AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

35 peratus golongan dewasa belum ambil dos penggalak

1,197,667 populasi kanak-kanak sudah divaksinasi

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Kuala Lumpur: Tiga puluh lima peratus golongan dewasa di negara ini belum mengambil suntikan dos penggalak, kata Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin.

Beliau menerusi akaun Twitter memaklumkan, dos penggalak adalah cara terbaik bagi melindungi daripada kesan teruk jangkitan COVID-19 seperti kematian, khususnya bagi mereka yang berusia 60 tahun dan ke atas serta golongan komorbid.

Berikutan itu, beliau menggesa orang ramai supaya segera mendapatkan dos penggalak bagi melindungi diri mereka daripada wabak itu.

Laman web COVIDNOW menunjukkan seramai 15,357,069 individu dewasa atau 65.3 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu di negara ini sudah menerima dos penggalak COVID-19, setakat kelmarin.

Data juga menunjukkan seramai 22,937,707 orang atau 97.5 peratus daripada populasi sama sudah melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka, manakala 23,213,875 orang atau 98.7 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya menerima satu dos vaksin.

Bagi populasi kanak-kanak berusia lima tahun hingga 11 tahun, seramai 1,197,667 individu atau 33.7 peratus kumpulan itu sudah menerima dos pertama vaksin COVID-19 melalui Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids).

Bagi remaja berusia 12 tahun hingga 17 tahun, sejumlah 2,839,254 individu atau 91.3 peratus daripada populasi itu sudah melengkapkan vaksinasi, manakala 2,938,900 orang atau 94.5 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Ia menjadikan jumlah kumulatif dos vaksin yang diberikan kepada rakyat negara ini sebanyak 68,275,177 dos.

Seorang kanak-kanak menerima suntikan vaksin COVID-19 dos pertama sempena PICKids di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin Offsite Tapak Ekspo Seberang Jaya, semalam. (Foto Danial Saad/BH)

Kes remaja maut selepas divaksinasi

Syor panel bebas teliti hasil bedah siasat

Kuala Lumpur: Kerajaan diminta mewujudkan panel siasatan bebas bagi meneliti hasil bedah siasat terhadap remaja lelaki berusia 13 tahun yang meninggal dunia selepas menerima vaksin COVID-19.

Charles Anthony Santiago (PH-Klang) ketika menyuarakan cadangan itu berkata, ia bertujuan mengatasi isu defisit kepercayaan rakyat terhadap hasil bedah siasat berkenaan yang memutuskan bahawa vaksin COVID-19 bukan punca kematian remaja terbabit.

Dr Noor Azmi ketika menjawab soalan di Dewan Rakyat, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

Beliau menegaskan, penubuhan panel bebas itu juga dipercayai dapat mengatasi isu kebimbangan ibu bapa yang menjadi antara punca kadar pengambilan vaksin COVID-19 dalam kalangan kanak-kanak berusia bawah 12 tahun masih rendah.

"Kita tahu Menteri Kesihatan sudah bertemu ibu bapa kanak-kanak berusia 13 tahun itu bagi menjelaskan hasil bedah siasat punca kematiannya yang berlaku selepas 14 hari menerima vaksin COVID-19.

"Saya juga diberitahu bahawa ada kanak-kanak lain berusia 12 tahun dan 13 tahun yang turut meninggal dunia dalam tempoh sekitar dua minggu selepas menerima vaksin ini.

"Bedah siasat itu mengatakan vaksin tidak menjadi punca kematian anak muda itu, namun orang ramai tidak percaya dengan kesimpulan ini.

"Oleh itu, saya meminta kerajaan membentuk satu panel bebas untuk menilai laporan bedah siasat yang dikemukakan kepada ibu bapa kanak-kanak ini, apatah lagi kerana ada juga kes seumpamanya dilaporkan berlaku," katanya di Dewan Rakyat, semalam.

Beliau berkata demikian ketika mencelah penggulungan perbahasan Titah Ucapan Yang di-Pertuan Agong, oleh Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan I, Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali.

Pada 4 Mac lalu, Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin, dilaporkan bertemu ibu bapa kepada remaja lelaki itu untuk memaklumkan hasil bedah siasat kematiannya.

Sebelum ini, media melaporkan ibu bapa remaja itu pada satu sidang media, menggesa supaya pihak berkaitan memberi penjelasan berhubung kematian mangsa yang berlaku beberapa minggu selepas mengambil vaksin pada Januari lalu.

Dalam jawapan balasnya, Dr Noor Azmi berkata, Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) melalui Menteri dan Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan sudah menangani isu itu dengan memberi penerangan kepada ibu bapa remaja terbabit.

Beliau berkata, KKM menjalankan tanggungjawab serius dalam menentukan punca semua kematian, termasuk yang membabitkan remaja lelaki itu.

Bagaimanapun, Dr Noor Azmi tidak menyatakan dengan jelas panel siasatan bebas bagi meneliti laporan bedah siasat itu diwujudkan atau sebaliknya.

"Apabila berlaku kematian selepas vaksinasi, KKM akan menentukan sama ada ia berpunca daripada vaksinasi atau tidak.

"Punca kematian ini ditentukan setepat-tepatnya melalui ujian, laporan, kajian tisu dan sebagainya oleh bahagian tertentu di KKM. Kita mengambil berat perkara ini," katanya.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 13
RUANGAN : MINDA PEMBACA

Ujian kendiri tuntut kejujuran lapor status, asing diri jika positif

Mohd Zaini Othman,
Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)

Bermula 1 Mac lalu, Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) melonggarkan lagi prosedur pengurusan kes positif dan kontak rapat jangkitan COVID-19, berdasarkan kepada status vaksinasi individu.

Pastinya KKM sudah membuat kajian dan pertimbangan sewajarnya sebelum memutuskan demikian walaupun secara umum kita masih bimbang disebabkan bilangan kes jangkitan harian yang kekal tinggi.

