

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 1
RUANGAN : MUKA HADAPAN

KKM buat simulasi hadapi lonjakan kes COVID-19

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Putrajaya: Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) meningkatkan kesiapsiagaan untuk menghadapi kemungkinan berlaku lonjakan kes COVID-19, termasuk menjalankan simulasi berikutan kenaikan kadar kebolehjangkitan (Rt) yang kembali melepasi nilai 1.0 sejak beberapa hari lalu.

Selain itu, Pasukan Bertindak Khas Greater Klang Valley (GKV-STF) yang ditubuhkan sebelum ini untuk menangani krisis COVID-19

di Lembah Klang pada Julai dan Ogos lalu turut diperkasakan sebagai Pasukan Petugas Khas Tindak Balas Pantas Negara untuk menangani penularan wabak itu di peringkat kebangsaan.

Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, dalam hantaran melalui Twitternya semalam, berkata KKM dan agensi berkaitan juga sudah diminta membuat penilaian terhadap kebarangkalian situasi jangkitan COVID-19 menjadi buruk akibat peningkatan jangkitan COVID-19.

Nasional 4

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

7 aspek perlu dipenuhi sebelum ke fasa endemik

Pendekatan dimaklumkan kepada umum selepas sidang khas dipengerusi PM

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Kuala Lumpur: Tujuh aspek perlu dipenuhi dalam pendekatan menyeluruh yang diambil kerajaan sebagai persediaan untuk memasuki fasa endemik, kata Menteri Kanan Pertahanan, Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein.

Katanya, ia merangkumi satu prosedur operasi standard (SOP) dan sembilan garis panduan, Sistem Amaran dan Tindakan (HAS) dan Strategi Ujian Kebangsaan, selain *Test, Report, Isolate, Inform, Seek* (TRISS); *Automated Find, Test, Trace, Isolate, Support* (FTTIS), pembukaan sempadan negara secara berperingkat dan mencari duta pemerikasaan komuniti.

"Semua ini perancangan kita untuk melihat kepada fasa endemik dan jika ia mendapat persetujuan pada sidang khas yang

Jika negara sudah berada di Fasa Empat Pelan Pemulihan Negara (PPN), ia tidak boleh lagi kembali ke Fasa Dua atau Tiga

Hishammuddin Hussein,
Menteri Kanan Pertahanan



akan dipengerusikan Perdana Menteri, Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob minggu ini atau minggu depan, ia satu perkara yang perlu difahami ramai dalam melihat ke hadapan," katanya pada sidang media, semalam.

Hishammuddin berkata, jika negara sudah berada di Fasa Empat Pelan Pemulihan Negara (PPN), ia tidak boleh lagi kembali ke Fasa Dua atau Tiga, justeru HAS amat penting untuk difahami rakyat.

"Selain itu, jika dasar vaksinasi kebangsaan dapat dilaksanakan dengan baik, saya tidak lihat jika Strategi Ujian Kebangsaan dapat dipersetujui oleh sidang khas nanti," katanya memaklumkan, pengumuman fasa endemik bergantung pada kriteria antarabangsa termasuk oleh Pertubuhan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHO).

Namun, katanya, negara boleh

ke fasa peralihan supaya tujuh aspek yang ditetapkan itu dapat dimaklumkan kepada umum.

Mengenai pembukaan sempadan negara secara selamat dan berhati-hati, beliau berkata, ia akan membabitkan banyak sektor termasuk kemasukan pekerja asing di bawah Kementerian Sumber Manusia, pelancongan di bawah Kementerian Pelancongan dan Seni Budaya, perjalanan perniagaan di bawah Kementerian Perdagangan Antarabangsa dan Industri serta Lorong Perjalan Vaksinasi (VTL) di bawah Kementerian Pengangkutan dan Kementerian Luar.

"Bagi VTL, sebelum ini kita sudah umumkan bagi Singapura dan Indonesia. Bagi negara lain, ia bergantung juga jika ada perancangan, selain Kementerian Kesihatan perlu melihat dari konteks kesihatan seperti negara berisiko tinggi," katanya.

Pendaftaran secara 'walk in' ke PPV mulai Isnin depan

Kuala Lumpur: Pendaftaran nama dalam senarai menunggu secara 'walk in' atau datang terus ke Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) kemudahan kesihatan swasta di seluruh negara akan dilaksana mulai Isnin depan.

Badan Bertindak Imunisasi COVID-19 Penggalak (CITF-B) menjelaskan dasar terbaharu itu dipersetujui menerusi mesyuarat yang dipengerusikan Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, semalam, sekali gus pendaftaran bagi kaedah itu akan dilaksanakan untuk lima kategori individu.

"Ia merangkumi individu layak pemberian dos penggalak; ingin mendapatkan suntikan secara lebih awal sebelum janji temu; belum menerima suntikan dos pertama atau kedua vaksin COVID-19; terlepas janji temu dan remaja berusia antara 12 hingga 17 tahun yang belum melengkapkan imunisasi," kata CITF-B dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Dalam perkembangan lain, Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah dalam satu kenyataan, berkata Bahagian Regulatori Farmasi Negara (NPRA) meluluskan permohonan untuk tarikh luput baharu vaksin CoronaVac dan Comirnaty, masing-masing bagi tempoh enam dan tiga bulan lagi berbanding tarikh asal dicetak pada label bebuli.

Katanya, keputusan itu selepas mendapat permohonan variasi daripada syarikat Pharmaniga

Lifescience Sdn Bhd dan Pfizer (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd berhubung pengemaskinian tarikh luput vaksin 'COVID-19 Coronavac Suspension for Injection COVID-19 Vaccine' (Vero Cell), 'Inactivated dan Comirnaty Concentrate for Dispersion for Injection'.

"Lanjutan diberi berdasarkan data 'stabiliti' terkini dikemukakan pengilang," katanya menambah, bagi Vero Cell, inactivated untuk kedua-dua pek saiz satu dos/bebuli dan dua dos/bebuli, tambahan enam bulan diberikan iaitu lanjutan daripada enam bulan kepada 12 bulan bagi bebuli vaksin disimpan pada suhu antara 2 hingga 8 darjah Celsius.

"Bagi vaksin 'Comirnaty Concentrate for Dispersion for Injection' keluaran Pfizer Manufacturing Belgium NV, Belgium dan 'Comirnaty Concentrate for Dispersion for Injection' keluaran BioNTech Manufacturing GmbH, Jerman, ia mendapat tambahan tiga bulan, lanjutan daripada enam kepada sembilan bulan bagi bebuli vaksin disimpan pada suhu antara -90 darjah Celsius sehingga -60 darjah Celsius," katanya.

"Kelulusan ini juga terpakai kepada semua stok secara retrospektif sebelum permohonan variasi ini diluluskan. Pengilang diberi masa enam bulan daripada tarikh kelulusan permohonan variasi untuk mengemas kini tarikh luput yang dicetak pada label bebuli untuk produk vaksin dikilangkan," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Laluan Perjalanan Vaksinasi diperluas

Pembukaan sempadan secara selamat rancakkan semula ekonomi

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Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia dalam proses memeterai Laluan Perjalanan Vaksinasi (VTL) bersama beberapa negara lain bersandarkan kepada konsep pembukaan sempadan secara lebih selamat bagi merancakkan ekonomi. Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Ja-

maluddin, berkata ketika kemudahan VTL dengan Singapura dijadualkan bermula 29 November ini, perbincangan berhubung usaha sama giat dilakukan dengan beberapa negara seperti Brunei dan Thailand.

