

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 6

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Malaysia bangun pelalihan secara oral, semburan hidung

Beri pilihan kepada rakyat takut jarum untuk suntikan vaksinasi

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Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia membangunkan vaksin COVID-19, yang boleh dititiskan ke dalam mulut dan semburan hidung.

Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi, Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim, berkata pelalihan secara oral dan semburan nasal itu dibuat sebagai pilihan untuk rakyat.

"Ada sesetengah orang yang takut dengan jarum menyebabkan mereka enggan mengambil suntikan vaksin.

"Pelalihan secara oral dan sem-

buran nasal ini memberi pilihan kepada mereka," katanya menjawab soalan tambahan Wong Kah Woh (PH-Ipoh Timur) di Dewan Rakyat, semalam.

Kah Woh bertanya sama ada pembangunan vaksin yang dilaksanakan Pelan Hala Tuju Pembangunan Vaksin Negara (PPVN), bertumpu pada vaksin COVID-19 sahaja atau vaksin yang lain.

Ahmad Amzad menjelaskan, PPVN tidak tertumpu kepada penghasilan vaksin COVID-19 semata-mata tetapi turut membabitkan penghasilan vaksin bagi penyakit lain.

Pada masa ini, katanya, ujian vaksin dijalankan terhadap manusia dan beberapa calon sudah melepasi fasa praklinikal vaksin terbabit.

"Insya-Allah, melihat kepada tahap kajian yang dilaksanakan

itu, sekitar 2024 kita ada calon vaksin COVID-19 yang pertama," katanya.

Sementara itu, menjawab soalan asal Datuk Zakaria Mohd Ederis (PN-Libaran) mengenai perkembangan terkini PPVN serta Institut Genom dan Vaksin Malaysia, beliau berkata, sebanyak RM349.9 juta diperlukan untuk pemerkasaan institut itu sepanjang tempoh 2022 hingga 2025.

"Keperluan peruntukan ini adalah untuk mengatasi jurang yang dikenal pasti dalam penghasilan vaksin sendiri akibat ke-

tiadaan makmal untuk melaksanakan kajian praklinikal dan klinikal yang menepati piawaian, selain kesukaran untuk mendapatkan pakar klinikal, terutama untuk mengawal selia kajian praklinikal dan kajian klinikal fasa satu dalam manusia," katanya.



Ahmad Amzad Hashim



Reaksi kanak-kanak terima vaksin Sinovac di PPV WTC

Kanak-kanak yang menerima suntikan vaksin Sinovac pada Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) untuk yang berusia 5 tahun hingga 11 tahun di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) World Trade Centre (WTC) Kuala Lumpur, semalam.

(Foto Fathil Asdi)

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Penularan COVID-19

Kemuka surat 'Fit To Travel' jika mahu masuk Malaysia

Prosedur bagi pengembara pernah positif, dikuarantin

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Putrajaya: Individu yang baru dijangkiti COVID-19 serta sudah

tamat tempoh kuarantin dalam jangka masa 60 hari perlu mengemukakan surat *Fit To Travel* daripada pihak hospital jika ingin masuk ke negara ini.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata surat berkenaan akan 'mengukuhkan' ujian saringan *Real-Time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction* (RT-PCR) yang diperlukan untuk masuk ke negara ini.

"Untuk individu di negara ini yang mahu ke luar negara, me-

reka perlu rujuk prosedur negara yang ingin dilawati.

"Mereka kena patuh kehendak negara berkenaan, contohnya melakukan ujian RT-PCR 48 jam sebelum bertolak.

"Tapi untuk prosedur di Malaysia, pengembara yang pernah positif dalam tempoh 60 hari itu perlu kemukakan surat *Fit to Travel* (jika dirawat di hospital) atau jika tak dirawat di hospital, jalani ujian saringan profesional dua hari sebelum berlepas," katanya kepada BH, semalam.

Kelmarin, Dr Noor Hisham dalam kenyataannya berkata, individu dijangkiti serta selesai menjalani kuarantin tidak perlu membuat ujian ulangan bagi memastikan tiada lagi virus berkenaan di dalam badan.

Beliau berkata, ini kerana ujian seperti RT-PCR itu sangat sensitif dan akan mengesan kehadiran genetik virus berkenaan menerusi saluran pernafasan dalam tempoh dua hingga tiga bulan selepas dijangkiti, misahny dalam tempoh *viral shedding*.

Surat berkenaan akan 'mengukuhkan' ujian saringan Real-Time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) yang diperlukan untuk masuk ke negara ini.

Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan



Katanya, walaupun keputusan ujian RT-PCR itu masih positif, virus itu sudah tidak dapat membiak dan individu terbit tidak mungkin boleh menyebarkan virus kepada orang lain.



Sebahagian kanak-kanak yang menunggu untuk menerima suntikan vaksin Sinovac pada PICKKids di PPV World Trade Centre, semalam.