Sehingga 13 Mac lalu, negara sudah mencatat kumulatif 3,823,571 kes positif COVID-19 dengan 3,468,888 kes sembuh dan 33,807 jumlah kematian direkodkan.

Selain vaksinasi, penjualan pelbagai jenis kit ujian kendiri COVID-19 yang berada di pasaran secara tidak langsung membantu dalam mengawal penularan lebih awal.

Kewujudan kit ujian kendiri yang menggunakan kaedah sampel daripada air liur atau calitan di dalam rongga hidung sememangnya memudahkan masyarakat untuk mengetahui status diri apabila bergejala atau menjadi kontak rapat.

Cuma yang dibimbangi sekiranya keputusan ujian kendiri adalah positif COVID-19, apakah yang akan berlaku selepas itu? Inilah yang penulis risaukan kerana tiada pihak berkuasa berwajib yang mengetahui status individu berkenaan positif atau kontak rapat.

Hal ini memandangkan pada peringkat itu hanya individu berkenaan sahaja yang mengetahui status dirinya sama ada sebagai pembawa virus COVID-19 atau sebaliknya.

Justeru, pada peringkat inilah penulis melihat kit ujian kendiri menuntut kepada sikap tanggungjawab yang tinggi dan jujur oleh rakyat Malaysia khususnya mereka dengan status positif. Begitu juga dengan kontak rapat. Mereka perlu melaporkan status diri dengan sukarela dan penuh tanggungjawab di MySejahtera dan seterusnya menjalani pengasingan dan prosedur lain yang ditetapkan KKM.

Tanpa menidakkan kebarangkalian, pasti ada segelintir yang tidak bertanggungjawab dan tidak jujur apabila mengambil sikap berdiam diri apabila gagal melaporkan status dirinya yang positif COVID-19 mahupun kontak rapat atas pelbagai alasan.

Lebih dikesali, sekiranya mereka ini tanpa rasa bersalah menjalani rutin kehidupan seperti biasa dan berinteraksi secara bebas dengan masyarakat.

Dari sinilah virus itu terus tersebar dengan disengajakan dan disedari. Ia terus menjangkiti seorang demi seorang. Golongan seperti inilah yang menjadikan pengawalan penularan jangkitan COVID-19 akan gagal.

Selain itu orang ramai terus diseru untuk mendapatkan dos penggalak vaksin COVID-19, penulis juga mengesyorkan untuk masyarakat melaksanakan ujian kendiri secara berkala terutama apabila bergejala. Nampak melecehkan, tetapi ia mampu menyelamatkan nyawa orang yang kita sayangi. Kata pepatah, lebih baik mencegah sebelum terjadi, jangan sudah terhantuk baru hendak terngadah.

Kesimpulannya, walau sebanyak manapun kelonggaran prosedur yang diberikan kerajaan selepas ini, janganlah ia dijadikan alasan untuk kita melonggarkan disiplin kendiri sebagai ikhtiar daripada dijangkiti virus ini atau menjadi penyebarnya.

Jadilah individu yang bertanggungjawab dan jujur untuk menang bersama melawan COVID-19.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 5
RUANGAN : LOKAL

HTJS tingkatkan aspek penjagaan kebersihan

Seremban: Hanya kerana seekor tikus mendorong pihak Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar Seremban (HTJS) mengambil beberapa langkah penambahbaikan membabitkan aspek penjagaan kebersihan di sekitar hospital itu, khususnya di wad susulan tular di laman sosial terdapat seekor tikus berkeliaran.

Pengarah Jabatan Kesihatan Kesihatan Negeri Sembilan (JKNNS) Datuk Dr Harlina Abdul Rashid berkata, pihak HTJS sudah menjalankan siasatan segera berhubung insiden berkenaan.

"Susulan itu, pihak pengurusan HTJS telah mengambil beberapa langkah bagi mencegah insiden sama daripada berulang dengan menambah kekerapan dalam jadual pembersihan dan kutipan sampah.

"Di samping itu, menitikberatkan penjagaan kebersihan di sekitar khususnya di semua wad.

"Pihak konsesi penyelenggaraan hospital juga diarahkan untuk mengenal pasti lokasi yang kerap didatangi tikus dan kuantiti pemasangan perangkap juga dipertingkatkan," katanya dalam satu kenyataan media di sini, semalam.

Beliau berkata, penjadualan kawalan makhluk perosak turut diberikan penekanan melalui aktiviti pemeriksaan rutin dan rancangan pembaikan preventif (PPM) mengikut frekuensi yang telah ditetapkan iaitu pada setiap hari dan setiap bulan dengan menggunakan pelbagai kaedah yang bersesuaian.

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

26,534 JANGKITAN BAHARU KELMARIN

59.71% dalam kategori dua

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Kuala Lumpur

Kes harian Covid-19 di negara ini kembali mencatat peningkatan iaitu 26,534 kes kelmarin.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, perkembangan itu menjadikan jumlah kumulatif individu dijangkiti virus berkenaan 3,872,135 kes.

Beliau berkata, jumlah kes membabitkan 25,843 kes penularan tempatan dengan 691 kes import yang mendapat jangkitan luar negara.

"Paling tinggi kategori dikesan semalam adalah kategori dua iaitu 15,842 kes atau 59.71 peratus, ia diikuti kategori satu (10,516), kategori tiga dan kategori empat masing-masing dengan 65 kes dan 46 kes bagi kategori lima.

"Daripada jumlah keseluruhan 176 kes bagi kategori tiga hingga lima, 45 kes (25.57 peratus) tidak divaksinasi atau belum lengkap divaksinasi manakala 91 kes (51.70 peratus) menerima dua dos vaksin Covid-19 tetapi belum menerima dos penggalak," katanya.

PETUGAS kesihatan memujuk seorang kanak-kanak untuk memberikan suntikan vaksin ketika Program PICKids di Putrajaya, kelmarin. - Gambar NSTP/MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, 40 kes (22.73 peratus) menerima dos penggalak dan 95 kes (53.98 peratus) berusia 60 tahun dan ke atas.