Beliau berkata, VTL di antara Kuala Lumpur-Jakarta sudah memasuki fasa rundingan asas, dengan kedua-dua negara sedang meneliti perincian lanjut.

"Kemudahan VTL pertama dilaksanakan Malaysia, iaitu dengan Singapura pada 29 November ini menerusi pengangkutan udara, sebelum disusuli secepat mungkin bagi laluan darat.

"Perdana Menteri (Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob) dan Presiden Jokowi (Presiden Indonesia, Joko Widodo) juga secara prinsipnya mengumumkan VTL

antara Kuala Lumpur dan Jakarta serta Kuala Lumpur dan Bali pada pertemuan mereka baru-baru ini.

"Saya juga sudah berbincang dengan rakan sejawat (Menteri Kesihatan Indonesia) untuk memastikan kita boleh bersetuju dalam beberapa hal teknikal mengenainya.

"Saya turut berhubung dengan rakan sejawat di Thailand dan harap dapat melaksanakan VTL serupa tidak lama lagi antara Kuala Lumpur dan Bangkok dan lain-lain destinasi di Malaysia dan Thailand," katanya ketika pelancaran Destinasi Rawatan untuk Hepatitis C, sempena In-sigHT2021, di sini.

Yang turut hadir, Menteri di Jabatan Perdana Menteri (Ekonomi), Datuk Seri Mustapa Mo-

hamed; Timbalan Menteri Kewangan I, Mohd Shahar Abdullah; Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah; Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Majlis Pelancongan Perkhidmatan Kesihatan Malaysia (MHTC), Mohd Daud Mohd Arif dan Pengarah Urusan Berhad (Pharmaniaga), Datuk Zulkarnain Md Eusope.

Mengorak langkah seterusnya, Khairy berkata, kerajaan berhasrat membuka sempadan negara, menerusi pendekatan VTL membabitkan beberapa rakan niaga utama dan negara sasaran bagi sektor pelancongan kesihatan.

"Ia antara lain merangkumi Jepun, Korea Selatan, China, Australia, New Zealand dan United Kingdom serta negara Eropah lain," katanya.

Sementara itu, di Singapura, BERNAMA melaporkan Pengerusi Pasukan Petugas Pelbagai Kementerian Singapura mengenai COVID-19, Gan Kim Yong, sebagai berkata, VTL laluan darat antara republik itu dengan Malaysia dijangka mengambil masa beberapa minggu lagi.

"Ramai keluarga yang lama terpisah berikutan sekatan sempadan. Kami berharap rancangan itu akan kembali menyatukan mereka dan ia akan menjadi antara keutamaan kami," katanya.

Pesuruhjaya Tinggi Malaysia ke Singapura, Datuk Azfar Mohamad Mustafar, pula dilaporkan berkata agensi di kedua-dua negara sedang menyelesaikan isu berkaitan kesihatan, ujian saringan dan proses rentas sempadan.



Khairy dan Mustapa menyaksikan majlis menandatangani MOU antara Mohd Daud (kiri) dan Zulkarnain (kanan) di Kuala Lumpur, semalam.
 (Foto Mohamad Shahril Badri Saali/BH)

Malaysia jadi hab rawatan Hepatitis C tahun depan

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia menjadi hab rawatan Hepatitis C yang menawarkan gabungan dua ubat berkesan pada harga lebih berpatutan, tahun depan.

Ketua Pegawai Eksekutif Majlis Pelancongan Perkhidmatan Kesihatan Malaysia (MHTC), Mohd Daud Mohd Arif, berkata prosedur kemasukan pesakit dari luar negara akan berteraskan kaedah perjalanan semasa yang ditetapkan kerajaan.

Katanya, ini termasuk menerusi Laluan Perjalanan Vaksinasi (VTL) yang kini dimeterai di antara Malaysia dan beberapa negara di rantau ini.

"Kempen yang kita ingin beri keutamaan sekarang lebih kepada untuk semua melakukan pemeriksaan kesihatan supaya dapat mengenal pasti pesakit Hepatitis C kerana berdasarkan statistik, kira-kira 30 juta menderitanya akibat jangkitan virus ini di Asia.

"Kita optimis kemasukan pesakit dari luar untuk menerima rawatan dan sembuh di Malaysia, berteraskan kaedah pemulihan yang ditawarkan berupaya dilakukan menjelang suku pertama dan kedua tahun depan.

"Prosedur kemasukan pesakit akan bersandarkan garis panduan pergerakan yang diperuntukkan Kerajaan Malaysia, termasuk menerusi VTL," katanya pada sidang media selepas melancarkan Destinasi Rawatan untuk Hepatitis C, sempena In-sigHT2021, di sini, semalam.

Sementara itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, kajian penggunaan ubat Hepatitis C, iaitu sofosbuvir dan ravidasvir terbukti berkesan sehingga menjangkau 97 peratus, dengan kesan sampingan yang amat rendah.

Katanya, pendekatan dasar pemberian ubat dan rawatan Hepatitis C juga diubah daripada pelesenan secara wajib kepada pelesenan secara sukarela, sekali gus bakal menyaksikan tawaran perkhidmatan kesihatan terhadap jangkitan virus itu diperluas ke hospital swasta.

"Kalau sebelum ini hanya hospital awam sahaja yang boleh berikan rawatan dan ubat Hepatitis C, sekarang hospital swasta juga boleh digunakan menerusi pelesenan sukarela, bagi mengendalikan sofosbuvir serta ravidasvir.

"Kedua-dua ubat ini diberikan

secara oral (makan) dengan kesan sampingan yang amat rendah. Berbeza jika dibandingkan kaedah rawatan Hepatitis C dulu yang menggunakan ubat cecuk.

"Kemajuan perubatan ini juga dijangka berupaya menangani masalah Hepatitis C yang menyasarkan kira-kira 400,000 penghidap virus ini yang belum dikesan di Malaysia.

"Kita sasarkan Malaysia untuk bebas daripada Hepatitis C menjelang 2030 dan ia berupaya dicapai menerusi gabungan dua ubat ini," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan lain, Mustapa menaruh kepercayaan sektor pelancongan kesihatan yang sebelum ini menjana pendapatan mencecah RM1.7 bilion setahun sebelum pandemik COVID-19, berupaya kembali pulih menjelang 2025.

Sepanjang tahun ini, jelasnya, kerajaan menggariskan sasaran pendapatan RM500 juta dan perangkaan setakat Oktober lalu, menunjukkan matlamat sedemikian sudah mencapai 96 peratus atau kutipan RM480 juta daripada pelancongan kesihatan, susulan pembukaan lebih

banyak sektor ekonomi serta pencapaian liputan Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan.

"Tahun depan, kita sasarkan untuk menjana pendapatan RM800 juta daripada sektor pelancongan kesihatan," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

6,013 pesakit sembuh atasi rekod jangkitan baharu

Tujuh kluster dikesan, 53 lagi kematian dicatat

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Putrajaya: Sebanyak 5,413 jangkitan baharu COVID-19 direkodkan setakat tengah hari semalam, meningkat sedikit berbanding 5,143 kes kelmarin, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif jangkitan berkenaan di negara ini mencecah 2,556,865.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata daripada jumlah kes terbaharu, 5,396 adalah penularan tempatan membabitkan 5,172 warganegara dan 224 bukan warganegara, manakala baki 17 lagi adalah kes import yang mendaripat jangkitan dari luar negara

membabitkan 14 warganegara dan tiga bukan warganegara.

"Berdasarkan kes harian yang dilaporkan itu, 5,311 kes bersamaan 98.1 peratus adalah pesakit dalam kategori satu dan dua, manakala 102 kes lagi, iaitu 1.9 peratus adalah pesakit kategori tiga hingga lima," katanya dalam kenyataan, semalam.