Penggunaan katil ICU lebih 50 peratus turun

Putrajaya: Penggunaan katil unit rawatan rapi (ICU) melebihi 50 peratus di seluruh negara, menurun dengan lima negeri mencatatkan penggunaan sedemikian berbanding tujuh negeri sebelum ini.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata lima negeri terbit adalah Selangor dan Putrajaya, masing-masing dengan penggunaan 83 peratus, diikuti Johor (70 peratus), Kelantan (69 peratus) serta Kuala Lumpur (54 peratus).

Beliau berkata, dua negeri yang mulai pulih dan penggunaan di bawah 50 peratus adalah Perlis dan Perak.

Bagi penggunaan katil bukan ICU pula, katanya, terdapat 12 negeri yang mencatatkan penggunaan melebihi 50 peratus ketika ini. "Ini membabitkan Selangor dengan penggunaan mencecah 118

peratus, Putrajaya (106 peratus), Perlis (88 peratus), Kuala Lumpur (92 peratus), Perak (90 peratus) dan Kelantan (88 peratus).

"Turut mencatatkan penggunaan melebihi 50 peratus ialah Terengganu dengan 78 peratus, Pahang (70 peratus), Johor (66 peratus), Sarawak (64 peratus), Pulau Pinang (58 peratus) dan Sabah (51 peratus)," katanya.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, Melaka kekal menjadi negeri tunggal mencatat penggunaan katil di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan COVID-19 (PKRC) melebihi 50 peratus, dengan 63 peratus penggunaan setakat semalam.

Selain itu, beliau berkata, bilangan pesakit COVID-19 yang memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan meningkat kepada 216 pesakit, menjadikan peratusan penggunaan alat berkenaan kini mencecah 24 peratus.

Jangkitan harian 27,435 kes

Kuala Lumpur: Jumlah kes harian jangkitan COVID-19 di negara ini menunjukkan sedikit penurunan kepada 27,435 kes, kelmarin selepas beberapa hari melepasi angka 30,000.

Angka itu umpama berita baik selepas Malaysia mencatat angka harian tertinggi jangkitan COVID-19 selama tiga hari berturut-turut, dengan 33,406 kes baharu direkodkan, Sabtu lalu, manakala sebanyak 33,209 jangkitan baharu pada Jumaat dan 32,467 kes pada Khamis lalu.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, berkata daripada keseluruhan jumlah jangkitan baharu direkodkan, kelmarin, 27,181 kes adalah penularan tempatan dan 254 kes import, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif kes meningkat

kepada 3,622,607 kes.

Beliau berkata, kes yang di kesan kelmarin paling tinggi membabitkan pesakit COVID-19 dalam kategori dua, iaitu sebanyak 17,495 kes atau 63.77 peratus, diikuti kategori satu dengan 9,756 kes (35.56 peratus).

"Seramai 89 pesakit dalam kategori tiga, kategori empat (53 kes) dan kategori lima (42 kes)," katanya.

Beliau berkata, kes aktif berkurang sebanyak 2,955 kes kepada 308,251 kes, kelmarin berbanding 311,206 kes aktif dicatatkan, sehari sebelumnya.

Daripada keseluruhan kes aktif, 95.9 peratus pesakit atau 295,704 orang menjalani kuarantin di rumah, manakala 3,510 pesakit ditempatkan di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan COVID-19 (PKRC).

Selain itu, beliau berkata, seramai 8,658 pesakit lagi kini dirawat di hospital, dengan 379 pesakit dimasukkan ke wad Unit Rawatan Rapi (ICU) dan daripada keseluruhan pesakit di ICU, 216 daripadanya memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, seramai 30,335 pesakit juga disahkan sembuh, kelmarin, manakala sebanyak 55 kematian direkodkan, dengan 16 daripadanya adalah kematian di luar fasiliti kesihatan (BID).

Beliau berkata, seramai 1,026,732 orang atau 28.9 peratus populasi kanak-kanak berusia lima tahun hingga 11 tahun di negara ini sudah menerima dos pertama vaksin COVID-19 melalui Program Imunisasi COVID-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKKids).



Seorang kanak-kanak menerima suntikan vaksin di PPV PICKKids IDCC, Shah Alam, semalam.

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

Catat 55 kematian kelmarin

Kuala Lumpur: Seramai 15,017,166 individu dewasa atau 63.8 peratus daripada populasi kumpulan itu di negara ini menerima dos penggalak Covid-19 setakat kelmarin.

Berdasarkan data di laman web COVIDNOW, sejumlah 22,927,624 atau 97.4 peratus daripada populasi sama melengkapkan vaksinasi manakala 23,204,433 atau 98.6 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Bagi populasi kanak-kanak berusia lima hingga 11 tahun, sebanyak 1,026,732 individu atau 28.9 peratus kumpulan itu menerima dos pertama vaksin Covid-19 melalui Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids).