"Manakala 61 kes lagi (34.66 peratus) mempunyai komorbid," katanya.

Menurutnya, 376 kes dirawat di Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) iaitu 152 kes disahkan Covid-19 serta 224 kes lagi disyaki, berkemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

Bagi pesakit dalam ICU dan memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan, setakat ini terdapat 222 kes iaitu 90 kes disahkan Covid-19 serta 132 kes lagi disyaki, berkemungkinan dan dalam siasatan.

"Sebanyak 31,234 kes sembuh dilapor semalam menjadikan jumlah kumulatif adalah 3,533,994," katanya.

> *Paling tinggi kategori dikesan semalam adalah kategori dua iaitu 15,842 kes atau 59.71 peratus"*
>
> **Dr Noor Hisham**

Dalam pada itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, ada empat kluster baru dikesan dan 366 masih aktif.

"Ia menjadikan jumlah kluster sebanyak 6,887 kluster dan 6,521 kluster sudah tamat," katanya.

Dalam pada itu katanya, tujuh negeri merekodkan penggunaan katil wad ICU pesakit Covid-19 melebihi 50 peratus.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, Kuala Lumpur mendahului dengan 81 peratus penggunaan katil diikuti Putrajaya (67 peratus), Johor (64 peratus), Selangor (60 peratus), Kelantan (58 peratus), Perlis (55 peratus) dan Melaka (50 peratus).

Bagi katil bukan ICU katanya, ada 12 negeri merekodkan penggunaan katil melebihi 50 peratus.

"Negeri berkenaan adalah Putrajaya sebanyak 104 peratus, Kuala Lumpur (90 peratus), Terengganu (87 peratus), Perak (83 peratus), Selangor (79 peratus) dan Melaka(77 peratus).

"Selain itu, Perlis 76 peratus, Sarawak (72 peratus), Kelantan (67 peratus) , Johor (57 peratus), Pahang (52 peratus) dan Pulau Pinang (50 peratus)," katanya.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, tiada negeri peratusan pengisian lebih 50 peratus bagi katil di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 (PKRC).

Menurutnya, pesakit Covid-19 memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan (ventilator) pula meningkat kepada 222 pesakit dan peratusan penggunaan bantuan itu adalah 25 peratus daripada keseluruhan ventilator untuk pesakit Covid-19 dan bukan Covid-19.

Selangor catat kes kematian tertinggi

Kuala Lumpur: Seramai 15,357,069 individu dewasa atau 65.3 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu di negara ini menerima dos penggalak Covid-19 setakat kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data menerusi laman web Covidnow, 22,937,707 atau 97.5 peratus daripada populasi sama melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka manakala 23,213,875 atau 98.7 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Bagi populasi kanak-kanak berusia lima hingga 11, 1,197,667 individu atau 33.7 peratus menerima dos pertama vaksin Covid-19 melalui Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids).

Bagi remaja berusia 12 hingga 17, 2,839,254 individu atau 91.3 peratus daripada populasi itu melengkapkan vaksinasi mereka manakala 2,938,900 atau 94.5 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Sementara itu, menurut portal GitHub Kementerian Kesihatan, 95 kes kematian akibat Covid-19 direkodkan kelmarin dengan Selangor tertinggi iaitu 21 kes, diikuti Johor (16), Perak (14), Kedah (10), Pulau Pinang (lapan) dan Sabah (lima).

Selain itu, Melaka, Pahang dan Perlis masing-masing melaporkan empat kes, Negeri Sembilan dan Sarawak masing-masing tiga kes, Kelantan (dua) manakala Terengganu (satu).

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 17
RUANGAN : NEGARA

Hospital tambah baik mutu pembersihan, kutipan sampah elak kejadian berulang

Tikus dalam wad kanak-kanak HTJ

Oleh NOR SHAFAWATI YUP

SEREMBAN – Hospital Tuanku Ja'afar (HTJ) di sini, mengambil tindakan segera dengan menambah baik mutu pembersihan susulan penularan satu video memaparkan seekor tikus berkeliaran di wad hospital berkenaan baru-baru ini.

Menerusi video berdurasi 16 saat yang dimuat naik di TikTok itu, seorang wanita berkongsi kehadiran tikus liar di wad kanak-kanak sehingga menimbulkan pelbagai reaksi orang ramai.

Difahamkan, aduan juga telah dibuat pihak yang merakam video berkenaan, namun didakwa tidak mendapat sebarang tindakan susulan daripada pihak hospital.

TANGKAP layar video yang tular baru-baru ini memaparkan seekor tikus dalam wad kanak-kanak di HTJ yang menimbulkan pelbagai reaksi orang ramai.

Pengarah Kesihatan Negeri Sembilan, Datuk Dr. Harlina Abdul Rashid berkata, pihaknya telah menjalankan siasatan serta-merta berhubung insiden seekor tikus berkeliaran di wad 3B, HTJ baru-baru ini.

Katanya, beberapa langkah penambahbaikan telah diambil termasuk menambah kekerapan dalam jadual pembersihan dan kutipan sampah di samping menitikberatkan penjagaan kebersihan di sekitar kawasan hospital khususnya di semua wad bagi mengelak kejadian sama berulang.

"Pihak konsesi penyelenggaraan hospital juga telah diarahkan untuk mengenal pasti lokasi yang kerap didatangi tikus dan kuantiti pemasangan perangkap turut dipertingkatkan bagi mengatasi masalah tersebut.

"Ini termasuklah penjadualan kawalan makhluk perosak melalui aktiviti pemeriksaan rutin dan *Planned Preventive Maintenance* (PPM) mengikut frekuensi pada setiap hari," katanya dalam kenyataan di sini semalam.

Tambahnya, Unit Entomologi dan Pest juga turut dilibatkan dalam menjalankan siasatan dan memberi khidmat nasihat teknikal bagi memastikan pelaksanaan aktiviti pencegahan kerosakan serta kawalan makhluk perosak dapat dilaksanakan dengan berkesan.