Selain itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, 545 pesakit dirawat di unit rawatan rapi (ICU), iaitu 458 disahkan akibat jangkitan COVID-19, manakala 87 kes disyaki, berkeungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

Tambah beliau, 264 daripada jumlah pesakit di ICU itu memerlukan bantuan pernafasan, membabitkan 184 disahkan COVID-19, manakala 80 kes disyaki,

berkemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

Mengenai kes sembuh harian pula, katanya, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) merekodkan 6,013 kes sembuh sekali gus mengatasi kes baharu yang dilaporkan, menjadikan jumlah individu pulih sepenuhnya daripada COVID-19 di negara ini seramai 2,461,780 orang.

Beliau berkata, tujuh kluster baharu dikesan oleh KKM, menjadikan secara keseluruhan 5,850 kuster dilaporkan setakat ini dengan 252 kluster masih aktif.

Sementara itu, sebanyak 53 lagi kematian akibat jangkitan COVID-19 direkodkan setakat tengah malam kelmarin, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif meningkat kepada 29,729 orang.



Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah

Program pertingkat kerjasama hadapi kenaikan kes

Dari Muka 1

Beliau berkata, simulasi atau latihan interaktif itu penting untuk menguji tahap kesiapsiagaan dan tindak balas semua agensi kecemasan bagi menghadapi kemungkinan situasi wabak bertambah buruk.

Program simulasi dikenali *Tabletop Exercise COVID-19 KKM 2021* berlangsung sejak beberapa hari lalu.

"Kita mesti bersiap sedia berdepan dengan lonjakan penggunaan kapasiti penjagaan kesihatan kita. Rt (kadar kebolehan jangkitan) kini pada 1.05," katanya.

Beliau juga memaklumkan GKVSTF yang sebelum ini menjalankan program *Tabletop Exercise* untuk menangani krisis COVID-19 di Lembah Klang turut diperkasakan sebagai Pasukan Pertugas Khas Tindak Balas Pantas Negara bagi menangani penularan wabak itu pada peringkat kebangsaan.

Sementara itu, Timbalan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan (Kesihatan Awam), Datuk Dr Chong Chee Kheong yang mengetahui

pasukan itu, berkata *Tabletop Exercise* diadakan sebagai persediaan menghadapi peningkatan kes positif dan nilai Rt sejak akhir-akhir ini.

"Semalam (kelmarin) *Tabletop Exercise* diadakan di Putrajaya menggunakan senario penularan wabak (*outbreak*) di negeri utara. Ia diadakan untuk mempertingkatkan persiapan kami," katanya kepada BH.

Dr Chee Kheong berkata, program yang diadakan tiga hari itu antara lain untuk menguji dan melihat semula prosedur operasi standard (SOP) serta pelan kontingensi berdepan dengan lonjakan pesakit COVID-19 di kemudahan kesihatan.

Katanya, ia turut menilai komunikasi dan koordinasi antara pasukan operasi, taktikal dan strategik oleh CPRC di KKM.

Program itu juga bertujuan mempertingkatkan kerjasama dan kolaborasi KKM dengan agensi seperti Polis Diraja Malaysia (PDRM), Jabatan Bomba dan Penyelamat Malaysia (JBPM) dan Angkatan Tentera Malaysia (ATM) sebagai tindak

balas kepada bencana seperti dalam Arahan 20 Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) iaitu Dasar dan Mekanisme Pengurusan Bencana Negara.

Nilai Rt atau R-Naught merujuk tahap kebolehan jangkitan kes COVID-19, iaitu berapa banyak kes yang boleh dijangkiti oleh satu kes positif.

Rt COVID-19 negara kekal berada pada bacaan 1.05 untuk tiga hari berturut-turut sejak Sabtu lalu.

KKM dalam beberapa hantaran melalui Twitter juga menyebarkan program *Tabletop Exercise* itu dianjurkan oleh Pusat Kesiapsiagaan dan Tindakan Cepat Krisis Perkhidmatan Hospital (CPRCPH), Program Perubatan dengan kerjasama *Subject Matter Expert* Perkhidmatan Perubatan Kecemasan KKM.

Sementara itu, data laman web COVIDNOW turut menunjukkan peningkatan sekitar 5,800 kes atau 17 peratus di seluruh negara dalam tempoh tujuh hari lalu.

Turut menunjukkan peningkatan adalah kadar kemasukan

pesakit COVID-19 ke hospital, iaitu 1,259 kes atau sembilan peratus dalam tempoh tujuh hari lalu, dengan penggunaan katil hospital pada kadar 69 peratus setakat tengah malam kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data sama, Putrajaya mencatatkan peningkatan kes tertinggi sejak tujuh hari lalu iaitu 82 peratus dan Perlis menunjukkan kadar peningkatan kes terendah iaitu 3 peratus, manakala Sabah dan Sarawak pengurangan kes dalam tempoh sama masing-masing -1 peratus dan -21 peratus.

Kuala Lumpur mencatatkan peningkatan kemasukan ke hospital tertinggi iaitu 115 peratus sejak tujuh hari lalu, namun kadar penggunaan katil masih pada paras 49 peratus setakat tengah malam kelmarin.

Beberapa negeri lain turut mencatatkan kadar penggunaan katil hospital melebihi 70 peratus iaitu Selangor dengan 71 peratus; Johor (72 peratus); Perak (74 peratus); Negeri Sembilan (78 peratus); Kedah (81 peratus); Melaka (83 peratus) dan Kelantan

ngah malam kelmarin, dengan 765,702 atau 2.3 peratus daripada populasi menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos, manakala 7,317,045 atau 22.4 peratus lagi belum divaksinasi.

Sebanyak 95.3 peratus populasi dewasa negara dan 80.4 peratus populasi remaja sudah divaksinasi sepenuhnya setakat tempoh sama. Jumlah vaksinasi diberikan kelmarin membabitkan 102,057 dos, iaitu 70,274 dos penggalak, 5,488 dos pertama dan 26,295 dos lengkap termasuk bagi vaksin jenis satu dos Cansino.

Secara keseluruhan, 51,322,636 dos vaksin sudah diberikan kepada populasi negara dengan 1,042,234 adalah dos penggalak.

(84 peratus).

Bagi kemasukan ke unit rawatan rapi (ICU), Kuala Lumpur dan Selangor menunjukkan kadar penggunaan katil tertinggi iaitu masing-masing 82.3 peratus dan 82.2 peratus, disusuli Putrajaya (75 peratus); Kelantan (73.6 peratus); Perak (68.1 peratus); Pulau Pinang (66.7 peratus); Melaka (65.2 peratus); Terengganu (61.4 peratus); Sarawak (56.7 peratus) dan Johor serta Sabah masing-masing pada paras 51.7 peratus.

Lima negeri dan wilayah melaporkan penggunaan katil ICU bawah 50 peratus iaitu Pahang pada 44.9 peratus; Negeri Sembilan (43.6 peratus); Perlis (42.1 peratus); Kedah (41.8 peratus) dan Labuan (25 peratus).

Biar pun penggunaan alat bantuan pernafasan negara kini pada kadar 38.6 peratus, tiga negeri menunjukkan kadar penggunaan melebihi 50 peratus iaitu Perak dengan 55.6 peratus, Kelantan (55.1 peratus) dan Sarawak (50.7 peratus), manakala Labuan terendah pada 13.3 peratus.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : COVID-19

BAHAYA 'PIL CEGAH MATI'

Pengambilan ubat cegah Covid-19 tak diiktiraf KKM mampu cetus komplikasi kesihatan kepada pengguna

Kuala Lumpur

Laporan demi laporan disiarkan oleh media bersumberkan autoriti sahih bahawa hingga kini Covid-19 belum ada penawar namun masih ramai dalam kalangan rakyat Malaysia terpedaya dengan pelbagai ubat-ubatan yang kononnya mampu merawat jangkitan itu.

