka juga tidak dibenarkan menyertai program Gelembung Pelancongan Antarabangsa Langkawi," katanya pada sidang media di sini, semalam.

Namun, Khairy berkata, tiada sekatan kemasukan kepada warganegara Malaysia dan pemegang pas lawatan jangka panjang.

Katanya, pada masa sama mereka tetap perlu menjalani kuarantin wajib selama 14 hari di stesen kuarantin tanpa mengira status vaksinasi, melakukan ujian pengesanan RT-PCR dalam tempoh 72 jam sebelum berlepas, semasa ke-



Antara negara disenaraikan adalah Afrika Selatan, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe dan Malawi"

Khairy Jamaluddin

tibaan di pintu masuk antarabangsa dan hari ke-10.

"Selepas itu, mereka perlu menjalani penilaian risiko pada hari ke-14 tempoh kuarantin wajib dan dilanjutkan tempoh kuarantin jika bergejala," katanya.

Katanya, kerajaan turut menangguhkan sementara kemasukan pelajar antarabangsa dan pekerja asing dari negara terbabit.

Selain itu, beliau berkata, KKM mengedarkan senarai negara melaporkan kes pe-

nularan Omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi secara harian kepada Kementerian Luar, Kementerian Pelancongan, Seni dan Budaya (MOTAC), Kementerian Pengangkutan dan Jabatan Imigresen Malaysia.

Menurutnya, Malaysia Airports Holdings Bhd (MAHB) juga perlu menyediakan pintu masuk khas bagi penumpang dari negara melaporkan penularan VOC itu di Lapangan Terbang Antarabangsa Kuala Lumpur (KLIA).

"Syarikat penerbangan bertanggungjawab mengenal pasti pengembara dari negara melaporkan penularan Omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi disenaraikan yang menaiki penerbangan mereka," katanya.

Katanya, maklumat pengembara terbabit mesti dikemukakan kepada Pejabat Kesihatan KLIA untuk memudahkan pengendalian.

Kluster baharu tercetus di Politeknik Sandakan

Kota Kinabalu: Sabah merekodkan satu kluster baharu Covid-19 semalam, membabitkan penularan kes di Politeknik Sandakan yang setakat ini menjangkiti 24 pelajar.

Jurucakap perkembangan harian Covid-19 Sabah, Datuk Masidi Manjun berkata, Kluster Sungai Batang, Sandakan dikesan selepas seor-

rang pelajar di institusi pendidikan itu dikesan positif Covid-19 baru-baru ini.

"Satu kluster baharu membabitkan institusi pendidikan dilaporkan di Sabah hari ini (semalam). Kluster Sungai Batang, Sandakan itu membabitkan seorang pelajar Politeknik Sandakan yang didapati positif Covid-19," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : COVID-19

Kuala Lumpur: Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) menyarankan penerima suntikan vaksin Sinovac sebelum ini terutama warga emas, untuk hadir janji temu pemberian dos penggalak Covid-19.

Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, kumpulan terbahagi paling berisiko tinggi mendapat jangkitan Covid-19 sekiranya tidak menerima dos penggalak.

Katanya, keberkesanan vaksin Sinovac akan menurun selepas beberapa bulan dan disebabkan itu dos penggalak amat penting. "KKM menasihati warga emas yang menerima dos

Penerima vaksin Sinovac disarankan ambil dos penggalak

asal Sinovac untuk cepat dan pantas hadir ke janji temu dos penggalak.

"Lebih-lebih lagi dengan perkembangan terkini iaitu kewujudan varian Omicron yang jelas tahap kebole-hangkitannya lebih tinggi daripada varian Delta walaupun masih lagi tidak berada di Malaysia tapi langkah pencegahan perlu dibuat," katanya dalam sidang media di sini, semalam.

Beliau berkata, sebanyak 2,457,510 dos penggalak sudah diberikan setakat ini.

Menurutnya, kehadiran janji temu dos penggalak itu amat memberangsangkan dan hampir memenuhi kapasiti pemberian dos pelan itu setiap hari, apabila senarai menunggu diperkenalkan pihaknya.

"Saya meminta supaya kapasiti pemberian dos penggalak ditingkatkan da-

ripada 120,000 dos sehari kepada 150,000 dos sehari dan akan ditingkatkan secara berperingkat sehingga 200,000 dos," katanya.