Tambah beliau, pihak Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri, Negeri Sembilan amat menghargai maklum balas yang diberikan dan dari semasa ke semasa serta berusaha untuk memastikan keselesaan dan keselamatan orang awam yang mendapatkan rawatan di hospital adalah terjamin.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 18
RUANGAN : LOKAL

Tak tahu restoran tidak boleh merokok

IPOH – Sebanyak 71 kompaun bernilai RM17,750 dikeluarkan atas kesalahan merokok di tempat awam hasil operasi penguatkuasaan oleh Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN) Perak di sekitar daerah Kinta di sini malam kelmarin.

Pelbagai alasan diberikan pengunjung dan pemilik kedai ketika dikesan melakukan kesalahan itu termasuk tidak mengetahui mengenai penguatkuasaan kawasan larangan merokok khususnya di premis makanan.

Pegawai Kesihatan Persekitaran Cawangan Inspektorat dan Perundangan JKN Perak, Azahari Man berkata, kompaun terhadap perokok itu dikeluarkan mengikut Peraturan 11 (1), Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau (PPKHT) 2004.

Katanya, sebanyak empat notis kesalahan bernilai RM1,000 turut dikeluarkan kepada pemilik premis di bawah Peraturan 12, PPKHT 2004 kerana gagal mempamerkan tanda larangan merokok.

"Selain itu, kami mengeluarkan tiga kompaun berjumlah RM1,500 kepada pekedai mengikut Peraturan 14(1) PPKHT 2004 iaitu gagal mempamerkan tanda larangan jualan hasil tembakau kepada individu di bawah umur 18 tahun.

"Kesemua kompaun dikeluarkan hasil pemeriksaan yang dilaksanakan di 215 premis di daerah Kinta," katanya pada sidang akhbar di Taman Ipoh Timur di sini semalam.

Beliau berkata, sebagai rakyat Malaysia, semua orang sepatutnya mengambil tahu kewujudan peraturan kawalan hasil tembakau dan kawasan larangan merokok, malah akta itu telah lama diwartakan iaitu pada tahun 2004.

ANGGOTA penguat kuasa JKN Perak mengeluarkan kompaun kepada individu yang melakukan kesalahan merokok di tempat awam di Ipoh kelmarin. – ZULFACHRI ZULKIFLI

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 28
RUANGAN : SINAR NEGERI

Tidak tahu larangan merokok

Alasan popular pelanggan yang ditangkap ketika merokok di kedai makan

Oleh NOOR AINON MOHAMED YUSOF

IPOH

Pegawai JKN Perak mengeluarkan kompaun kepada pengunjung dan pekedai yang dikesan melanggar Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau.

Segelintir pelanggan memberi alasan tidak mengetahui larangan merokok di kedai makan dalam operasi penguatkuasaan yang dijalankan Jabatan Kesihatan Negeri (JKN) Perak di Taman Ipoh Timur di sini pada Selasa.

Semua alasan itu tidak dilayan oleh 54 penguat kuasa Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia, sebaliknya sebanyak 71 kompaun bernilai RM17,750 telah dikeluarkan bagi kesalahan tersebut.

Pegawai Kesihatan Persekitaran Cawangan Inspektorat dan Perundangan JKN Perak, Azahari Man berkata, kompaun tersebut dikeluarkan mengikut Peraturan 11 (1) Peraturan-Peraturan Kawalan Hasil Tembakau (PPKHT) 2004.

"Ketika pemeriksaan rata-rata mereka beritahu tidak tahu tidak boleh merokok di premis makanan.

"Sebagai rakyat Malaysia, kita perlu ambil tahu kewujudan peraturan kawalan hasil tembakau ini, malah akta atau peraturan itu telah lama diwartakan iaitu pada tahun 2004," katanya dalam sidang akhbar di sini.

Menurutnya, empat notis kesalahan bernilai RM1,000 dikeluarkan kepada pemilik premis di bawah Peraturan 12 PPKHT 2004 kerana gagal mempamerkan tanda larangan merokok.

"Tiga kompaun turut dikeluarkan kepada pekedai mengikut Peraturan 14(1) iaitu gagal mempamerkan tanda larangan jualan hasil tembakau kepada individu di bawah umur 18 tahun," katanya.

Menurut Azahari, pihaknya berjaya mengesan individu yang didapati melanggar perintah kuarantin di rumah (HSO) ketika makan di premis berkenaan.

"Perkara ini tidak sepatutnya berlaku kerana Covid-19 bukan perkara baharu dan masyarakat sendiri mengetahui tindakan melanggar prosedur operasi standard (SOP) akan menyebabkan penularan jangkitan.

"Pekedai perlu bertanggungjawab memastikan pelanggan yang memasuki premis mereka mematuhi SOP yang digariskan Majlis Keselamatan Negara," katanya.

Jelas Azahari lagi, 27 kompaun bernilai RM27,000 dikeluarkan mengikut Akta 342 Akta Pencegahan dan Pengawalan Penyakit Berjangkit 1988 kerana ketidakpatuhan orang ramai terhadap SOP Pelan Pemulihan Negara (PPN) Fasa 4.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NEWS/NATION

A boy closing his eyes as a health worker administers a Covid-19 vaccine at the Seberang Jaya expo grounds in Penang yesterday. PIC BY DANIAL SAAD

0.17 CASES PER 1,000 DOSES

6 A.E.F.I. AMONG KIDS, INCLUDING 1 DEATH

Probe into death of girl, 7 who had underlying condition, under way

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SIX serious cases of adverse events following immunisation (AEFI) have been reported among children aged between 5 and 11 who have vaccinated against Covid-19 up to March 11.

This includes a 7-year-old girl with an underlying condition who was brought in dead to hospital. A probe is under way to determine if the death was linked to the vaccination.