Iklan mengenai ubat-ubatan sedemikian masih berleluasa di platform media sosial dan antara ubat yang popular dan mendapat permintaan tinggi ialah Ivermectin, ubat yang diluluskan oleh Pentadbiran Makanan dan Ubat-ubatan Amerika Syarikat (FDA) hanya untuk merawat parasit seperti cacing.

Diberi julukan 'pil cegah mati', Ivermectin didakwa mampu mencegah kematian dan kesan serius akibat Covid-19, sekali gus menjadi 'penawar' yang dicari-cari oleh kebanyakan ahli masyarakat dan turut membawa kepada lambakan ubat itu dari luar negara.

Malah, menurut Bahagian Penguatkuasa Farmasi (BPF) Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), harga pil itu juga naik berkali ganda daripada RM5 sepapan (10 biji) kepada RM60 termasuk caj penghantaran.

Namun ternyata dakwaan 'pil cegah mati' itu tidak berasas kerana KKM pada 3 November lalu mengumumkan kajian Institut Penyelidikan Klinikal (ICR) mendapati Ivermectin tidak mencegah penyakit Covid-19

daripada menjadi lebih serius, justeru, tidak disarankan untuk dimasukkan ke dalam garis panduan rawatan Covid-19 sedia ada.

Kajian itu membabitkan 500 pesakit Covid-19 kategori 2 atau 3 di 20 buah hospital kerajaan serta Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 Maeps 2.0.

Mengulas isu populariti Ivermectin sebagai 'ubat Covid-19', pnsyarah perubatan di Jabatan Farmakologi, Fakulti Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Mala-

ysia (UKM) Dr Fitri Fareez Ramli berkata, kepercayaan terhadap 'keberkesanan' Ivermectin dalam merawat Covid-19 adalah fenomena global.

"Perkara ini masih berlanjutan kerana sebahagian masyarakat berasa bimbang dan ingin mencari alternatif bagi mencegah atau merawat jangkitan Covid-19. Isu melibatkan Ivermectin ini adalah antara contoh bahawa sebahagian ahli masyarakat begitu mudah mempercayai dakwaan pihak tidak bertanggungjawab tanpa bukti saintifik yang

mencukupi," katanya ketika dihubungi.

Tegas beliau, pengambilan ubat-ubatan yang belum dipastikan keberkesanan adalah berbahaya kerana berpotensi membawa komplikasi kesihatan yang tidak diinginkan.

Perkara itu ada kebenaran kerana KKM semasa mengumumkan keputusan kajian terhadap Ivermectin dalam merawat Covid-19 turut men-

dedahkan penggunaan ubat tersebut menyebabkan kesan adwers (sampingan) tiga kali lebih kerap berlaku kepada pesakit - paling kerap ialah cirit-birit.

Sementara itu, Dr Fitri Fareez menyarankan golongan profesional dalam bidang kesihatan supaya sentiasa melengkapkan diri dengan ilmu pengetahuan yang terkini, bersumberkan jurnal dan pakar sahih, sebelum menterjemahkan maklumat yang diterima ke dalam bahasa yang mudah difahami

oleh masyarakat umum.

Usaha itu, katanya, penting bagi mendidik masyarakat secara berterusan, sekali gus mengelakkan pengguna terpedaya dengan kaedah rawatan yang tidak terbukti secara saintifik.

"Selain itu, penggunaan pelbagai saluran seperti media arus perdana, media sosial dan laman se-

MOLNUPIRAVIR
inisiatif rawatan Covid-19.

sawang juga perlu bagi membolehkan setiap lapisan masyarakat mendapatkan maklumat terkini," katanya.

Beliau berkata, golongan profesional penjagaan kesihatan juga boleh memanfaatkan forum umum bagi membolehkan masyarakat atau pengguna media sosial membuat pertanyaan secara langsung kepada mereka.

Selain itu, penggunaan infografik menarik yang mudah difahami dan dalam pelbagai bahasa juga adalah antara kaedah yang dapat menarik perhatian umum, tambah beliau.

Sementara itu, Dr Nurul 'Izzah Ibrahim, juga pnsyarah di Jabatan Farmakologi

22,318,132 individu lengkap vaksinasi

Kuala Lumpur: Sebanyak 22,318,132 individu atau 95.3 peratus daripada populasi dewasa di negara ini sudah lengkap menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19, setakat 11.59 malam kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) melalui laman COVIDNOW, sejumlah 22,875,185 individu atau 97.7 peratus bagi populasi dewasa pula telah menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksinasi.

Sementara itu, 80.4 peratus atau 2,531,793 individu bagi kadar populasi remaja berumur 12 hingga 17 tahun lengkap divaksi-

nasi manakala 87 peratus atau 2,740,442 individu remaja menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin Covid-19.

Sebanyak 102,057 dos vaksin diberikan kelmarin membabitkan 26,295 suntikan dos lengkap, 5,488 menerima dos pertama dan 70,274 pula mendapat suntikan dos penggalak, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif pemberian vaksin bagi Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (Pick) kini meningkat kepada 51,322,636.

Selain itu, jumlah kumulatif dos penggalak kini sebanyak 1,042,234. - Bernama

lakunan demi mendapatkan keuntungan, haruslah dihentikan dengan segera.

"Pihak berwajib harus menjalankan siasatan terperinci mengenai pemberian Ivermectin secara tidak bertanggungjawab ini," tegasnya, menambah mereka yang didapati bersalah juga harus dikenakan tindakan tegas bagi memberi pengajaran kepada yang lain.

Dalam pada itu, Dr Nurul 'Izzah memuji pelan kerajaan melalui KKM menandatangani surat aku janji (*Letter of Undertaking*) bagi pemberian ubat antiviral Molnupiravir dengan Merck Sharp & Dohme baru-baru ini.

Beliau melihat perkara itu sebagai satu usaha proaktif yang dapat membantu mengurangkan kebimbangan masyarakat, sekali gus mengelakkan mereka daripada terus tertipu dengan dakwaan 'keberkesanan' ubat-ubatan tertentu dalam merawat jangkitan virus berkenaan.

"Ubat ini bekerja dengan mengganggu proses virus menyalin bahan genetiknya, asid ribonukleik (RNA). Penggunaan ubat ini dapat menghalang virus daripada merebak di dalam badan dan boleh membantu merawat pesakit yang berisiko untuk (mengalami) jangkitan virus yang teruk," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : COVID-19

PENJAWAT AWAM MASIH ENGGAN TERIMA VAKSIN COVID-19

JPA masih perhalusi data

Oleh Saiful Haizan Hasam

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Bangi

Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) sedang memperhalusi data penjawat awam yang masih enggan menerima vaksin Covid-19 sebelum membuat keputusan mengenai tindakan lanjut ke atas mereka.

Ketua Pengarah Perkhidmatan Awam Tan Sri Mohd Khairul Adib Abd Rahman berkata, pihaknya sudah meminta laporan daripada ketua-ketua jabatan berhubung isu itu bagi mendapatkan jumlah sebenar penjawat awam yang menolak vaksin.

Katanya, selain itu pihaknya mahu mengetahui bagaimana ketua-ketua jabatan menangani segelintir penjawat awam berkenaan. "Saya minta tempoh untuk melihat data-data yang ada sekarang, kita tengah

memperhalusinya.