Justeru, beliau berharap orang ramai yang sudah mendapat janji temu dos penggalak supaya hadir menerima suntikan mereka.

Ditanya sama ada Malaysia bersedia mendapatkan vaksin khas Omicron, Khairy berkata, ia masih terlalu awal untuk membuat rumusan mengenai keberkesanan vaksin terhadap varian baharu itu.

Beliau berkata, langkah itu akan diambil sekiranya vaksin sedia ada tidak berkesan terhadap Omicron.

Selangor catat 9,551 kematian setakat 2 November

Shah Alam: Selangor merekodkan 9,551 kematian akibat Covid-19 sejak Januari sehingga 2 November lalu manakala bagi 2020, 66 kematian direkodkan.

Pengerusi Jawatan Kuasa Tetap Kesihatan Awam, Perpaduan dan Pembangunan Wanita & Keluarga Dr Siti Mariah Mahmud berkata, daripada jumlah keseluruhan, 7,833 kematian membabitkan warganegara manakala 1,718 pula bukan warganegara.

"Merujuk kepada Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri Selangor (JKNS), jumlah kematian mengikut pecahan kaum untuk tempoh yang sama adalah 4,696 bagi Melayu, 1,800 membabitkan kaum Tionghua, 1,285 India dan 52 lain-lain.

"Kadar kematian tertinggi direkodkan pada Julai serta Ogos

iaitu masing-masing 3,034 dan 2,452 bagi

kematian membabitkan warganegara manakala 613 (Julai) serta 823 (Ogos) bagi kematian bukan warganegara," katanya pada Sidang Dewan Undangan Negeri (Dun) Selangor di sini, semalam.

Beliau menjawab pertanyaan **Lee Kee Hiong (PH-Kuala Kubu Bharu)** yang diwakili **Lau Weng San (PH-Banting)** berkenaan kes kematian akibat Covid-19 pada 2020 serta 2021.

Mengulas lanjut, Dr Siti Mariah berkata, mengikut rekod JKNS bermula 1 Jun hingga 30 September lalu, 775 kes kematian adalah dalam kalangan mereka yang sudah menerima dua dos vaksin.

"Ini bermakna, 9.1 peratus kematian akibat Covid-19 bagi tempoh Jun hingga September 2021 di Selangor membabitkan kalangan penerima ma-

ma sudah lengkap dua dos vaksin," katanya.

Kadar kematian tertinggi direkodkan pada Julai serta Ogos lalu

22,689,471 populasi dewasa lengkap terima suntikan vaksin

Kuala Lumpur: Sebanyak 96.9 peratus atau 22,689,471 individu bagi populasi dewasa di negara ini lengkap menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19, setakat jam 11.59 malam kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) melalui laman COVIDNOW, sejumlah 98.3 peratus atau 23,028,508 individu bagi populasi dewasa pula sudah menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Sementara itu, 89.7 peratus atau 2,822,370 individu bagi populasi remaja berusia 12 hingga 17 tahun

menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos, manakala 86.1 peratus atau 2,709,263 individu remaja sudah lengkap vaksinasi.

Dalam pada itu, 135,914 dos suntikan vaksin diberikan kelmarin membabitkan 8,313 suntikan dos lengkap, 4,703 dos pertama dan 122,898 pula suntikan dos penggalak, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif pemberian vaksin bagi Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) kini meningkat kepada 53,517,981 dos.

Jumlah kumulatif dos penggalak kini sebanyak 2,457,510.

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

Agong gusar penularan varian Omicron

KUALA LUMPUR - Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah pada Rabu menzahirkan kegusaran terhadap penularan varian baharu Covid-19, Omicron yang dikategorikan Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO) sebagai varian yang membimbangkan (VOC).

Datuk Pengelola Bijaya Diraja Istana Negara, Datuk Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin berkata, Seri Paduka menasihati seluruh rakyat untuk terus beristiqamah dalam kawalan sendiri dan berdisiplin mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang ditetapkan kerajaan serta menyeru supaya mereka berwaspada dan tidak alpa

menjalani aktiviti harian.