National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) pharmacovigilance section head Dr Azuana Ramli said the girl died four days after immunisation.

"The report we received mentioned that on the first day of inoculation, the girl's parents said she had no reaction and she was well and had no fever.

"On the day she was unwell, she had symptoms but it was related to her underlying condition. She also had several (hospital) admissions due to it prior to that episode.

"We will leave it to the facility to confirm the cause of death through a post-mortem, which is being done at the moment," said Dr Azuana at a press briefing yesterday.

The girl's underlying condition was not revealed due to confidentiality rules.

Present was NPRA director Dr Roshayati Mohamad Sani.

Dr Azuana encouraged people to report serious illness after vaccination.

"Though the evidence (of the girl's death) pointed more to the underlying condition rather than the vaccine, but because of the temporal relation, it was reported anyway," she added.

Dr Azuana said the other five cases involved a 10-year-old girl who had asthma exacerbation, two girls aged 6 and 8, and a 10-year-old boy who suffered from Bell's palsy; and a girl aged 10 who was admitted to hospital for seizure.

All five children, who were admitted to hospital for treatment and observation, have been discharged.

Two have fully recovered and three are still recovering.

In the case of three children who experienced Bell's palsy, Dr Azuana said the temporary facial paralysis was documented as a possible side effect of the Comirnaty vaccine (made by Pfizer).

"However, the rate is rare. We only have three cases per million doses of vaccine, which means it is not more than what was documented for the Cominarty vaccine.

"It is a short-term effect and it is not serious. One would recover after a few weeks," she said, adding that the condition could affect anyone and not just because of vaccination.

The six cases were part of the overall 182 AEFI reports received until March 11 involving PICKids recipients aged between 5 and 11.

Dr Roshayati said until March 11, 1,097,425 doses of the Covid-19 vaccine had been dispensed under PICKids. The 182 reported AEFI are equivalent to 0.17 reports for every 1,000 doses.

"This is much lower than the overall AEFI reports received, which is 0.4 for every 1,000 doses. The majority of AEFI reports received for PICKids were non-serious effects and the most common were fever, stress on the injection site or vaccination process, itchy skin, dizziness and headache," she said.

Dr Azuana urged people not to be afraid of taking the vaccine as its risks were small compared with the severity of getting Covid-19.

"We have monitored the AEFI reports from adults, adolescents and now kids. In all three groups, it is clear that AEFI reported in children are far lower than adults and milder than those experienced by adults.

"So there should be no doubt about the safety of vaccines for PICKids. From NPRA's observation of what had been reported in other countries, the trend of low AEFI reports is the same here."

AKHBAR : **NEW STRAITS TIMES**
MUKA SURAT : **9**
RUANGAN : **NATION/NEWS**

PEST CONTROL

HOSPITAL TAKES ACTION AFTER VIRAL RAT VIDEO

Rat seen roaming around children's ward at Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital

The rat making its rounds at Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital in Seremban. PIC COURTESY OF READER

SEREMBAN

THE state Health Department conducted an investigation and took measures following a viral video of a rat roaming around Ward 3B of Tuanku Ja'afar Hospital here.

State Health director Datuk Dr Harlina Abdul Rashid yesterday said the department had increased cleaning and garbage collections.

It also focused on hygiene at the hospital, especially in wards, she added.

"The hospital maintenance concessionaires were instructed to find areas that had rats and put more traps.

"The concessionaires were also urged to organise pest control and preventive maintenance.

"The Entomology and Pest Unit is conducting investigations and providing advice on prevention activities and pest control."

She said the department appreciated the feedback from the public and always strove to ensure the comfort and safety of patients.

On Monday, a six-second long clip showed a rat roaming around the children's ward. **Bernama**

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NEWS/NEWS IN BRIEF

'Get checked for glaucoma early to avoid loss of vision'

PUTRAJAYA: Those at risk of getting glaucoma are advised to seek early examination to avoid loss of vision and permanent blindness, said Putrajaya Hospital Ophthalmologist Dr Rathna Ramayaj. She said glaucoma, a leading cause of blindness for people over 60, had been detected in people aged 40, especially those with diabetes, myopia and a family history of glaucoma. Citing findings of the National Eye Survey in Malaysia, she said 6.6 per cent of blindness among those aged 50 and above was due to glaucoma. "The increase in age is a risk for primary open angle glaucoma and primary angle closure glaucoma. The prevalence of open angle glaucoma in terms of age is 0.3 per cent for 40-year-olds. This increases sharply to 3.3 per cent for those aged 70." **Bernama**

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : NATION/ NEWS

POISONS ACT AMENDMENTS

MMA WANTS REVIEW OF STIFFER PENALTIES

Medical body says some offences don't merit jail, also calls for fine-tuning of enforcers' powers

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THE Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) wants the government to review the proposed penalties and fine-tune the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers in the Poisons Amendment Bill 2022.

The bill to amend the Poisons Act 1952 was tabled for the first reading in the Dewan Rakyat on Monday. It was initially slated for a first reading in November 2019, but was withdrawn to be reviewed.

MMA president Dr Koh Kar Chai welcomed the Health Ministry's decision to exclude the mandatory prescription upon request provision in the bill.

However, he urged the ministry to review several proposed heftier fines and longer jail time for certain offences in the bill.

"Amendments to the Poisons Act 1952 has finally been tabled in Parliament. The proposed amendments to this archaic act have been overdue.

"The act needs to be updated as the landscape in healthcare has significantly changed in recent years. We need to factor in how medicine is practised in this digital era. The issue of massive fines has always been a contentious issue and more so, the proposal to increase jail time.

"We have always felt that certain offences may not justify an increase in the jail sentence or even the presence of imprisonment, as it will cause criminalisation of certain offences which may be trivial and not endanger the health of anyone.

"With an increase in fines and the imposition of a jail sentence, many doctors will practice with the 'Sword of Damocles' hanging over their head, more so, when the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers are enhanced," he said in a statement yesterday.