"Kita juga minta laporan ketua-ketua jabatan, ada dua perkara, pertama bilangan yang belum vaksin dan kedua, bagaimana mereka menangani sebilangan yang belum vaksin.

"Dengan (mengambil kira) keperluan untuk mereka ini berterusan memberi perkhidmatan, mereka tak boleh duduk di rumah," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian dalam sidang akhbar selepas sesi Town Hall KPAA bersama warga universiti awam dan pelajar tajaan JPA di Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) di sini, semalam.

Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 4 Tahun 2021 dikeluarkan JPA pada 18 Oktober lalu, menetapkan tindakan tatatertib atau denda perkhidmatan bo-

leh diambil terhadap penjawat awam yang tidak mematuhi arahan daripada ketua jabatan untuk mendapatkan dos vaksin Covid-19 selepas 1 November lalu.

Mengikut Peraturan-Peraturan Pegawai Awam (Kelakuan dan Tatatertib) 1993 (PU(A) 395/1993), an-

tara bentuk hukuman tatatertib boleh dikenakan kepada pegawai awam yang didapati melakukan kesalahan antaranya ialah amaran,

denda, dilucut hak emolument, ditangguh 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) dan

JANGKITAN HARIAN MENGIKUT NEGERI 15 NOVEMBER 2021



dilucut hak emolument (24 bulan).

Mereka juga boleh ditangguh pergerakan gaji (30 bulan), turun gaji (36 bulan) dan turun pangkat (48 bulan).

Sementara itu, Mohd Khairul Adib berkata, JPA akan menggiatkan usaha untuk mendigitalkan per-

khidmatan awam selaras dengan keperluan semasa, perkembangan teknologi dan pengharapan rakyat.

Menurutnya, pendigitalan itu amat penting bagi membolehkan perkhidmatan kerajaan dapat terus diberikan tanpa mengira keadaan sebagaimana perkhidmatan secara dalam talian yang diberikan sewaktu tempoh Perintah Kawalan Pergerakan (PKP) sebelum ini.

"Teknologi yang ada membolehkan kita berterusan menyampaikan perkhidmatan dan ada banyak lagi selepas ini yang kita perlu lihat sebagaimana diumum oleh kerajaan melalui Unit Pemodenan Tadbiran dan Perancangan Pengurusan Malaysia (Mampu)," katanya.

Dalam perkembangan berkaitan, Mohd Khairul Adib menegaskan pendigitalan perkhidmatan awam tidak bermakna jumlah kakitangan kerajaan akan dikurangkan.

Buka lebih banyak VTL selepas ini

Kuala Lumpur: Selepas Singapura, kerajaan akan membuka lebih banyak kemudahan Laluan Perjalanan Vaksinasi (VTL) untuk memastikan sempadan negara dibuka secara selamat bagi aktiviti keluar masuk pengembara, sekali gus merancakkan ekonomi.

Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin berkata, beliau sudah berbincang dengan rakan sejawat beberapa negara seperti Brunei dan Thailand.

Beliau berkata, kemudahan VTL pertama dilaksanakan Malaysia iaitu dengan Singapura pada 29 November ini menerusi mod pengangkutan udara dan akan disusuli secepatnya bagi laluan darat.

"Perdana Menteri (Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob) dan Presiden Jokowi (Presiden Indonesia Joko Widodo) juga sudah secara prinsipnya mengumumkan VTL antara Kuala Lumpur dan Jakarta serta Kuala Lumpur dan Bali pada pertemuan mereka baru-baru ini," katanya.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI



Dos penggalak nak atau tak nak

KATA seorang doktor di sebuah klinik dos penggalak jenis Pfizer yang akan diterima oleh individu yang sudah lengkap dua vaksin Covid-19 hanya memberi kesan yang minimum.

Jika Sinovac kesannya sederhana sahaja, Pfizer yang disuntik itu mungkin memberi kesan demam sedikit dan sakit di sekitar kawasan lengan yang disuntik vaksin.

Kalau itu sahaja kesannya dan untuk tempoh yang seketika tetapi manfaatnya pula besar, jawabnya ambil sahaja.

Jika pakar kesihatan pun kata dos penggalak mampu meningkatkan keberkesanan imuniti badan seseorang daripada 54 peratus kepada 95 peratus terhadap jangkitan Covid-19, maka tidak ada sebab rakyat negara ini menolak dos penggalak tersebut.

Dapatan keberkesanan dos penggalak tersebut iaitu selepas 14 hari dos diterima dilakukan hasil kajian yang dibuat oleh Kementerian Kesihatan Chile.

Setakat ini dos penggalak itu belum diwajibkan oleh kerajaan terhadap rakyat negara ini dan tidak menjadi masalah pun terhadap sistem MySejahtera jika tidak mengambalnya.

Memang menjadi kebimbangan sesetengah orang terhadap kewajaran mengambil dos penggalak itu selepas mereka lengkap dua vaksin yang diwajibkan sebelum ini.

Setakat semalam sebanyak 51,322,636 dos vaksin telah diberikan kerajaan kepada rakyat negara ini menjadikan 24,849,925 orang sudah lengkap vaksin. Pencapaian itu sekali gus membolehkan imuniti kelompok dicapai.

Sejak Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (PICK) bermula pada 24 Februari lalu, hasil kejayaannya semakin jelas dan mencapai matlamat untuk memberi perlindungan kepada rakyat terhadap pandemik berkenaan.

Negara pernah menyaksikan kes harian positif jangkitan covid-19 mencecah 20,000 sehari pada September lalu dan semalam hanya 5,413 kes dilaporkan. Jika vaksin tidak berkesan, angka tersebut tidak akan turun sebanyak itu.

Selepas melaksanakan imunisasi untuk remaja, kerajaan akan memberi vaksin Covid-19 kepada kira-kira lima juta kanak-kanak berusia lima hingga sembilan tahun pula tidak lama lagi.

Diharapkan program itu juga berjalan lancar dan tidak ada lagi yang ragu-ragu dengan keberkesanan vaksin. Jika ada kes pun, tentunya melibatkan mereka yang mempunyai rekod kesihatan terdahulu sama ada disedari atau pun tidak.



**Setakat ini
dos penggalak
itu belum
diwajibkan
oleh kerajaan
terhadap rakyat
negara ini..."**

**Nizam Abdul Hamid ialah Pengarang Berita Utusan
Malaysia**

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 9

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Jawatankuasa bebas selesaikan isu doktor kontrak

PETALING JAYA: Kerajaan disaran menubuhkan jawatankuasa bebas bagi mengatasi kemelut 22,288 doktor kontrak agar kumpulan tersebut tidak meneruskan mogok siri kedua dan meletakkan jawatan beramai-ramai Disember ini.

Presiden Persatuan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam Malaysia (PPPKAM), Datuk Dr. Zainal Ariffin Omar berkata, jawatankuasa bebas yang tidak terikat dengan Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) dan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mungkin menjadi penyelesaian terbaik buat isu doktor kontrak.

Sebaliknya, menurut beliau, jawatankuasa itu akan menjadi orang tengah antara kerajaan dan Gerakan Hartal Doktor Kontrak bagi menyelesaikan masalah secara adil bagi kedua-dua belah pihak.

"Antara pertikaian yang tidak

Doktor kontrak rancang piket siri kedua, berhenti beramai-ramai Disember ini

Mogok, letak jawatan

UTUSAN MALAYSIA
17 NOVEMBER 2021

KUALA LUMPUR: Gerakan Hartal Doktor Kontrak merancang untuk meletakkan jawatan beramai-ramai Disember ini.