"Seri Paduka Baginda menasihati rakyat supaya melengkapkan suntikan dos vaksin Covid-19 dan mendapatkan dos penggalak bagi melindungi dan memelihara kesihatan serta keselamatan diri, ahli keluarga tersayang dan masyarakat," katanya dalam kenyataan pada Rabu.

Seri Paduka Baginda turut menzahirkan sokongan penuh terhadap tindakan tegas kerajaan untuk membendung penularan varian tersebut yang diklasifikasikan sebagai lebih berbahaya dan cepat merebak.

"Khususnya Kementerian Kesihatan



AL-SULTAN ABDULLAH

(KKM) dan Majlis Keselamatan Negara, mempertingkatkan langkah-langkah pencegahan, kawalan sempadan dan surveilan Covid-19 bagi pengembara yang tiba di pintu masuk negara, terutama dari negara yang melaporkan kes varian Omicron," katanya.

Ahmad Fadil berkata, menurut WHO, varian Omicron mungkin berisiko tinggi untuk dijangkiti berbanding varian lain serta mutasinya berpotensi mengurangkan keberkesanan vaksin.

Beliau berkata, Seri Paduka berharap rakyat melaksanakan tanggungjawab so-

sial dengan segera mendapatkan pemeriksaan dan rawatan jika bergejala serta mengasingkan diri jika disahkan positif atau ditakrifkan sebagai kontak rapat sekali pun tidak bergejala.

Ahmad Fadil berkata, Seri Paduka berpandangan pengorbanan dan usaha semua pihak termasuk petugas barisan hadapan memerangi Covid-19 akan menjadi sia-sia sekiranya negara menghadapi ancaman gelombang Omicron.

Beliau berkata, Al-Sultan Abdullah menzahirkan penghargaan terhadap langkah proaktif KKM mempertingkatkan kesiapsiagaan hospital dan klinik bagi menghadapi kemungkinan peningkatan kes sekiranya varian Omicron menular dalam negara. - Bernama

Sempadan antarabangsa kembali diperketat

Ekoran tersebarnya jangkitan varian Omicron di 20 buah negara

Oleh **TUAN BUQHAIKHAH TUAN MUHAMAD ADNAN**

PUTRAJAYA

Malaysia kembali mengambil langkah mengetatkan sempadan antarabangsa susulan 20 negara melaporkan jangkitan varian Omicron.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar berkata, antaranya adalah meletakkan Malawi dalam senarai terlarut sekatan perjalanan.

"Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) melakukan sekatan perjalanan sementara untuk pengembara asing dari negara yang melaporkan penularan Omicron atau negara disenaraikan berisiko

tinggi, selain pengembara mempunyai sejarah perjalanan ke negara tersebut dalam tempoh 14 hari," katanya dalam sidang akhbar di kementerian pada Rabu.

Selain Malawi, tujuh negara Afrika terlebih dahulu disenarai sebagai larangan perjalanan iaitu Afrika Selatan, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia dan Zimbabwe.

Menurutnya, KKM akan mengemaskini secara harian senarai larangan sekatan perjalanan antarabangsa dan diedarkan kepada Kementerian Luar Negeri, Kementerian Pengangkutan dan Jabatan Imigresen Malaysia melalui Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN).

"Rakyat tempatan tidak dibenarkan membuat perjalanan ke negara yang melaporkan penularan Omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan," katanya.

Tegasnya, kemasukan pe-



KHAIRY

lajar antara-bangsa dan pekerja warga asing ke negara ini dari negara yang disenaraikan turut ditangguh sementara.

"Tiada sekatan kemasukan kepada pengembara Malaysia dan pemegang pas lawatan jangka panjang," katanya.

Bagaimanapun Khairy berkata, mereka perlu melakukan ujian RT-PCR dalam tempoh 72 jam sebelum berlepas, se-

masa ketibaan masuk pintu antarabangsa negara dan hari ke-10 tempoh kuarantin.

"Kuarantin adalah wajib selama 14 hari di stesen kuarantin," katanya.

Sebanyak 203 daripada 215 kes Omicron dilaporkan di laman web Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAID).

Afrika Selatan merekodkan 129 kes diikuti Botswana (19), Netherland (12), Portugal (13), United Kingdom (sembilan), Australia (enam), Hong Kong dan Jerman (lima), Itali, Israel dan Austria masing-masing melaporkan empat kes Omicron.