Sementara itu, bagi remaja berusia 12 hingga 17 tahun, 2,831,197 individu atau 91 peratus daripada populasi itu melengkapkan vaksinasi manakala 2,931,709 atau 94.2 peratus menerima sekurang-kurangnya satu dos vaksin.

Vaksinasi harian kelmarin menyaksikan sebanyak 57,106 dos vaksin diberikan meliputi 24,342 dos pertama, 882 dos kedua dan 31,882 dos penggalak, menjadikan jumlah kumulatif dos vaksin yang diberikan di bawah Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan (Pick) sebanyak 67,731,132.

Sementara itu, menurut portal GitHub Kementerian Kesihatan, 55 kes kematian akibat Covid-19 direkodkan kelmarin dengan Kedah merekodkan angka tertinggi iaitu 12 kes.

Ia diikuti Pulau Pinang dengan lapan kes, Johor (7), Terengganu (6), Kelantan (5), masing-masing empat kes di Perak dan Selangor, dua kes masing-masing di Melaka, Negeri Sembilan dan Perlis serta satu kes direkodkan masing-masing di Pahang, Sabah dan Sarawak.

PENGUNAAN KATIL WAD ICU BAGI MERAWAT PESAKIT COVID-19

Lima negeri melebihi 50%

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Kuala Lumpur

Penggunaan katil di wad unit rawatan rapi (ICU) bagi merawat pesakit Covid-19 di Selangor, Putrajaya, Johor, Kelantan dan Kuala Lumpur melebihi 50 peratus.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, penggunaan katil ICU di Selangor adalah 83 peratus, Putrajaya (83 peratus), Johor (70 peratus), Kelantan (69 peratus) dan Kuala Lumpur (54 peratus).

"Bagi katil bukan ICU, terdapat lima negeri merekodkan penggunaan katil melebihi 90 peratus iaitu di Selangor (118 peratus), Putrajaya (106 peratus), Perlis (98 peratus), Kuala Lumpur (92 peratus) dan Perak (90 peratus).

"Bagi katil bukan ICU melebihi 50 peratus direkodkan di Kelantan iaitu 88 peratus, Terengganu (78 peratus), Pahang (70 peratus), Johor (66 peratus), Sarawak (64 peratus), Pulau Pinang (58 peratus) dan Sabah (51 peratus)," katanya dalam satu kenyataan, semalam.

Menurutnya, hanya Melaka menunjukkan pengisian lebih 50 peratus bagi katil di Pusat Kuarantin dan Rawatan Covid-19 (PKRC).

"Pesakit Covid-19 yang memerlukan alat bantuan pernafasan (ventilator) me-

NARKAN ASUK

gi pelanggan yang
NARKAN ASUK
ak bergejala)



DARIPADA jumlah keseluruhan 203 kes bagi pesakit kategori tiga hingga lima, 43 kes atau 21.18 peratus belum divaksinasi.

ningkat kepada 216 pesakit.

"Peratusan penggunaan bantuan itu 24 peratus daripada keseluruhan ventilator untuk pesakit Covid-19," katanya.

Dr Noor Hisham berkata, terdapat perbezaan antara data harian kemasukan kes Covid-19 ke hospital berbanding kes jangkitan itu kategori 1 hingga 5 yang baru didiagnosa pada setiap hari.

Katanya, ia memandang-



kan keadaan klinikal pesakit yang dinamik dan mungkin merosot atau bertambah baik sepanjang dijangkiti Covid-19.

"Pada masa sama, terdapat juga kes Covid-19 berisiko tinggi dari kategori 1 dan 2 yang memerlukan kemasukan ke PKRC dan hospital sebagai langkah berjaga-jaga.

"Semalam (kelmarin); kes Covid-19 yang dimasukkan ke hospital adalah sebanyak

1,756 kes dan daripada jumlah itu, 724 kes atau 41.2 peratus adalah kategori 3, 4, dan 5 manakala 1,032 kes (58.8 peratus) lagi adalah terdiri daripada kategori 1 dan 2," katanya.

Sementara itu, Dr Noor Hisham berkata, negara kini merekodkan 27,435 kes baharu penularan Covid-19 kelmarin menjadikan jumlah keseluruhan individu dijangkiti virus berkenaan kini meningkat kepada

3,622,607 kes.

"Jumlah yang direkodkan itu membabitkan 27,181 kes tempatan dengan 254 kes lagi adalah import yang mendapat jangkitan dari luar negara.

"Daripada 27,435 kes harian, sebanyak 17,495 kes adalah pesakit Covid-19 dalam kategori dua manakala 9,756 kes adalah pesakit kategori satu," katanya.