Presiden Persatuan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam Malaysia (PPPKAM), Datuk Dr. Zainal Ariffin Omar berkata, jawatankuasa bebas yang tidak terikat dengan Jabatan Perkhidmatan Awam (JPA) dan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) mungkin menjadi penyelesaian terbaik buat isu doktor kontrak.

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UTUSAN Malaysia
16 November.

sudah seperti ada pihak mendakwa kerajaan tiada duit untuk menyerap semua doktor kontrak ke jawatan tetap.

"Tetapi, ada pula pihak yang mengatakan sistem kesihatan negara memerlukan lebih banyak doktor, jadi sewajarnya kita menyerap doktor-doktor berkenaan," kata beliau kepada *Utusan Malaysia* semalam.

Kata Zainal Ariffin, isu ini seharusnya diselesaikan melalui perbincangan dan berakhir de-

ngan cepat.

"Walaupun tiada kesan akibat kempen mogok siri satu tetapi saya pasti ia menimbulkan persepsi kepada doktor berkenaan," katanya.

Perkembangan terbaru Gerakan Hartal Doktor Kontrak kelmarin memaklumkan mereka merancang untuk meletak jawatan secara besar-besaran menerusi siri mogok kedua di seluruh negara pada Disember ini.

“Walaupun tiada kesan akibat kempen mogok siri satu tetapi saya pasti ia menimbulkan persepsi kepada doktor berkenaan.”

ZAINAL ARIFFIN OMAR

Gerakan tersebut bertindak demikian selepas kecewa dengan baki 22,288 doktor berkenaan yang tidak diserapkan

ke jawatan tetap.

Sementara itu, Presiden Pertubuhan Doktor-Doktor Islam Malaysia (PERDIM), Datuk Dr. Ahmad Shukri Ismail pula berkata, pihaknya menyokong kempen mogok pada Disember ini sekiranya ia benar-benar berlangsung secara aman.

"Perhimpunan dahulu aman selain tidak mengganggu tugas perkhidmatan kesihatan dan paling penting tidak menyusahkan pesakit, PERDIM sokong," kata beliau.

Bagaimanapun, menurut beliau, rancangan untuk turut meletakkan jawatan secara beramai-ramai adalah tidak betul.

"PERDIM percaya kumpulan itu hanya ingin menzahirkan perasaan ketidakpuasan hati mereka sambil cuba menarik perhatian pihak berwajib untuk bertindak menyelesaikan permintaan mereka," tambahnya.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : STORY OF THE DAY / NEWS

'S.O.P COMPLIANCE IMPERATIVE'

EXPERTS WARN OF NEW COVID WAVE

Intervention measures, stricter enforcement needed to avoid another surge, say experts

ADIB POVERA
AND TEH PEI YING
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EXPERTS have warned that there are signs that Malaysia could be swept away by a fresh Covid-19 wave if no intervention measures are put in place. There are already a number of indicators, including the national coronavirus infectivity rate (Rt), which points that the country is heading towards such a direction.

The nationwide Rt hit 1.0 on Nov 11, about five weeks after the ban on interstate movement was lifted, and continued to climb before it remained at 1.05 on Sunday.

As of press time, the nationwide hospital bed utilisation rate stood at 66.4 per cent, a seven per cent jump from the previous week.

The Health Ministry together with other agencies have organised National Table Top Exercise to prepare for worst-case scenarios and simulate crisis responses to prepare for any eventuality.

Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar did not discount the probability of



A senior citizen getting a Covid-19 booster jab at KPJ Tawakal Hospital in Kuala Lumpur on Monday. PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

another Covid-19 wave if the public let their guard down and fail to comply with the standard operating procedures (SOP).

"Everyone should be alarmed," he said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's epidemiologist and biostatistician Associate Professor Dr Malina Osman said the current development in the country's Covid-19 situation must be closely monitored.

"At the same time, all of us should be wary of any risk of infection. For the past two months, there has been an increasing

trend of new infections among fully vaccinated people as well as the hospitalisation rate among them," she said.

Dr Malina said with the relaxing of restrictions over some activities, it was imperative that the public was continuously reminded of the need to adhere to the SOP.

"In my opinion, we have a really tough situation when discussing socio-behavioural characteristics among the community. Based on our experience of facing this outbreak and practising the new norms for almost 21

months, we have to admit that it is a very difficult condition to maintain the SOP for a prolonged duration," she said.

Both health experts said compliance with the SOP was imperative to prevent Malaysia from experiencing another Covid-19 wave. They proposed stricter enforcement against those who fail to comply with the SOP.

"Enforcement under Act 342 (the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988), particularly on certain social activities, should be carried out to prevent any potential new cases

or emergence of new clusters," said Dr Malina.

Dr Zainal said the authorities should also continue looking out for new Covid-19 clusters to control the spread of the virus.

"The authorities should continue with higher vaccination coverage for children aged 12 and above. At the same time, the authorities should also increase the Covid-19 booster shot uptake," he said.

With evidence of waning of antibodies among the fully inoculated, Dr Malina said those eligible for booster doses must turn up for their appointments.

"I would also suggest a walk-in vaccination for those eligible to be administered for booster shots as well as those who have yet to receive the Covid-19 vaccine," she said.

Dr Malina also suggested that Malaysia emulate the move by Singapore, which requires people who choose not to be vaccinated to pay for their own medical bills if they are admitted to hospitals or Covid-19 treatment facilities.

This, she said, was to encourage people who had yet to get vaccinated to do so.

"Perhaps the approach by Singapore can be 'modified' in our country through certain mechanisms. For example, those who reject vaccination (without valid health reasons) need to pay a certain premium (if they become infected and wish to be treated at government hospitals).

"With the burden of healthcare due to long Covid, on the Intensive Care Units as well as our frontliners, who are fatigued, this should be considered wisely."

5,413 new Covid-19 cases reported

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia logged 5,413 new Covid-19 cases up to noon yesterday.

This marks the fourth day the country registered new coronavirus cases below the 6,000 mark.

There were 5,143 new cases on Monday, 5,162 cases on Sunday and 5,809 cases on Saturday.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the cumulative count stood at 2,556,865 cases to date.

Based on data shared in the Health Ministry's CovidNow and

GitHub portals yesterday morning, Malaysia recorded 53 Covid-19 fatalities on Monday, pushing the nation's death toll to 29,769.

Eleven of Monday's deaths were brought-in-dead cases.

Majority of the deaths were reported in Sarawak and Johor with six fatalities each, followed by Perak and Terengganu with five deaths each.

There were four deaths each in Kelantan and Pahang, two deaths each in Penang and Sabah and Negri Sembilan had one fatality.

For the past two weeks, 16



A Health Ministry official in personal protective equipment showing a disposable brush and indelible ink, which will be used for the early voting for the state polls, at Bukit Beruang in Melaka yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

Covid-19 deaths were reported per million people in Malaysia with Sarawak recorded the highest with 39 deaths per million people.

Up to Monday, the country's

Covid-19 R-naught (Rt) rate remained at 1.05 for three days straight.

States with Rt 1.0 and above are Putrajaya at 1.17; Negri Sembilan at 1.05; Selangor, Kelantan and

Kuala Lumpur at 1.04 each; Pahang at 1.02 and Sabah at 1.0.