Tangguh perjalanan luar negara bagi warga emas, individu komorbid

PUTRAJAYA - Berikutan penularan jangkitan varian Omicron, warga emas dan individu yang mempunyai komorbid dinasihatkan menangguhkan perjalanan ke luar negara.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar berkata, golongan tersebut juga disaran mengelak dari menghadiri tempat sesak.

"Jika ke luar negara, sila berhati-hati dengan meneruskan prosedur operasi stan-

dard (SOP) yang diamalkan di negara ini," katanya.

Menurutnya, kealpaan dalam mengamalkan langkah-langkah pencegahan seperti pemakaian pelitup muka, penjarakan fizikal, mengelakkan tempat-tempat yang sesak dan mengasingkan diri apabila bergejala, hanya akan memberi peluang untuk Covid-19 bermutasi serta lebih mudah dijangkiti.

"Akibat kealpaan, kita mungkin jadi

mangsa," katanya.

Beliau berkata, dalam pada itu orang ramai disaran tidak mengambil mudah mengenai keperluan dos penggalak.

"Sekiranya anda telah layak untuk menerima dos penggalak dan telah diberikan janji temu, sila penuhi janji temu tersebut dan ambillah dos penggalak. Dengan kewujudan Omicron, KKM sangat menggalakkan pengambilan dos penggalak," katanya.



MEDEPANI KRISIS COVID-19: APA TINDAKAN KITA?

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Malaysia sekat perjalanan lapan negara

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia melakukan sekatan perjalanan sama ada bagi penerbangan terus atau transit ke atas lapan negara dengan yang terbaharu Malawi susulan kebimbangan terhadap penemuan varian baharu omicron.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, tujuh negara lain ialah Afrika Selatan, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia dan Zimbabwe.

"Kementerian Kesihatan pada 26 November lalu menyenarai-

kan hanya tujuh negara yang disekat singgah di Malaysia namun hari ini (semalam) ada pertambahan satu lagi negara iaitu Malawi," kata beliau pada sidang akhbar mengenai perkembangan terkini varian baharu omicron di sini semalam.

Menurut beliau, sekatan perjalanan itu untuk pengembara bukan warganegara dari negara yang melaporkan penularan varian membimbangkan (VOC) omicron atau negara berisiko tinggi berlaku penularan VOC omicron yang disenaraikan atau

pengembara yang mempunyai sejarah perjalanan ke negara tersebut dalam tempoh 14 hari sebelum ketibaan.

"Tiada sekatan kemasukan bagi warga Malaysia dan pemegang pas lawatan jangka panjang pemegang pas penduduk tetap (PR), visa pasangan, Program Malaysia Rumah Kedua (MM2H) dan pas residen. Mereka perlu menjalani kuarantin wajib 14 hari di stesen kuarantin tanpa mengira status vaksinasi," katanya.

Mengulas lanjut, Khairy

berkata, warga Malaysia yang merancang melawat ke lapan negara disenaraikan tidak dibenarkan meneruskan perjalanan mereka.

Sementara itu, Khairy berkata, setakat ini sebanyak 20 negara sudah melaporkan pengesanan varian omicron dengan 18 daripadanya melibatkan kes import.

Pada masa sama, sebanyak 203 daripada 215 kes varian yang membimbangkan (VOC) omicron dilaporkan di dalam laman web Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data (GISAIID).

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 2

RUANGAN : NEWS / STORY OF THE DAY

TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS

TRAVEL-BAN LIST TO BE UPDATED DAILY

These countries reported Omicron cases or are at high risk of transmission

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TRAVELLERS from countries that have reported the Omicron Covid-19 variant or considered high risk will be temporarily barred from entering Malaysia.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the ministry had, on Nov 26, put South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe on the list of restricted countries.

"And, today (Dec 1), Malawi will be added to the list, making it eight countries in total, with the list updated regularly," he told a press conference here yesterday.

The temporary travel restrictions, he said, were also for non-Malaysian travellers from countries at high risk of Omicron transmission or those who had been to the same countries 14 days prior.

As for Malaysians, long-term pass holders, namely permanent resident pass holders, spouse visas and Malaysia MySecond

Home participants, will not be barred from entering the country.