Katanya, selebihnya bagi kategori tiga terdapat 89 kes (0.33 peratus), kategori empat dengan 53 kes (0.19 peratus) serta bagi kategori lima adalah 42 kes (0.15 peratus).

Katanya, seramai 379 kes memerlukan rawatan di ICU iaitu 122 kes disahkan Covid-19; 257 kes disyaki, kemungkinan, dan kes dalam siasatan manakala 216 kes memerlukan bantuan pernafasan (73 kes disahkan Covid-19; 143 kes disyaki, kemungkinan dan kes dalam siasatan).

"Daripada jumlah keseluruhan 203 kes bagi pesakit kategori tiga hingga lima, 43 kes atau 21.18 peratus belum divaksinasi atau belum lengkap mendapatkan pelantikan berkenaan manakala 117 kes sudah menerima dua suntikan vaksin tanpa dos penggalak.

"Sebanyak 43 kes sudah menerima dos penggalak, berumur 60 tahun ke atas (119 kes), mempunyai komorbid (67 kes) dan ibu mengandung (satu kes)," katanya.

Bangun vaksin melalui mulut, semburan hidung

mendapatkan vaksin.

"Seperti kita ketahui antara menjadi ketakutan rakyat (mendapatkan vaksin) ialah takut jarum suntikan, maka antara pembangunan yang sedang diusahakan termasuk pemberian vaksin secara oral (mulut) dan nasal spray (semburan hidung)," katanya ketika sesi soal jawab lisan di Dewan Rakyat, semalam.

Beliau berkata demikian

bagi menjawab soalan tambahan Wong Kah Woh (PH-Ipoh Timur) yang bertanyakan sama ada PPVN tertumpu kepada vaksin Covid-19 sahaja atau vaksin lain serta tempoh pembanguan vaksin Covid-19.

Ahmad Amzad menjelaskan PPVN tidak tertumpu kepada penghasilan vaksin Covid-19 semata-mata, tetapi turut membabitkan kapasiti secara umumnya bagi

membolehkan Malaysia menghasilkan vaksin untuk penyakit manusia secara tempatan.

Beliau berkata, buat masa ini, Malaysia hanya mempunyai kapasiti menghasilkan vaksin haiwan sahaja.

"Berkaitan tempoh 10 tahun (PPVN) adalah daripada segi pembangunan kapasiti supaya dalam 10 tahun, kita ada kapasiti menghasilkan sepenuhnya pengeluaran

vaksin secara tempatan.

Berkenaan calon untuk vaksin, Ahmad Amzad berkata terdapat beberapa yang sudah melepasi fasa praklinikal dan selepas ini akan menjalani ujian terhadap manusia.

"Insya-Allah kalau melihat kepada tahap kajian yang sudah dilaksanakan itu, sekitar 2024 kita ada calon vaksin Covid-19 yang pertama," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : COVID-19



SEORANG bapa menemani anak perempuannya untuk menerima suntikan vaksin Covid-19 pada Program Imunisasi Covid-19 Kebangsaan Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) di Pusat Pemberian Vaksin (PPV) World Trade Centre Kuala Lumpur (WTCKL). - Gambar NSTP/ASWADI ALIAS

Kuala Lumpur

Kerajaan diminta mempertimbangkan untuk menyenaraikan Covid-19 sebagai penyakit berjangkit dalam Pekeliling Perkhidmatan bagi melayakkan ibu bapa yang menjaga anak dijangkiti wabak tersebut menggunakan kemudahan cuti kuarantin bagi menguruskan anak mereka.

Presiden Kongres Kesatuan Pekerja-Pekerja Di Dalam Perkhidmatan Awam (Cuepacs) Datuk Adnan Mat berkata langkah itu, bagi membolehkan ibu bapa khususnya yang menjadi kontak rapat tanpa gejala dan telah menerima dos penggalak mendapat kemudahan lima hari cuti kuarantin tersebut.

Ini kerana, mengikut prosedur operasi standard (SOP) Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM), individu dalam kategori berkecenderungan tidak perlu menjalani kuarantin manakala berdasarkan Pekeliling Perkhidmatan Bilangan 11 Tahun 2016, kemudahan cuti kuarantin ini hanya diberikan kepada ibu bapa yang anak mereka dijangkiti oleh penyakit berjangkit antaranya penyakit tangan, kaki dan mulut; demam denggi; cacar air (*chickenpox*) dan malaria tidak termasuk Co-

Permudah urusan ibu bapa jaga anak

Gesa kerajaan senarai Covid-19 sebagai penyakit berjangkit dalam Pekeliling Perkhidmatan



ADNAN

vid-19.

"Dalam hal ini, mereka tidak boleh hantar anak ke pengasuh, ini menjadi kesukaran untuk menguruskan anak-anak mereka jadi, Cuepacs minta agar cuti

kuarantin ini diberikan kepada salah seorang sama ada ibu atau bapa untuk jaga anak mereka sehingga sihat sepenuhnya.