Pharmacy enforcement officers raiding premises selling bogus health products in 2019. FILE PIC

Among the proposed penalties in the bill include a maximum of five years' jail, a compound of RM50,000, or both. Currently, the maximum jail term is one year and the maximum fine is RM3,000.

Besides allowing pharmacy enforcement officers to raid premises and seize drugs or other related items, the bill also protects them from civil suits and prosecution for actions deemed necessary to enforce the Poisons Act.

Koh hopes the proposed penalties would be reconsidered and that the powers of pharmacy enforcement officers be fine-tuned.

"These were all brought up in the engagements with the Health Ministry. If the bill is passed, we will need to look into the regulations which we hope will clear up our reservations of the proposed amendments," he added.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali, on Monday, said the bill would be tabled for second reading in the current Dewan Rakyat sitting.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 3
RUANGAN : NATION/NEWS

DOWNWARD TREND

D-G: CURVE FLATTENING BUT DANGER REMAINS

Malaysia not out of the woods yet, says Noor Hisham as Rt falls to 0.95

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ALTHOUGH the number of daily Covid-19 cases appear to have plateaued and started to come down, Malaysia is not out of the woods yet, said Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

He said the SEIR model used by the Health Ministry to forecast the trend of cases from Aug 31 last year to March 30 this year showed that infections were going down.

"It seems that the observed daily cases have plateaued and is beginning to come down slowly.

"Let's hope it will continue the downward trend, we are not out of the woods yet," he said in a Facebook post yesterday.

On Monday, the country recorded 22,030 Covid-19 infections, a decrease from Sunday's 22,535.

On Tuesday, Malaysia reported 26,534 Covid-19 infections.

The case tally is now 3,872,2135.

"From the new cases reported, 10,516 (39.63 per cent) were in Category 1; 15,842 (59.71 per cent) in Category 2; 65 (0.24 per cent) in Category 3; 65 (0.24 per cent) in Category 4; and 46 (0.18) in Category 5.

"Of 176 cases reported in Category 3, 4 and 5; 45 cases involved unvaccinated or partially vaccinated individuals; 92 cases were individuals who have been fully vaccinated but had not received their booster shots and 40 cases were individuals who have been boosted.

"Ninety-five cases were those aged 60 and above, and 61 cases with comorbidities," he said.

Dr Noor Hisham said 376 patients were in intensive care units, with 222 of them needing breathing assistance.

He said 31,234 patients recovered and were discharged yesterday. This brought the number of active cases down to 304,147.

Dr Noor Hisham said four new clusters were detected, bringing the number of active clusters to 366.

Dr Noor Hisham said more than half of intensive care unit beds for Covid-19 patients in five states and two federal territories were in use on Tuesday.

Kuala Lumpur topped the list at 81 per cent, followed by Putrajaya (67 per cent), Johor (64 per cent), Selangor (60 per cent), Kelantan (58 per cent), Perlis (55 per cent) and Melaka (50 per cent). But quarantine centres in all states were less than 50 per cent full.

"Patients needing ventilator support increased to 222, with utilisation rate at 25 per cent," Dr Noor Hisham said.

He said the country's infectivity index (Rt value) was at 0.95 on Tuesday, a slight drop from Monday's 0.96.

"Sarawak registered the highest Rt at 1.19, followed by Kuala Lumpur at 1.12, Terengganu (1.10), Negri Sembilan and Putrajaya (1.04), Perak (1.03), Penang, Melaka and Johor (1.02), Selangor (1.01), Pahang and Kedah (1.00), Kelantan (0.97), Perlis (0.92), Labuan (0.81) and Sabah at 0.70."

On Tuesday, 95 Covid-19 fatalities were reported, bringing the death toll to 33,994.

Twenty-three of these deaths were brought in dead to hospitals.

A Covid-19 patient being treated in Kuala Lumpur Hospital recently.
PIC BY EFFENDY RASHID

GOING FOR A SPIN Families enjoying an amusement park ride at Skytropolis in Genting Highlands recently. PIC BY FATHIL ASRI

Paediatricians can register to vax kids

KUALA LUMPUR: Paediatricians in the private sector are encouraged to participate in the Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme for Children (PICKids).

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali said they could do so by registering with ProtectHealth Corporation, a subsidiary of the Health Ministry.

"Once their clinic or hospital has been approved, they can vaccinate children at a rate and capacity set by the ministry," he told the *New Straits Times* yesterday.

Dr Noor Azmi, who is also the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force-Children chairman, said 704 medical practitioners, including paediatricians, and 44 private hospitals were participating in PICKids.

Recently, an expert said public- and private-sector paediatricians should be allowed to administer Covid-19 jabs to children as parents were more comfortable having their children vaccinated by someone they trusted.

Dr Noor Azmi said as the new school year would begin on Sunday (for schools in Kedah, Johor, Terengganu and Kelantan) and Monday, the Health Ministry had engaged with the Education Ministry to plan for PICKids promotions and vaccinations.

He said this would help parents access Covid-19 vaccines.

"First, the Health Ministry and Education Ministry have identified 444 schools that will function as vaccination centres, where parents will be invited to bring their children to these schools to be vaccinated.

"Second, for schools in hard-to-reach areas, the Health Ministry will mobilise 399 vaccination teams to visit schools.

The PICKids programme began on Feb 3, and aims to vaccinate 3.6 million children aged 5 to 11.

Up to yesterday, 1,197,667 children, or 33.7 per cent of the target, had received the first dose of the vaccine.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 10
RUANGAN : NATION

PCR test monopoly to end

More labs to provide Covid-19 screening at airports soon

MORE companies will soon provide Covid-19 screening services at Malaysia's airports, effectively ending the current monopoly held by a private healthcare firm, the Dewan Rakyat was told.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali said Malaysia Airports Holdings Berhad (MAHB) has started a new procurement process by tender to identify additional companies that will perform the Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) screening tests.