"However, they will have to undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days at the designated quarantine centres, regardless of their vaccination status," said Khairy.

"Also, they will have to do Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) tests 72 hours before departure, upon arrival, as well as on the 10th day of their mandatory quarantine."

"Risk assessments will be conducted on the 14th day of the mandatory quarantine and it will be extended if they show any symptoms."

He advised Malaysians who were planning to travel abroad to continue to comply with the ministry's Covid-19 standard operating procedure (SOP) and urged senior citizens and those with comorbidities to cancel their trips abroad following the spread of the Omicron variant.

"The SOP set in European countries is quite relaxed compared with Malaysia."

"I would like to advise Malaysians travelling abroad to always wear a mask and practise physical distancing."

"If you want to visit Oxford Street or even Harrods, just wear a mask."

Khairy said Malaysia would temporarily suspend the admission of international students and foreign workers from the eight countries involved.

He also announced that the use of the Malaysian Immigration Department's auto gate system would be temporarily suspended with immediate effect.

"The suspension is to allow Immigration officers to check those entering the country as to whether they have visited high-risk countries."

He said flights carrying passengers from countries that reported cases involving Omicron or countries at high risk of the variant were allowed to enter Malaysia only through the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA).

As for travellers using the vaccinated travel lane (VTL) between Singapore and Malaysia, or coming into the country via land or air, Khairy said they must undergo Covid-19 self-test upon arrival.

The test, he said, must be done on the third and seventh day after their arrival.

"They also must report their results on the MySejahtera application."

Khairy said the government would postpone plans for VTL with countries that reported cases involving Omicron or countries at high risk of Omicron transmission.

"The ministry will update the list of countries that are categorised as high risk on a daily basis," he said, adding that the list would be distributed to the Foreign Ministry, Transport Ministry, Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry and the Immigration Department.

Khairy said tourists from countries that had reported or were at risk of Omicron infections were not allowed to participate in the



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin speaking at a press conference on the Omicron Covid-19 variant in Putrajaya yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

Langkawi international travel bubble programme, including tourists who had a travel history to high-risk countries within 14 days.

"Malaysians, namely Langkawi residents, returning from the countries that have recorded or are at high risk of Omicron transmission are allowed to enter the country via KLIA. They must undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days at designated centres.

"Foreign tourists who test positive for Omicron will be placed in isolation at private hospitals and will have to bear the cost of treatment themselves."

Khairy said the measures implemented by Malaysia such as the travel restrictions were not meant to punish any country.

"The measures are precautionary and temporary to ensure our people are safe.

"We would like to extend our thanks to the South African scientists for sharing with the world the new variant and this speaks volumes about how they responded and subsequently assisted other countries to detect Omicron."

Khairy said the Institute for Medical Research would continue to study the variant and gather data on the genomic sequence from other countries.

"Following that, we are able to quickly detect Omicron using the Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction allowing us to deliver better diagnostics."

Meanwhile, Khairy said the ministry would increase the daily booster doses' capacity from 120,000 to 150,000 doses.

"(And) we are also looking at increasing it until it hits 200,000 doses daily."

COVID-19 UPDATES

5,439 cases in last 24 hours

KUALA LUMPUR: The daily Covid-19 cases continue to see an upward trend with 5,439 infections recorded in the last 24 hours.

On Tuesday, Malaysia recorded 4,879 new Covid-19 cases, a jump from 4,087 on Monday.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the cumulative total stood at 2,638,221 cases up to 12pm on Tuesday.

The Covid-19 death toll now stands at 30,425 with 55 fatalities recorded yesterday, including eight brought-in-dead cases.

According to the Health Ministry's CovidNow portal, 488 deaths were reported in the past 14 days.

Terengganu registered the highest number of fatalities at 63, followed by Selangor (60), Kelantan and Perak (53 each), Sabah (49), Johor (46), Kedah (32), Sarawak (29), Pahang (28), Kuala Lumpur (26), Negri Sembilan (17), Penang (15), Melaka (14) and Perlis (three).

There were no Covid-19 deaths reported in Labuan and Putrajaya in the last 14 days.

There are 65,153 active Covid-19 cases in the country.