"Kalau tidak diberikan cuti kuarantin ini, ketua perkhidmatan atau ketua jabatan boleh mempertimbangkan untuk memberi kemudahan bekerja dari rumah dan kembali bertugas lima hari kemudiannya," katanya ketika dihubungi.

Di samping itu, beliau berkata Cuepacs mengambil maklum kepentingan penjawat awam untuk terus berada di lapangan atau pejabat kerana situasi ketika ini menuntut mereka sebagai pelaksana untuk bertugas bagi memastikan sistem penyampaian kerajaan da-

pat dilaksanakan sebaik mungkin.

"Jadi ketua-ketua perkhidmatan perlu bijak mengurus dalam memastikan sistem penyampaian kerajaan tidak terjejas oleh kerana jangkitan masih berlaku tetapi dalam masa yang sama sistem penyampaian tidak boleh terhenti begitu sahaja," katanya.

Pada 24 Februari lalu, Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin mengumumkan individu berumur 18 tahun ke atas yang menjadi kontak rapat kepada kes positif Covid-19 yang menerima dos penggalak dan tidak bergejala pada hari pertama, tidak perlu menjalani kuarantin bermula 1 Mac 2022.

covid-19

Kemuka surat *Fit to Travel* jika ke Malaysia

Putrajaya: Individu yang baru dijangkiti Covid-19 serta sudah tamat tempoh kuarantin dalam jangka masa 60 hari-perlu mengemukakan surat *Fit To Travel* daripada pihak hospital sekiranya ingin masuk ke negara ini.

Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah berkata, surat berkenaan akan 'menguji' ujian saringan *Real-Time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR)* yang diperlukan untuk masuk ke negara ini.

"Untuk individu di negara ini yang mahu ke luar negara, mereka perlu rujuk prosedur negara yang ingin dilawati. Mereka kena patuh kehendak negara berkenaan contohnya melakukan ujian RT-PCR 48 jam sebelum bertolak.

"Tapi untuk prosedur di Malaysia, pengembara yang pernah positif dalam tempoh 60 hari itu perlu mengemukakan surat *Fit to Travel*

(jika dirawat di hospital) atau jika tak dirawat di hospital, jalani ujian saringan profesional dua hari sebelum berlepas," katanya.

Kelmarin, Dr Noor Hisham dalam kenyataannya berkata, individu yang sudah dijangkiti Covid-19 serta selesai menjalani kuarantin tidak perlu membuat ujian ulangan bagi memastikan tiada lagi virus berkenaan di dalam badan.

Beliau berkata, ini kerana ujian seperti RT-PCR itu sangat sensitif dan akan mengesan kehadiran genetik virus berkenaan menerusi saluran pernafasan dalam tempoh dua hingga tiga bulan selepas dijangkiti, misalnya dalam tempoh *viral shedding*.

Namun beliau berkata, walaupun keputusan ujian RT-PCR itu masih positif tetapi ia sudah tidak dapat membiak dan individu itu (dijangkiti Covid-19) tidak mungkin boleh menyebarkan jangkitan kepada orang lain.



ORANG ramai mengambil peluang minggu cuti sekolah membawa keluarga mereka bermain air ketika tinjauan di Taman Tema Air Lost World of Tambun, Ipoh, kelmarin.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN

MUKA SURAT : 15

RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Beri vaksin melalui mulut dan hidung

Kaedah baharu dibangunkan berikutan terdapat rakyat Malaysia takut jarum suntikan

KUALA LUMPUR

Malaysia menerusi Pelan Hala Tuju Pembangunan Vaksin Negara (PPVN) sedang membangunkan kaedah pemberian vaksin melalui mulut dan semburan hidung, kata Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi, Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim.

Beliau berkata, kaedah berbeza selain melalui suntikan itu sedang diteliti kerana terdapat rakyat yang takut jarum picagari

bagi mendapatkan vaksin.

"Seperti yang kita ketahui antara yang menjadi ketakutan rakyat (mendapatkan vaksin) ialah jarum suntikan, maka antara pembangunan sedang diusahakan termasuk pemberian vaksin secara oral (mulut) dan nasal spray (semburan hidung)," katanya ketika sesi soal jawab lisan di Dewan Rakyat pada Isnin.

Beliau berkata demikian bagi menjawab soalan tambahan Wong Kah Woh (PH-Ipoh Timur) yang bertanyakan sama ada PPVN tertumpu kepada vaksin Covid-19 sahaja atau vaksin lain serta tempoh pembangunannya.