"The decision will be finalised soon," he said when winding up ministerial replies on the motion of thanks in Parliament on Wednesday.

Currently, private Covid-19 screening provider BP Healthcare is the sole company handling Covid-19 RT-PCR screening services, which is mandatory for all incoming travellers at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA) and KLIA2.

Dr Noor Azmi said BP Healthcare was appointed based on the open tender process by MAHB, whereby the charges for the Covid-19 tests had already been agreed upon.

This was in reply to Tiong King Sing (GPS-Bintulu) who asked why Covid-19 screening services at KLIA and KLIA2 were handled by only one private company, effectively granting it a monopoly.

He also questioned the high price of the RT-PCR test as other countries such as China charged less.

"We shouldn't have a monopoly. Why can't other labs come in and provide Covid-19 tests at the airport? Why does one person have to pay RM300 to RM400 for the test?

"It should be opened up to more companies so that the price of the RT-PCR tests would be more competitive," said Tiong.

To a question by Datuk Seri Salim Sharif (BN-Jempol) on whether the government intended to lower the price of RT-PCR tests at private clinics as it could cost a few hundred ringgit, Dr Noor Azmi said Malaysians should only take RT-PCR tests in specific situations such as pre-travelling abroad.

He said Malaysians should rely more on the Antigen Rapid Test Kits (RTK-Ag) to screen for Covid-19 as the country enters a transitional phase into endemicity.

"The RT-PCR tests are more costly, and by contrast, the RTK-Ag self-test kits are cheaper and easily available.

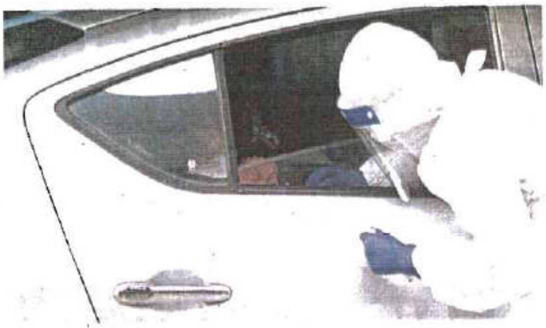
"According to experts, the RTK-Ag tests are sufficient to detect positive cases with higher infectivity rates, compared to the RT-PCR tests that are more sensitive," he said.

Dr Noor Azmi said even people who have recovered from their infection could still test positive under the RT-PCR tests.

He added that those who tested positive for Covid-19 through self-test kits do not have to undergo the RT-PCR tests to verify the results.

Instead, they should start undergoing quarantine as soon as possible once they test positive.

The RT-PCR tests will, however, remain in place for travellers entering Malaysia, said Dr Noor Azmi.



Test and go: RT-PCR tests should be taken only for specific reasons like for when one is planning on travelling internationally, Dr Noor Azmi said. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Omicron strain on healthcare workers

Spike in cases has huge impact on frontliners but situation under control

BY **SIVAA TANGAI RAJU**
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PETALING JAYA: The recent spike in Covid-19 cases has a huge impact on healthcare personnel even though the majority of cases are of low severity, medical experts said.

"However, the situation is still under control and it is too soon to make conclusions on the growing trend, especially in categories 4 and 5," said Malaysian Medical Association president Dr Koh Kar Chai.

He added patients in categories 1 and 2 are being remotely monitored in order to alleviate pressure on medical frontliners amid the rising Covid-19 cases triggered by the highly infectious Omicron variant.

Koh was responding to reports that hospitals in Klang Valley have reported a high number of Covid-19 cases, including patients that need hospitalisation.

"Half of the patients were found to be asymptomatic when they came for other medical reasons unrelated to the virus," he said.

"The current number of cases due to the Omicron variant is indeed high and this has put a strain on healthcare workers at the frontline.

"Although cases are mostly mild, the large numbers threaten to overwhelm our public sector healthcare services," he told *theSun*.

"The number of positive cases as reported daily has been relatively stable for the last few days, and we hope that the number will be on a downward trend soon.

"But it is still too early to form a definite opinion, especially when we look at an upward trend in categories 4 and 5.

"A number of healthcare frontliners have been infected and also recovered from the infection.

"We need to keep their morale high by looking after their welfare, including their mental, physical as well as financial health, so that they continue to give their best during the pandemic," he said.

Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia president Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh agreed with Koh.

He said Omicron is equally dangerous as Delta.

"It is difficult to predict infections, especially when there are no symptoms," he added.

He urged healthcare workers to be cautious while attending patients, especially those who are in high-risk catergory.

"If workers get infected, it would put more burden on the healthcare system."

Kuljit said the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme has helped the nation in the Covid-19 recovery battle, despite the rapid spread of Omicron in the community.

"What is important is that we have fewer patients that require treatment at intensive care units and fatal cases have also dropped compared to last year with the Delta variant," he said.

"The nature of the Omicron variant is unpredictable, hence the frontliners have to be very cautious and treat every untested person as a possible Covid patient until proven otherwise.

"Healthcare workers do get infected but rarely from treating patients. However, if they are infected and can't work, it would put a strain on the healthcare system," he said.

"The high numbers can be overwhelming but fortunately, there are fewer severe cases.

"However, we have yet to reach zero level," he added.

M'sia to give 1.6m vaccine doses to Afghanistan

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia will contribute 1.6 million doses of Covid-19 vaccine to Afghanistan in an effort to assist the country, said Deputy Foreign Minister Datuk Kamarudin Jaffar.

However, he said the matter was still in the process of negotiations with authorities in Afghanistan.

"A delegation had provided about US$50,000 (RM210,000) in aid that would be used to buy goods in Pakistan or Afghanistan," he said during the question and answer session at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

He was replying to Ahmad Fahmi Mohamed Fadzil (PH-Lembah Pantai), who wanted to know what were the types and amount of assistance given by the government to the Afghan people thus far.

On Malaysia's stance and its relations with Afghanistan, Kamarudin said Malaysia was of the view that the rebuilding aspect and humanitarian aid to Afghanistan must be led and controlled by that country.

