

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : COVID-19

Jumlah terkumpul jangkitan 4,440,383

Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia merekodkan 6,900 kes sem-buh Covid-19 setakat kelmarin, lebih tinggi berbanding 3,471 kes baharu, kata Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Menerusi satu kenyataan semalam Dr Noor Hisham berkata, daripada jumlah kes baharu dilaporkan, sebanyak 3,461 adalah kes tempatan manakala 10 kes import.

Beliau berkata, daripada keseluruhan 27 kes bagi kategori tiga, empat dan lima

yang dilaporkan, lima kes tidak divaksin atau belum lengkap vaksinasi, 13 kes sudah mendapat dua dos vaksin Covid-19, tetapi belum menerima dos penggalak manakala sembilan kes menerima dos penggalak.

"Selain itu, 13 kes berumur 60 tahun dan ke atas direkodkan manakala 14 kes mempunyai komorbid," katanya.

Perkembangan terbaharu itu menjadikan kumulatif kes Covid-19 dalam negara kini adalah 4,440,383, selain dua

kluster baharu dilaporkan kelmarin menjadikan jumlah kluster aktif, 91 kluster.

Sementara itu, bagi penggunaan fasiliti kesihatan khusus untuk kes Covid-19, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, tiada negeri yang mencatat penggunaan katil Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) dan katil bukan ICU melebihi 50 peratus.

Beliau berkata, 98 kes memerlukan rawatan di ICU kelmarin manakala kes yang memerlukan bantuan pernafasan 63 kes.

Berhubung kadar kebole-hajkitan Covid-19 atau nilai Rt, Dr Noor Hisham berkata Rt dicatatkan seluruh negara adalah 0.70 dengan Putrajaya merekodkan nilai tertinggi iaitu 1.05.

Walaupun kelonggaran prosedur operasi standard diberikan, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) berharap agar rakyat sentiasa berwaspada dengan mengamalkan kawalan sendiri kerana virus Covid-19 masih berada dalam kalangan masyarakat.

92.9 peratus daripada populasi remaja lengkap vaksinasi

Kuala Lumpur: Sebanyak 785,432 atau 22.1 peratus kanak-kanak berumur lima hingga 11 tahun sudah melengkapkan vaksinasi di bawah Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) setakat kelmarin.

Berdasarkan laman web COVIDNOW, sebanyak 1,511,678 atau 42.6 peratus

kanak-kanak dalam kumpulan sama sudah menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Bagi remaja berumur 12 hingga 17 tahun, sebanyak 2,890,870 atau 92.9 peratus sudah lengkap vaksinasi manakala 2,989,453 dan 96.1 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS / STORY OF THE DAY

HYBRID FACILITY

Sg Buloh Hospital to treat Covid, non-Covid patients

KUALA LUMPUR: The Sungai Buloh Hospital will now serve as a hybrid hospital that treats Covid-19 and non-Covid patients.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah yesterday said the ministry had agreed for the hospital to resume the treatment of non-Covid cases as the number of critical patients and use of healthcare facilities for Covid treatment in the Klang Valley was low.

The hospital was gazetted to treat only Covid-19 patients on March 10, 2020.

This move, Dr Noor Hisham said, was done to enable optimum management of healthcare facilities, medicines, equipment, expertise and human resources.

"During the peak of its operations, the hospital was able to take in more than 2,000 Covid-19

patients at a time.

"Up to yesterday (Wednesday), 92,874 Covid-19 patients have received treatment at this hospital."

He said the ministry would continue to monitor and prepare treatment services for Covid-19 cases during the transition to the endemic phase.

The services, he said, included critical care treatment based on the ministry's Strategic Plan for Covid-19 Management, in the event there was a resurgence of Covid-19 cases.

Dr Noor Hisham said: "The ministry wishes to convey its highest appreciation to frontliners in the country, especially at Sungai Buloh Hospital, for their commitment to deliver the best healthcare services during the Covid-19 pandemic."



Sungai Buloh Hospital has treated 92,874 Covid-19 patients up to Wednesday. FILE PIC

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : NATION

When masks are a must outdoors

They must be worn in crowded areas, say experts

By **FATIMAH ZAINAL**
fatimah@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: While mask-wearing will be optional in outdoor settings come Sunday, the public are highly encouraged to keep them on for crowded situations and if they are unwell, say public health experts.

They said masks could reduce the expulsion and transmission of Covid-19 droplets and should be worn in crowded outdoor areas like bazaars, stadiums and night markets.

Public health expert Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh of Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia said people should wear masks when joining a large and crowded congregation outdoors where the health and vaccination status of the people are unknown.

"Individuals with symptoms such as fever, cough and runny nose are also encouraged to wear masks."