Ahmad Amzad menjelaskan, PPVN tidak tertumpu kepada penghasilan vaksin Covid-19 semata-mata, tetapi turut melibatkan kapasiti secara umumnya



Petugas kesihatan, Nurul Farahin Haron Narashid, 33, mengambil vaksin jenis Sinovac menggunakan picagari sebelum diberikan kepada kanak-kanak ketika Program Imunisasi Kanak-Kanak (PICKids) di IDCC Shah Alam pada Isnin.

bagi membolehkan Malaysia menghasilkan vaksin untuk penyakit manusia secara tempatan.

Buat masa ini, katanya, Malaysia hanya mempunyai kapasiti untuk menghasilkan vaksin haiwan sahaja.

"Berkaitan tempoh 10 tahun

(PPVN) adalah dari segi pembangunan kapasiti supaya dalam tempoh itu, kita ada kapasiti untuk menghasilkan sepenuhnya pengeluaran vaksin secara tempatan," ujarnya.

Berkenaan calon untuk vaksin, Ahmad Amzad berkata, terdapat

beberapa yang telah melepasi fasa praklinikal dan selepas ini akan menjalani ujian terhadap manusia.

"Insya-ALLAH, melihat kepada tahap kajian yang dilaksanakan, sekitar tahun 2024 kita ada calon vaksin Covid-19 yang pertama," katanya. - *Bernama*

AHMAD AMZAD

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 8

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Program rumah ke rumah wajar dilakukan - Pakar

Oleh **ARIF AIMAN ASROL**
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PETALING JAYA: Program memberi suntikan dos penggalak kepada warga emas dari rumah ke rumah wajar dilakukan bagi memberi kemudahan kepada golongan tersebut mendapatkan suntikan tanpa membebankan mereka.

Pakar Kesihatan Komuniti Fakulti Perubatan Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM), Prof. Dr. Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh berkata, kadar imunisasi bagi golongan warga emas akan menurun 30 hingga 50 peratus, jadi golongan tersebut perlu dipastikan mendapat dos penggalak.

Katanya, Jawatankuasa Kemajuan dan Keselamatan Kampung (JKKK) perlu menyediakan inventori menjejaki warga emas bagi membantu dan melancarkan program pemberian dos penggalak.

"JKKK sepatutnya mempunyai senarai berapakah warga emas di dalam kampung tersebut dan



SUNTIKAN dos penggalak perlu diambil warga emas memandangkan kadar imunisasi bagi golongan itu akan menurun 30 hingga 50 peratus. - **UTUSAN/ SHAHIR NOORDIN**

di manakah golongan itu tinggal. Jadi boleh mengelakkan mereka daripada tercicir dalam mendapatkan dos penggalak.

"Jika kita nak harapkan warga emas sahaja datang, memang sukar disebabkan pelbagai faktor khususnya kesihatan. Selain membuat program dari rumah

ke rumah, kerajaan boleh beri insentif pada keluarga yang membawa sebagai galakkan dan ganjaran pada mereka," katanya semasa dihubungi *Utusan Malaysia*.

Terdahulu, akhbar ini melaporkan, klinik kesihatan dan persatuan komuniti perlu turun

padang mencari serta mendekati kira-kira 350,000 warga emas yang menerima dua suntikan vaksin Sinovac untuk diberi dos penggalak.

Malah, Program Mobilisasi Vaksin Komuniti (Movac) perlu digerakkan semula bagi membantu warga emas yang sukar bergerak atau sukar dihubungkan dengan pengangkutan awam bagi menerima vaksinasi berkenaan.

Dalam pada itu, Pensyarah Perubatan dan Pakar Perubatan Kesihatan Awam, Jabatan Kesihatan Komuniti di Fakulti Perubatan dan Sains Kesihatan Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM), Dr. Siti Aisah Mokhtar berkata, penyelesaian tersebut tidak boleh digeneralisasi kepada semua.

Jelasnya, ia perlu mengikut keperluan dan keadaan warga emas tersebut, misalnya kawasan tersebut memang sukar untuk melakukan pergerakan keluar masuk yang mana Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) boleh membawa PPV kepada penempatan tersebut.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 10

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Bangun vaksinasi melalui mulut, semburan hidung

Oleh HAKIMI ISMAIL
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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia menerusi Pelan Hala Tuju Pembangunan Vaksin Negara (PPVN) sedang membangunkan kaedah pemberian vaksin melalui mulut dan semburan hidung.

Timbalan Menteri Sains, Teknologi dan Inovasi, Datuk Ahmad Amzad Hashim berkata, kaedah itu sedang diteliti kerana ter-

dapat rakyat Malaysia yang takut kepada jarum suntikan vaksin.

"Antara yang menjadi ketakutan rakyat adalah takut kepada jarum suntikan. Maka antara pembangunan yang sedang diusahakan pemberian vaksin secara oral (mulut) dan *nasal spray* (semburan hidung)," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian di Dewan Rakyat bagi menjawab soalan tambahan Wong Kah Woh (PH-Ipoh Timur) yang ingin tahu

sama ada PPVN tertumpu kepada penghasilan vaksin Covid-19 atau vaksin-vaksin lain.