Of the total, 81.3 per cent or 52,954 people are undergoing home quarantine, 10 per cent (6,539 people) are at integrated quarantine and treatment centres, and 7.9 per cent (5,151 patients) are hospitalised.

A total of 1,122 people were admitted to hospitals on Tuesday, an increase from 1,009 on Monday and 925 on Sunday.

Covid-19 cases made up 37.6 per cent of hospital bed utilisation.

A total of 509 patients are being treated in the intensive care units (ICU) with 252 of them requiring ventilator support. The national ICU utilisation rate is now at 62 per cent.

There were 289 hospital admissions in the Klang Valley with the hospital bed utilisation rate increasing from 55.9 per cent on Monday to 62.2 per cent on Tuesday.

Selangor recorded 226 hospital admissions followed by 45 in Kuala Lumpur and 18 in Putrajaya.

Other states that reported new hospital admissions were Johor with 216 cases, Sabah (106), Kelantan (87), Sarawak (78), Perak (72), Pahang (67), Terengganu (62), Negri Sembilan (47), Kedah (34), Melaka (32), Penang (23) and Perlis (nine).

There were no new hospital admissions reported in Labuan yesterday.

To date, 96.9 per cent of the adult population have been fully vaccinated, with 98.3 per cent having received at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, and 1.7 per cent are unvaccinated.

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NATION

Palace: The King concerned about new variant

KUALA LUMPUR: Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah has expressed his concern over the spread of the Omicron variant that has been categorised as a variant of concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Comptroller of the Royal Household of Istana Negara Datuk Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin said His Majesty advised the people to continue practising self-discipline in complying with the standard operating procedure (SOP) set by the government to contain the Covid-19 outbreak and called on them to be vigilant while conducting their daily affairs.

He added His Majesty also advised the people to complete their Covid-19 vaccination and get their booster shots to protect and preserve not only their health and safety but also their loved ones and the community.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong also expressed his full support for the government's decisive actions to contain the spread of the variant that has been classified as more dangerous and more transmissible than others.

"In particular, the Health Ministry and the National Security Council are enhancing Covid-19 prevention measures, border control and surveillance measures for travellers

arriving into the country, especially from countries that have reported cases involving the Omicron variant," he said in a statement.

He said Sultan Abdullah hoped that the people would be responsible and immediately seek treatment if they were experiencing symptoms, and isolate themselves if they were confirmed positive or detected as close contacts.

He said His Majesty was of the view that all the sacrifices and efforts of all parties in battling the pandemic would be in vain if the country was subjected to a new wave of the outbreak. — Bernama

VTL users must self-test on third and seventh day after arrival

PETALING JAYA: Travellers using the Malaysia-Singapore Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) by air or land will be required to perform a Covid-19 self-test on the third and seventh day after their arrival.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the results will have to be reported through the MySejahtera app.

The creation of VTLs between countries that have reported transmission of Omicron or are on the ministry's temporary travel ban will also be postponed, he added.

"This postponement will be until a clearer picture is obtained on the transmission of Omicron on a global level," he said.

Khairy added that the autogate system at the Immigration Department will be temporarily suspended with immediate effect to allow immigration officers to query travellers on their travel history.

He added that flights carrying passengers from countries that have reported transmissions of Omicron or are on the ministry's temporary travel ban will only be allowed to enter Malaysia through Kuala Lumpur International Airport.

These tourists and those who have a history of travelling to these countries in the last 14 days will not be allowed to participate in the Langkawi travel bubble programme.

Separately, Khairy said that the government will maintain the six-month interval for booster shots except for those who received the Sinovac vaccine — they will receive theirs after an interval of three months.

"There will be an announcement next week for those who are immunocompromised as to the new interval for them.

"For the general public, it will still be six months and we will continue to review this. Most countries have retained the six-month interval, but we are aware that some have shortened the interval due to winter.

"We don't have it (winter) in Malaysia, but we will continue to monitor and should the situation necessitate a shorter interval period, we will make that announcement," he said.

'Travel ban is temporary'

Govt will be assessing situation daily, says Khairy

PETALING JAYA: As reports emerge of the Covid-19 Omicron variant spreading globally, the government will be assessing the situation daily and broadening travel restrictions.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said Malawi has been added to the list of countries under temporary travel restrictions as of Dec 1. Other countries currently on the list are South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

The temporary travel restriction only applies to non-Malaysians from these countries. Malaysians and those holding long-term passes, including permanent residency status, spouse visa, MM2H, and residence passes, will not be barred from entry.