The other states logged between Rt 0.86 and 0.99 while Labuan has 12 cases without any Rt figure.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

COVID-19 INOCULATION

ANTI-VAXXERS 'THE ONLY HOLDOUTS'

A fully vaccinated nation now relies on the errant few who have refused the jab, says Khairy

VEENA BABULAL
AND MOHAMED BASYIR
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THE onus is now on anti-vaxxers to decide when the entirety of Malaysia's population can be fully vaccinated against Covid-19.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said a significant portion of the population have already been vaccinated, save for the errant segment.

Asked when the ministry expected to have the entire population vaccinated, he said this was a question which needed to be directed to the anti-vaxxers.

"If you look at the statistics today, 98 per cent of the adult population have received the first dose, so we are talking about just two per cent left, based on the Department of Statistics' denominator."

"The question of when the population can be fully vaccinated should be addressed to the anti-vaxxers. They will determine whether we will be fully vaccinated or not. Those who are willing to be vaccinated have mostly been vaccinated already."



A health worker holding up a batch of Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 booster doses at the Raja Perempuan Zainab II Hospital in Kota Baru, Kelantan, on Sunday. PIC BY NIK ABDULLAH NIK OMAR

"This target will depend on those who refuse to be vaccinated," he said, adding that the ministry would continue to organise outreach drives to vaccinate those who have not received their primary or secondary shots, such as migrants.

Khairy was speaking at the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council briefing on marketing

Malaysia as a destination for Hepatitis C treatment.

Up to yesterday, 76.1 of the total population has been fully vaccinated, with 78.4 per cent having received at least one dose.

Around 80 per cent of the adult population became fully vaccinated by Sept 21. Malaysia also succeeded in fully vaccinating 80 per cent of its adolescent pop-

ulation yesterday, a feat achieved within 70 days and is understood to be among the fastest in the world.

Data on the CovidNow website showed that 80.4 per cent of those aged between 12 to 17 were fully vaccinated, while 87 per cent had received at least one dose.

Meanwhile, Khairy also gave

his assurance that the country had enough Covid-19 vaccine supply to provide booster shots, as well as to vaccinate those who had yet to be inoculated.

Malaysia has administered more than a million Covid-19 booster shots since they were rolled out last month.

Up to Monday, 1,042,234 booster doses have been administered.

He said the ongoing administering of booster jabs to strengthen the immunity level of vaccine recipients would not affect vaccine availability for those who have yet to receive their first or second Covid-19 jabs.

Khairy said the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force would be announcing its decision on walk-ins for booster doses soon.

"Perhaps when we allow walk-ins for boosters, we may allow those who are unvaccinated to also walk-in for their jabs."

Khairy said those in charge of vaccination centres have been instructed not to turn away those who qualified for boosters if they were a few days short of their target dates. Sinovac vaccine recipients can receive their booster shots three months after completing the first two doses, while Pfizer recipients can get their booster shots six months after being completely vaccinated.

The government had previously said that booster shots would be expanded to more groups including pregnant women, people aged 18 and above with comorbidities, those aged 40 and above, as well as non-healthcare frontliners.

MANY DEFERRED CHECK-UPS

Rise in late-stage cancer cases prompts call for screenings

KUALA LUMPUR: Cancer patients have been urged to keep up with their scheduled treatment at hospitals to avoid further complications.

National Cancer Society of Malaysia (NCSM) managing director Dr Muralitharan Munisamy said the movement restrictions introduced to curb the Covid-19 transmission had forced many cancer patients to defer their appointments.

"Cancer patients faced difficulties in going to hospitals to seek treatment."

"Some even had to suspend their scheduled treatment due to financial constraints."

"In some cases, patients were afraid to come for treatment as they had a false perception that they might contract Covid-19 if they entered the hospital grounds."

"Since the movement restrictions were lifted, we have found that almost all patients diagnosed have developed late-stage cancer."

"Therefore, it is crucial to encourage cancer patients to get back on track with their treatment," he said during the launch of the "New Normal, Same Cancer" campaign yesterday.

The campaign, he said, aimed to encourage patients diagnosed

with cancer and high-risk groups to continue their routine screening and scheduled treatment.

The campaign was launched by Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali at the Connection Conference and Event Centre at Nexus here yesterday.

Jointly organised by NCSM and Lung Cancer Network Malaysia (LCNM), the campaign is also supported by AstraZeneca Malaysia.

The campaign, Dr Muralitharan said, will include advocacy through mass media and social media, as well as face-to-face outreach programmes through collaboration with private hospitals.

"Under this initiative, we have collaborated with private healthcare players to form a network of hospitals throughout the country that people can visit to get themselves screened."

"We are also offering vouchers that offer discounted prices for cancer screening to encourage more people to get themselves screened. These vouchers can be downloaded from the campaign's website," he said.

Meanwhile, LCNM co-founder and president Dr Anand Sachithanandan pointed out that almost 95 per cent of lung cancer incidents in Malaysia were diagnosed at either Stage Three or

Stage Four.

However, he said, treatments for late-stage cancers were non-curative.

"Based on local data in Malaysia, the five-year relative survival rate of a lung cancer patient in Malaysia is only 11 per cent. This means, if 100 people were diagnosed with lung cancer last year, only 11 of them would still be alive by 2025."

"However, if we can detect lung cancer at an early stage, we can offer the patients more cost-effective curative treatment that includes surgery and adjuvant therapy," he said. **By Dhesegaan Bala Krishnan**

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NEWS / NATION

MEDICAL TOURISM

KL to be Hepatitis C regional treatment hub by next year

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is set to become a Hepatitis C treatment hub by the second quarter of next year and will be offering a combination of two effective drugs at affordable prices for the treatment of the disease.

Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC) chief executive officer Mohd Daud Mohd Arif said the admission procedure for international patients would be based on travel options set by the government.

He said this included Vaccinated Travel Lanes (VTLs) that Malaysia had confirmed or was seeking with several countries in the region.

"We want to give priority to campaigns that insist that everyone go for health screenings so they can detect Hepatitis C as, based on statistics, about 30 million suffer from this infection in Asia," said Mohd Daud.

He said based on these factors, the group was optimistic that they could start receiving patients between the first and second quarter of next year.

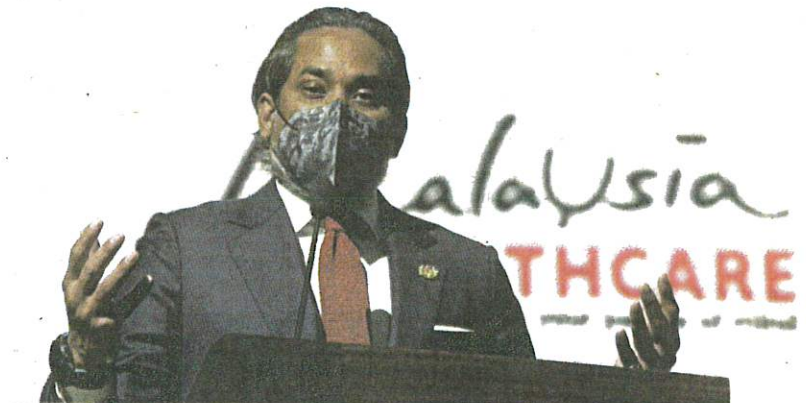
"The patient admission procedure will be based on the movement guidelines provided by the government," he said at a press conference after MHTC's briefing on marketing Malaysia as a destination for Hepatitis C treatment.

Present were Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Deputy Finance Minister Mohd Shahar Abdullah and Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Dr Noor Hisham said studies on the use of Hepatitis C drugs, namely sofosbuvir and ravidasvir, proved to be up to 97 per cent effective with few side effects.

He said the policy approach on Hepatitis C medication and treatment would also be changed from compulsory to voluntary licensing, so treatment for the infection could be expanded to private hospitals.