Menurut Ahmad Amzad, PPVN tidak tertumpu kepada penghasilan vaksin Covid-19 semata-mata, sebaliknya melibatkan kapasiti umum untuk penyakit manusia secara tempatan.

"Berkaitan tempoh 10 tahun (hasilkan vaksin), itu adalah dalam segi pembangunan kapasiti agar dalam tempoh itu,

kita ada kapasiti untuk hasilkan sepenuhnya pengeluaran vaksin secara tempatan.

"Bagaimanapun, buat masa ini, Malaysia hanya mempunyai kapasiti untuk menghasilkan vaksin haiwan," katanya.

Dalam pada itu, katanya, berdasarkan prestasi dan tahap kajian dilakukan ketika ini, sekitar tahun 2024, Malaysia akan mempunyai calon vaksin Covid-19 yang pertama.

AKHBAR : UTUSAN MALAYSIA

MUKA SURAT : 13

RUANGAN : DALAM NEGERI

Ambulans macam van jenazah: 'Itu kes terpencil'

Oleh MOHD. FADHLI
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PETALING JAYA: Perkhidmatan ambulans dikendalikan swasta yang didakwa tidak mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) dan tidak mempunyai pembantu perubatan (MA) adalah kes terpencil.

Bercakap kepada *Utusan Malaysia*, Presiden Persatuan Hospital Swasta Malaysia (APHM), Datuk Dr. Kuljit Singh berkata, beliau tidak menafikan mungkin wujud kes sedemikian, namun tidak sehingga menjejaskan rawatan awal di ambulans sebelum tiba ke hospital.

Jelasnya, hospital swasta masih mengikuti garis panduan Kementerian Kesihatan berhubung penyediaan MA dan per-

Tak patuh SOP Kementerian, tiada pembantu perubatan

Ambulans macam van jenazah

CHIA ANNEE/ANWAR

AMBULANS seperti van jenazah, perkhidmatan ambulans yang tidak mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) dan tidak mempunyai pembantu perubatan (MA) adalah kes terpencil.

petiti ke fatur (cedera).
Beliau berkata, beliau telah
menyampaikan maklumat
kepada pihak berkuasa
terkait mengenai perkara
ini. Beliau berharap pihak
berkuasa akan mengambil
tindakan yang sesuai
untuk memastikan
keselamatan pesakit.

yang akan lebih cepat
untuk mematuhi SOP
dan memastikan
keselamatan pesakit.
Beliau berkata, beliau
harap pihak berkuasa
akan mengambil
tindakan yang sesuai
untuk memastikan
keselamatan pesakit.

pihak kuasa berhubung hospital
persekitaran dan juga akan
melakukan pemeriksaan
kepada ambulans yang
tidak mematuhi SOP.

UTUSAN Malaysia
7 Mac 2022.

alatan perubatan asas.

"Itu kes terpencil dan jangan disebabkan satu atau dua kes, kita memukul rata semua penyampaian kesihatan buruk.

"Kebanyakan hospital yang besar, akan pastikan ambulans mempunyai peralatan lengkap dan sudah pastikan, kami akan mencari vendor yang ada

kelengkapan berkaitan selain sijil kelayakan yang diiktiraf.

"Saya tidak boleh sahkan jika ada kes berlaku, tetapi, akan cuba membantu jika ada hospital kecil yang bermasalah tetapi, saya percaya lebih 90 peratus hospital yang menggunakan khidmat ambulans menggunakan standard ter-

tentu," katanya ketika dihubungi semalam.

Beliau mengulas laporan akhbar ini yang memetik Presiden Persatuan Pembantu Perubatan Malaysia, Mustafa Abdul Majid yang mendakwa, hampir 100 peratus perkhidmatan ambulans swasta ibarat van jenazah.

Dakwaannya itu rentetan perkhidmatannya dilaporkan tidak mematuhi SOP, tiada MA dan perkakas asas bagi memberi rawatan awal kepada pesakit.

Terdapat 1,200 ambulans di seluruh negara dengan 25 peratus dikendalikan swasta termasuk hospital persendirian dan organisasi sukarela.

Utusan Malaysia masih mendapatkan maklum balas Kementerian Kesihatan mengenai laporan tersebut.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 3

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

QUARANTINE CARE

CUEPACS SEEKS COVID LEAVE FOR PARENTS

Call to add Covid-19 into service circular to enable them to care for infected kids

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THE government has been asked to add Covid-19 into its service circular to enable parents to take quarantine leave and care for their infected children.

In a Bernama report, Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services Malaysia (Cuepacs) president Datuk Adnan Mat said this was especially for parents who were asymptomatic close contacts and

had received their booster shot.