However, they will be required to undergo a compulsory 14-day quarantine regardless of their vaccination status, he said.

"They will also need to undergo a RT-PCR test 72 hours before flying and after arriving at the international travel gates and on the 10th day of quarantine.

"A risk assessment will be conducted on the 14th day and the quarantine period will be extended if there are symptoms," he said.

Malaysians will also not be allowed to travel to the countries on the list and entry of international students and foreign workers from these countries will be postponed.

Khairy said the countries were placed on the list based on whether the Omicron coronavirus variant spread from an imported case or community transmission.

"We also looked at the country's vaccination rate and whether there was a risk of high transmission in a short time.

"If the vaccination rate is low and the community spread is wide, then the ministry's risk assessment is to put the country on the



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list, but if the transmission is due to imported cases and is low, and the country has a high vaccination rate, then we will not add it to the list," he said during yesterday's press conference.

This assessment will be reviewed daily by the ministry, he said, adding that the steps are taken as a precautionary measure and not to punish the countries on the list.

"The ministry will also prepare a list of countries recognised as 'at high risk of Omicron variant infections' for distribution to relevant agencies on a daily basis," he said.

He pointed out that this was only a tempo-

rary measure until more information is available about the variant.

"If we find that it is not a threat to public health then we will loosen the restrictions once again.

"This is in line with the World Health Organisation's (WHO) recommendation not to overreact to the variant of concern and to respond in a proportionate manner and to continue to share information while updating measures," he said.

When asked if the government would also impose temporary travel restrictions on the United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands and Australia following reports of suspected community transmissions of the Omicron variant, Khairy said the government still needs more information before completing a risk assessment.

Latest updates:

Khairy speaking during a press conference on the new Omicron variant. With him is Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.
— Bernama



For more stories:
See page 4

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NATION

'Imposing travel ban not effective in the long term'

By ASHLEY TANG
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PETALING JAYA: Imposing a travel ban on countries that have detected the presence of the Covid-19 Omicron variant is ineffective and should be replaced by strengthening public health measures, including longer quarantines and RT-PCR testing, say health experts.

International Islamic University Malaysia public health medicine specialist Asst Prof Dr Mohammad Farhan Rusli said travel restrictions were just a stopgap measure.

"For all we know, the Omicron may already be in Malaysia, just that we have not done enough genomic sequencing to determine that."

"Imposing travel bans serve as a quick way of controlling the spread but are economically ineffective," he said when contacted yesterday.

Yesterday, the government added Malawi to the list of countries on temporary travel restrictions as of Dec 1.

Other countries currently on the restricted travel list are South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia and Zimbabwe.

Dr Mohammad Farhan said he felt that basic public health measures, including testing, tracing and isolation, were needed instead.

"Due to globalisation many from these countries are bound to cross paths, perhaps during flight tran-

sits. Just like the Delta variant, we need to make sure our public health response and capacity are ready if a surge occurs," he said.

Universiti Malaya Department of Social and Preventive Medicine Faculty of Medicine Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming said imposing a longer quarantine period of at least 14 days with repeated RT-PCR testing would be a more appropriate response compared with a blanket ban.

"We should impose quarantine measures on citizens coming in from these countries instead," she said.

Medical Practitioners Coalition Association of Malaysia president Dr Raj Kumar Maharajah said a long-term mitigation plan was needed, as more such cases with new variants and mutations were likely to arise in the future.

"We cannot be imposing such restrictions every time. There must be a long-term plan as to how we are going to tackle this," he said.

However, as not much is known about the Omicron variant, Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman said she believed the government was correct in imposing a travel ban on some countries.

"As the actual clinical and epidemiology impact of Omicron is not yet known, the government is making the right move. It is a safer choice in preventing a potential new wave of infection," she said.