"Previously only public hospitals could provide treatment and



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin speaking at Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council's briefing on marketing Malaysia as a destination for Hepatitis C treatment in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

medicine for Hepatitis C, but now patients can seek treatment from private hospitals through the voluntary licensing for handling of sofosbuvir and ravidasvir.

"Both of these drugs are given orally with few side effects, which is different from the previous Hepatitis C treatment which were injection-based. This medical advancement is also expected to be able to address the problem of Hepatitis C in the country."

Up to late 2019, it was estimated

that more than 400,000 individuals were chronically infected with Hepatitis C but only about one per cent of them had been treated due to a delay in detection.

"Our target is for Malaysia to be free from Hepatitis C by 2030 and it can be achieved through a combination of these two drugs," he said.

On another development, Mustapa was confident that the health tourism sector, which previously generated revenue of RM1.7 billion a year before the

Covid-19 pandemic, would recover by 2025.

During the year, he said, the government had set a revenue target of RM500 million and statistics up to last October showed that the target had reached 96 per cent, or RM480 million in collection from health tourism, following the opening of more economic sectors and the achievement of the national vaccination drive.

"Next year, we aim to generate RM800 million in revenue from the health tourism sector."

AKHBAR : THE SUN ON THURSDAY

MUKA SURAT : 1

RUANGAN : FRONT PAGE

Irony on the rocks

BY SHIVANI SUPRAMANI
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PETALING JAYA: Fear not if you cannot get your bottle of single malt at a shop near you. It is easily available just a short drive or even an easy walk away.

That about sums up the ludicrousness of the decision to ban the sale of alcoholic beverages at grocery and convenience stores and Chinese medical shops in Kuala Lumpur.

Added to that is the fact that such a move would not do one bit to achieve the intended objective, which is to curb social ills.

In fact, as some have pointed out, it may even backfire.

Malaysian Medical Association president

» Interest groups highlight absurdity of ban on alcohol sale to curb social ills

Dr Koh Kar Chai said it could lead to the sale of illicit alternatives, thereby creating a new problem for the authorities.

On Nov 15 last year, Kuala Lumpur City Hall mooted a change in the guidelines on the sale of liquor to ban such transactions at selected outlets.

The new guidelines, which allow sundry and convenience stores and Chinese medical shops to sell such items only from 7am to 9pm, came into force on Nov 1.

In addition, Chinese medical shops that

sell mixed or pure alcohol for medicinal purposes must now get approval from the Health Ministry.

Koh pointed out that those who want to purchase alcoholic drinks would only have to drive to Selangor.

He said consumers would look for alternative sources and may end up buying fake, illicit or smuggled booze, adding that to deal with alcohol addiction, which is what the ban is supposed to address, a better way is for those affected to seek professional help.

"This will require a whole-of-society approach led by experts such as psychiatrists trained in treating addictions. Substance abuse is a mental health issue that requires medical attention."

Koh said in certain states in India, the authorities have allowed licensed outlets to cater to the needs of the working class in efforts to stop the consumption of cheap illicit liquor and reduce morbidity and mortality.

In a joint statement issued recently, the Malaysian Retail Chain Association and the Associated Liquor Merchants Association (Alma) said many of their members have applied for licences to sell alcoholic beverages to meet a clear demand in the market.

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page 3

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

No ministry backing on use of Ivermectin

➤ Clinical study reveals drug does not prevent infection from progressing to serious stage

KUALA LUMPUR: Many Malaysians are still falling for claims that certain drugs are effective for the treatment of Covid-19.

These drugs are openly being promoted on social media platforms, with the most popular being Ivermectin, an antiviral drug approved by the US Food and Drug Agency as anti-parasitic medication.

Proponents of Ivermectin, who have dubbed it the "death prevention pill", claim the drug can prevent death due to Covid-19 infection as well as stop the disease from progressing to a more serious stage.

These unsubstantiated claims have created a high demand for Ivermectin, which saw a spike in its price from RM5 to RM60 a strip (10 tablets), according to the Health Ministry pharmacy enforcement division.

A clinical study carried out by the

Institute of Clinical Research showed that Ivermectin does not prevent severe cases of Covid-19. In a statement on Nov 3, the ministry said the drug cannot be recommended for inclusion in current Covid treatment guidelines, Bernama reported.

The study involved 500 Covid patients in Category Two and Three at 20 government hospitals and the MAEPS 2.0 Covid-19 quarantine and treatment centre.

On the popularity of Ivermectin, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) medical lecturer Dr Fitri Fareez Ramli said the belief in the effectiveness of the drug in treating Covid has spread globally.

"The matter is ongoing because part of the community is worried and want to find alternatives to prevent or treat Covid-19," said Fitri Fareez, who is attached to the department of

pharmacology at the Faculty of Medicine.

Meanwhile, UKM department of pharmacology lecturer Dr Nurul 'Izzah Ibrahim called for a complete stop to the dissemination of false information.

She commended the ministry's move to sign a letter of understanding with Merck Sharp and Dohme for the purchase of the antiviral pill molnupiravir which, according to clinical data, can reduce the risk of Covid patients progressing to a more severe stage of the disease.

She said molnupiravir works by disrupting the replication of the Covid-19 virus genome, ribonucleic acid. The use of the antiviral drug can stop the virus from spreading inside the body and treat patients at risk of experiencing a severe infection.

"Clinical trials of molnupiravir showed encouraging results. Early analysis of Phase Three trials showed that it reduced hospitalisation and death by 50% (in a group that was given molnupiravir) compared to a group that was given a placebo," she added.



RIGHT AT LAST ... Adryani Iwani Ibeni Yanin (centre) with her twin Atirah Ibeni Yanin (right) and Adryana Iwani Husin showing their new identification cards after a switched-at-birth mistake resulted in Adryani being raised as Adryana's sister for 20 years. —BERNAMAPIX

M'sia poised to be Hepatitis treatment hub

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is ready to become a hub for Hepatitis C treatment in the region by offering a combination of ravidasvir and sofosbuvir at affordable prices, said Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

He said the new product for medical tourism was being offered after Malaysia became the first country to be given conditional approval to offer treatment using a combination of the two drugs.

"We will market this treatment to travellers from abroad and as it is a medium-term treatment of around three months, we expect a multiplier effect on the economy," he told a press conference on the first day of the insigHT 2021 conference yesterday.

The event is the region's leading medical travel market intelligence conference, organised by the Malaysia Healthcare Travel Council (MHTC),

and will be held for three days.

Khairy said the move was also in line with the World Health Organisation's mission to reduce the spread of hepatitis infection by 90% and reduce deaths due to the virus by 65% by 2030.

He added that the ministry would also identify hospitals that could be turned into premium facilities to carry out the initiative.

He said the medical tourism sector had great potential to boost the economy, and had generated revenue of about RM1.7 billion annually before the Covid-19 pandemic.

"For this year, we are targeting RM520 million in revenue due to travel restrictions. Next year, we are targeting RM800 million and based on MHTC plans, we are targeting to reach pre-pandemic levels again in 2025."

Earlier, Khairy launched an

initiative to promote Malaysia as a destination for Hepatitis C treatment, which was also attended by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed, Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah and MHTC chief executive officer Mohd Daud Mohd Arif.

Noor Hisham said studies on the use of a combination of ravidasvir and sofosbuvir proved to be up to 97% effective in treating Hepatitis C, with very low side effects.

"Previously, treatment that required a compulsory licence was only offered in public hospitals. Now, it can be done in private hospitals using a voluntary licence," he said, adding that the Health Ministry was also tracking down more than 400,000 Hepatitis C patients in the country. —Bernama