"People with symptoms should always wear masks as Covid-19 might mimic coughs and colds, so they may unknowingly transmit the virus to others," she said.

Prof Sharifa said masking outdoors also provides personal protection for high-risk individuals such as the elderly, the unvaccinated, the immunocompromised and those living with comorbidities.

"Senior citizens and those with underlying health conditions such as diabetes or obesity should also wear masks outdoors due to their weakened immune system and the high

risk of Covid-19 infections.

"Wearing masks outdoors can protect them should they be in close contact with infected persons with mild symptoms or who are asymptomatic."

"Other individuals can choose not to wear masks outdoors especially in well-ventilated, open air outdoor settings that are less crowded."

Covid-19 cases were still manageable in countries like Singapore that have removed the mask mandate outdoors.

She said the city-state has a high health literacy and vaccination coverage as well as a lower population density than Malaysia.

She also said the government must pay attention to the children's vaccination programme as the rate is still quite low.

Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming of Universiti Malaya's Social and Preventive Medicine Department said while wearing masks outdoors has become a personal choice, the decision depends on the risks.

"Outdoor settings that are not crowded or where physical distancing is possible pose low risks."

"However, if the outdoor area is crowded like markets and bazaars, the risk of infection may be higher."

"Under these circumstances, I would suggest masks be worn."

Additionally, she said if the individual is from the older age or high-risk group, his risk of getting infected will be even higher, adding that he is encouraged to put on his mask outdoors.

She said Singapore is doing well in terms of Covid-19 with its case-load and hospitalisation rates declining.

"They have kept the last measure, that is the mask mandate indoors."

Prof Moy said it is the people's choice whether to mask up or not outdoors, as there are no more legal consequences.

However, she said they should be accountable for their actions.

"As reporting positive for Covid-19 is done by the patients themselves, I hope they will report diligently and go into isolation."

"They should not pretend or hide the fact that they are Covid-19 positive as it will cause a surge in new cases and increase the hospitalisation rate," she said.

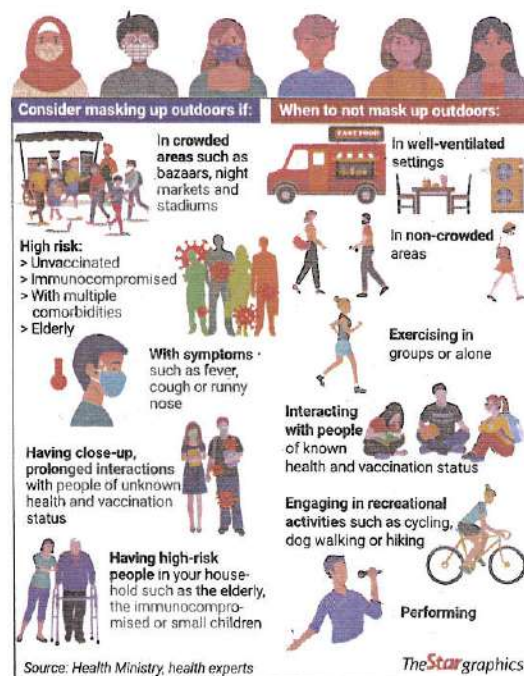
Prof Moy added that while the final measure - relaxing the indoor mask mandate - should not be done too soon.

"We need to observe the consequences of the current relaxations, especially on the hospitalisation and death rates."

"We should also monitor the situation in other countries, especially whether new variants are getting milder or more lethal," she added.

She said with the Hari Raya celebrations, people should weigh the risks and be responsible.

Volunteers For Community Engagement and Empowerment For Covid-19 chairman Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said that people could feel comfortable not masking up outdoors as the airflow does a good



job of minimising infection risks compared to shared indoor spaces.

He added that being outdoors provides another layer of protection because of the ventilation.

"It should be okay if people want to walk around with their family members while on holiday without

masks on," he said.

However, he said certain outdoor situations could call for masking up such as when in crowded areas without physical distancing.

"High risk individuals and those who are unwell should consider masking up outdoors."

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 12

RUANGAN : NATION

Khairy: We need to combat the NCD epidemic next

By JOSEPH KAOS Jr
joekaosjr@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: As Malaysia transitions to the endemic phase of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Health Ministry wants to focus on the "ticking time bomb" – the epidemic of non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

Its minister Khairy Jamaluddin said more awareness must be created on NCDs, especially within the B40 group.

"Once the pandemic is under control, the ministry can shift its focus towards the NCD epidemic.

"The Covid-19 pandemic is a public health emergency, but NCD is more a long-term epidemic.

"If we are infected with Covid-19, within three to four days we see an onset of symptoms.

"But with NCDs, its symptoms or harm can only be seen years later. An NCD is like a 'ticking time bomb' – we know it exists but one day, it will explode.