Countries placed on the list of travel restrictions as of Dec 1

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| ☐ South Africa | ☐ Mozambique |
| ☐ Botswana | ☐ Namibia |
| ☐ Eswatini | ☐ Zimbabwe |
| ☐ Lesotho | ☐ Malawi |

New measures imposed to contain Omicron Covid-19 variant

1. Malaysians and long-term social visit pass holders to undergo 14-day mandatory quarantine
2. Malaysians barred from travel to countries listed on travel ban or countries with reported transmission of Omicron
3. International students and foreign workers from travel ban list barred from entering Malaysia
4. Foreigners from travel ban list or countries with reported transmission of Omicron and with history of travel in the last 14 days to countries in travel ban list barred from entering Malaysia
5. Travellers using the Malaysia-Singapore VTL by air and land to undergo Covid-19 self-testing on 3rd and 7th day upon arrival
6. Tourists from travel ban list and countries with reported Omicron transmission and those who have a history of travelling to those countries in the last 14 days not allowed to participate in the Langkawi travel bubble programme.
7. Autogate system at immigration Department temporarily suspended to allow immigration officers to question travellers on their travel history

TheStar graphics

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NATION

Nearly 90% of teens vaxxed

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 22,689,471 people or 96.9% of the adult population in Malaysia have completed their Covid-19 vaccination as at Tuesday.

Based on the Health Ministry's CovidNow portal, 98.3% of the adult population or 23,028,508 individuals have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Meanwhile, 89.7% of adolescents aged between 12 and 17 or 2,822,370 individuals have received at least one dose, while 86.1% or 2,709,263 have completed their vaccination.

A total of 135,914 doses of the vaccine were dispensed yesterday, with 8,313 of them as second doses, 4,703 as first doses, and 122,898 as booster doses, according to Bernama.

This makes a total of 53,517,981 doses of the vaccine have been administered.

AKHBAR : THE SUN ON THURSDAY
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

King expresses concern over Omicron

► His Majesty advises the people to comply with SOP and complete their vaccination to curb spread of new variant

KUALA LUMPUR: Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah yesterday expressed concern over the spread of the Omicron variant that has been categorised as a variant of concern by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Comptroller of the Royal Household of Istana Negara Datuk Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin said His Majesty advised the people to continue practising self-discipline by complying with the standard operating procedures (SOP) set by the government to contain the

Covid-19 outbreak. He also called on them to be vigilant while conducting their daily affairs, Bernama reported.

In a statement yesterday, Ahmad Fadil said His Majesty also advised the people to complete their Covid-19 vaccination and get their booster shots to protect, not only their health and safety, but also their loved ones and the community.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong also expressed full support for the government's decisive actions to contain the spread of the new variant that has been classified as more dangerous and more transmissible

than others.

"The Health Ministry and the National Security Council are enhancing measures involving Covid-19 prevention, border control and surveillance for travellers arriving into the country, especially from countries that have reported cases involving the Omicron variant."

Ahmad Fadil said according to WHO, the variant is also likely to have a higher risk of reinfection than other variants, and mutations in the variant could reduce protection by vaccines.

Al-Sultan Abdullah hoped that the people would be responsible and seek treatment immediately if they experienced symptoms.

They should isolate themselves if they were tested positive or came in close contact with infected individuals, Ahmad Fadil added.

He said His Majesty was of the

view that all sacrifices and efforts by all parties in battling the pandemic would be in vain if the country was subjected to a new wave of the outbreak.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong also expressed appreciation for the proactive measures implemented by the Health Ministry to enhance the preparedness of hospitals and clinics to deal with possible increase in the number of daily cases due to the Omicron variant.

"With the high level of cooperation and commitment between the people and the government, His Majesty expressed confidence that the spread of Covid-19 infections, especially the Omicron variant, will be contained to ensure the people's safety and the country's well-being," he said.

Meanwhile, in Putrajaya, the Health Ministry has named eight

countries on temporary travel restriction list.

Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the countries are South Africa, Botswana, Eswatini, Lesotho, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and Malawi.

He said 20 countries had detected the new variant as of Tuesday, and 203 of the 215 cases of the Omicron variant had been reported on the Global Initiative on Sharing All Influenza Data website.

The ministry will, on a daily basis, prepare a list of countries that have reported cases of the Omicron variant or are at high risk of spreading the variant.

It will be distributed to the Foreign Ministry, Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry, Transport Ministry and the Immigration Department through the National Security Council, said Khairy.