He said this was discussed at the extraordinary session of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), that was attended by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Abdullah in Islamabad, Pakistan on Dec 19.

He added Malaysia also called on the international community to increase efforts to provide humanitarian assistance to Afghanistan, Bernama reported.

Kamarudin said the recognition of the Afghan government could be established through two channels.

Malaysia, as a member of the OIC, could take into account the stand jointly taken within the organisation on the issue of recognition.

"Secondly, Malaysia, together with like-minded countries, could recognise the Afghanistan government, if it complied with all conditions such as establishment of an inclusive government, as well as preserving and defending the human rights of women and ethnic minorities," he said.

Kamarudin said Malaysia would continue to monitor developments in Afghanistan. He would be representing the country at the OIC Foreign Ministers' Meeting in Islamabad on March 22 to 23.

BRINGING CHEER ... Datuk D Dave, 74, celebrating his birthday on Feb 14 by entertaining persons with disabilities at Taman Mega Handicapped Child Care Centre in Kuala Lumpur. – **BERNAMAPIX**

Number of recoveries exceed new cases

KUALA LUMPUR: The daily number of Covid-19 recovery cases of 31,234 reported on Tuesday, exceeded the daily number of new cases, which was 26,534, said Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

He said out of 26,534 positive cases recorded on Tuesday, 99.34% or 26,358 cases were in categories1 and 2.

"A total of 10,516 cases or 39.63% are in category 1, while 15,842 cases or 59.71% are in category 2," he said in a statement yesterday.

Noor Hisham said a total of 176 cases or 0.66% recorded on Tuesday were in categories 3, 4 and 5.

Of the total cases, category 3 and 4 have 65 cases or 0.24% each, while 46 cases or 0.18% are in category 5, he added.

He said the infectivity rate (Rt) was 0.95 on Tuesday, slightly down from 0.96 on Monday.

As for the use of beds at the Covid-19 Low Risk Quarantine and Treatment Centre, he said no state recorded a percentage of more than 50%.

For critical case beds or intensive care units, Noor Hisham said seven states recorded usage of more than 50%.

They are Kuala Lumpur (81%), Putrajaya (67%), Johor (64%), Selangor (60%), Kelantan (58), Perlis (55%) and Malacca (50). – Bernama

65.3% of adult population given booster dose

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 15,357,069 adults or 65.3% have received the Covid-19 booster dose as of Tuesday.

Based on the CovidNOW website, a total of 22,937,707 individuals or 97.5% of adult population have completed their vaccination, while 23,213,875 or 98.7% have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

For children aged between five and 11, a total of 1,197,667 or 33.7% have received the first dose under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme for Children.

As for adolescents aged between 12 and 17, a total of 2,839,254 or 91.3% have completed the vaccination, while 2,938,900 or 94.5% have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

On Tuesday, a total of 56,585 doses of the vaccine were administered, comprising 17,939 as first dose, 1,728 as second dose and 36,918 as booster dose, bringing the cumulative number of vaccine doses given under the programme to 68,275,177.

Meanwhile, according to the Health Ministry's GitHub portal, a total of 95 deaths due to Covid-19 were recorded on Tuesday, with Selangor the highest with 21 deaths, followed by Johor (16), Perak (14), Kedah (10), Penang (eight) and Sabah (five). Malacca, Pahang and Perlis recorded four deaths each, while Negri Sembilan and Sarawak three cases each, followed by two deaths in Kelantan and one case in Terangganu. – Bernama

25,122 receiving treatment for long Covid

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 25,122 recovered Covid-19 patients discharged from government hospitals were given appointments for follow-up treatment at health facilities as of last month.

Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali said there were five main symptoms of Covid-19 long-term effects or long Covid namely fatigue (75.1%), shortness of breath while doing certain activities (63.1%), cough (14%), difficulty sleeping (8.6%), and anxiety (3.8%).

He said follow-up rehabilitation services can be found at 41 Rehabilitation Medicine facilities for long Covid patients namely at 32 government hospitals, university hospitals (three), private hospitals (four) and one rehabilitation centre under the Human Resource Ministry.

"Comprehensive respiratory services, specifically for long Covid patients, are also provided at 21 government hospitals nationwide. To date, a total of 15,[illegible]64 Covid-19 patients in categories [illegible]ur and five, who were discharged from hospitals, have been referred for this special service," he said when winding up the debate on the motion of thanks for the royal address on behalf of the ministry in Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Azmi, who is also the chairman of Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force for Children said 1,180,323 (33.2%) of children aged between five and 12 have received the first dose of Covid-19 vaccine as of Monday.

He appealed to parents and guardians to vaccinate their children at nearby centres before school session begins to protect them from severe Covid-19 infection.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 Vaccine Pharmacovigilance Special Committee found that no reported deaths were directly linked to the vaccine received based on 451 reports on adverse events following immunisation (AEFI).

National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) director Dr Roshayati Mohamad Sâni said the findings were part of 607 serious AEFI reports received involving deaths among Covid-19 vaccine recipients, of which another 156 reports were still under investigation before being assessed by the commitee.

"All serious AEFI reports require complete investigations and detailed evaluation before the relationship of the reported effects and the vaccines received can be determined," she said during a virtual media briefing on Covid-19 vaccine AEFI yesterday.

Roshayati said NPRA had received a total of 25,746 AEFI reports due to the Covid-19 vaccine, including 1,411 reports involving booster dose recipients and 182 reports involving children aged between five and 11.

She said 93% or 23,957 of the AEFIs were non-serious and symptoms frequently reported such as fever, pain at injection site, headache and muscle aches would normally go away within one or two days.

Roshayati said six serious cases of AEFI among children aged five to 11 were recorded as of March 6.

Five of the cases required hospitalisation while one case involving a seven-year-old girl who had underlying health condition, was classified as brought-in-dead.

"A complete report on this case has not been received as it is still under investigation." – Bernama