"And when it explodes, it's too late.

"The disease's manifestation will probably take several years compared to Covid-19," he said at the launch of the 2020-2021 report on the Healthcare Protection Scheme for the B40 Group (PeKa B40).

Khairy said that although 5.9

million Malaysians from the B40 group are eligible for PeKa B40, which is the government's free health screening programme, fewer than 600,000 people had taken up the offer.

"I urge the B40 group to take advantage of the free health screening scheme for early detection and prevention of NCDs," he added.

The minister said that out of the 582,746 people who have undergone health screening, 186,610 were found to be sufferers of at least one NCD.

Khairy said ProtectHealth Corp, which runs the PeKa B40 programme, should think of ways to reach out to more people in the B40 group, including expanding its outreach programmes.

He urged more general practitioners to become administrators of the programme and help achieve the country's aspiration of becoming a health-literate nation.

Also present at the launch were Deputy Health Ministers Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali and Datuk Aaron Ago Dagang, ministry secretary-general Datuk Harjeet Singh, Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, and ProtectHealth chief executive officer Datuk Dr Anas Alam Faizli.

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Remain **vigilant** against Covid, public told

» Everyone needs to take responsibility as risk of contracting coronavirus or other respiratory disease still present, says expert

■ BY MUHAMMAD YUSRY
AND IMAN MUTTAQIN
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Despite the relaxation of Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP) from May 1, Malaysians must continue to be vigilant and take responsibility to protect themselves and their families against the coronavirus.

Universiti Malaya social and preventive medicine head Dr Victor Hoe said the relaxation is reasonable based on the current risk situation in the country and around the world.

"The number of cases in Malaysia is on a downward trend and our vaccination rate is very high. So, I am not too concerned with the relaxation of the SOP.

"However, the people should be responsible for their actions and be mindful that the risk of contracting Covid-19 or any other infectious respiratory disease is still present, even though the SOP have been relaxed.

"Besides Covid-19, the public should also be concerned about tuberculosis.

Everyone should be responsible to ensure they do not spread Covid-19 or other respiratory diseases. Those who have respiratory symptoms should wear masks and avoid crowded places," he said.

Restaurant and Bistro Owners Association (RBOA) vice-president Jeremy Lim said the nightclub industry is happy with the relaxation of the SOP.

He said the industry is a complex ecosystem that overlaps with other sectors, so it is welcome news for everyone.

"This includes shops within our premises, employees, our supply chain and even Mamak restaurants that are supper haunts for clubbers," said Lim, who is also Dragonfly nightclub managing director.

He said RBOA is still waiting for a viable SOP from the government.

"Realistically speaking, the crowd would not return in full force. First, we need to show our customers that nightclubs are safe to visit. Hopefully, given enough time, we can once again see packed dance floors.

"Right now, nightclub operators are conducting deep cleaning at their venues. The next step is to service all technical

equipment. We can only decide on how many employees we can recall and how to optimise our resources after the SOP is announced," he said.

Lead singer for local band Loko, who wished to be known only as Acap Loko, said he missed performing to a full crowd and expressed excitement in doing it again soon.

However, he said after two years of having limited capacity venues, selling a high number of tickets would take time as Malaysians are going through the "new norm".

"Crowds influence musicians' performance, and relaxing the SOP would affect our stage performances. I can't wait to perform, but I wish to remind everyone to be extra cautious as Covid-19 is still around. The responsibility lies with the individual, so please get yourself tested before going to concert venues," he said.

On Wednesday, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced the relaxation of Covid-19 SOP.

Among them are entry to all premises regardless of vaccination status, optional wearing of face masks outdoors but mandatory indoors and in public transport, and MySejahtera check-ins will no longer be required for entering premises and public areas. Nightclubs, the only remaining premises within the National Security Council's negative list, would be allowed to operate from May 15.

3,461 local infections among new cases

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia recorded 6,900 recoveries from Covid-19 on Wednesday compared to 3,471 new cases, said Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

In a statement yesterday, he said 3,461 of the new cases were local infections while 10 were imported.

Of the total 27 cases in categories three, four and five, five involved patients who are not vaccinated or had not been fully vaccinated, 13 involved those who are fully vaccinated but had not received the booster jab, while nine had received the booster dose.

"Thirteen cases are aged 60 and above while 14 have comorbidities."

Noor Hisham said the new cases bring the cumulative figure for Covid-19 infections to 4,440,383. Two new clusters were detected on Wednesday, bringing the number of active clusters to 91.

On the use of health facilities dedicated to Covid-19 cases, Dr Noor Hisham said no states exceeded a usage rate of 50% for both intensive care unit (ICU) and non-ICU beds. - Bernama