Individuals in that category were no longer required to undergo quarantine according to the Health Ministry's standard operating procedure (SOP), but based on Service Circular No. 11/2016, the five-day quarantine leave was provided only to parents of children sick with hand-foot-mouth disease, dengue, chickenpox and malaria, but not Covid-19.

"As such, they cannot send their children to childcare, and it is difficult to manage their children. So Cuepacs is requesting that the quarantine leave be given to one of the parents to allow them to tend to their children until they fully regain

their health.

"If leave is not provided, the head of service or department can consider allowing them to work from home and return to the office five days later," he said recently.

Adnan said Cuepacs understood the importance of civil servants being on the field or at the office as they were required to be on duty to ensure that the government's delivery system was implemented as best as possible.

"So heads of service need to be smart in ensuring that the government delivery system remains unaffected even as infections occur," he said.

According to CovidNow, there were 295,704 people observing

home quarantine, making up 95.9 per cent of the total active cases in the country.

On Feb 24, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that individuals aged 18 and above who were close contacts with Covid-19 positive cases and had received their booster doses, but did not display any symptoms on the first day, need not undergo quarantine starting from March 1.

On Sunday, new Covid-19 infections dropped below the 30,000 mark at 27,435 cases, bringing the country's tally to 3,622,607.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said 99.33 per cent of the new cases were in Categories 1 and 2 amounting to 27,251 cases.

"The remaining 184 cases are in Categories 3 to 5," he said in a statement yesterday.

Of the Category 3 to 5 cases, 55 were either unvaccinated or yet to complete their vaccination, 85 had completed their vaccination without booster, and 44 had received their booster shots.

A total of 98 cases were aged 60 and above, including 64 with comorbidities and three pregnant women.

Meanwhile, 379 cases were admitted into the Intensive Care Unit (ICU), with 122 being confirmed as Covid-19 positive while the remaining 257 were under investigation. Dr Noor Hisham said 30,335 patients had been discharged in the past 24 hours.

On fatalities, 55 deaths were recorded on Sunday, taking the toll to 33,228 nationwide. Of the number, 16 were brought-in-dead cases, according to the CovidNow website. In the past two weeks, the country had recorded a rate of 21 deaths per million people.



Datuk Adnan Mat

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES

MUKA SURAT : 7

RUANGAN : NATION / NEWS

SHORTAGE OF ORGANS FOR TRANSPLANTS

OPT-OUT SYSTEM CAN BOOST ORGAN DONATION

Offering incentives may also encourage more people to pledge as organ donors, say experts

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MALAYSIA should introduce an opt-out system for organ donations to meet the large demand for organ transplants, especially for kidneys, in the country, say experts.

They suggested that incentives — such as free medical treatment, discounted treatment at private healthcare facilities, cheaper medication and rebates on health and medical equipment — should be provided to encourage people to sign up as organ donors.

Public Awareness Action Committee for Organ Donation former chairman Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye said not all pledges would end up donating their organs upon their deaths as this required consent from their next of kin.

Lee said there were instances where family members had objected to harvesting organs from their dead loved ones despite the latter having pledged to it.

"During our campaigns, we reminded pledges to inform their family members and make sure that the latter are aware of it."

"The government can also consider incentives for family members of organ pledges, like access

to healthcare facilities and services," said the Alliance for Safe Community chairman.

Lee suggested campaigns to share success stories of transplantation of organs that had saved lives.

The younger generation, including those in universities, should be educated on the importance of organ donation, he added.

He welcomed ideas to use the MySejahtera app to allow users to register as organ donors.

Universiti Malaya occupational and public health expert Professor Dr Victor Hoe said the Health Ministry's proposal to include an option in the MySejahtera application for people to pledge as organ donors was a laudable move.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, on March 5, said the ministry was mulling enhancing the MySejahtera app by allowing Malaysians to sign up as organ donors to boost the number of donors.

He said the nation practised the opt-in system, whereby the people were required to register to pledge their organs.

"This means people have to register to become an organ donor."

"This is in contrast with the opting-out system as practised in some countries whereby all citizens are presumed to be organ donors unless they opt out from the system."

"If our laws change, then the MySejahtera application will be a good way to convince people to stay as organ donors."

Former Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said the government should consider offering incentives to encourage more people to pledge as organ donors.



Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye



The Health Ministry is mulling enhancing the MySejahtera app by allowing Malaysians to sign up as organ donors. FILE PIC

He said there was a need for continuous intensive public education and a nationally coordinated mechanism should be in place to ensure the effectiveness of identifying potential donors and recipients.

The Health Ministry in 2016 proposed the Organ and Tissue Transplantation Bill as the Human Tissues Act 1974 has a limited scope.

It had said that the proposed bill generally covered all organs, tissues and cells for transplantations.

A 2005 study titled "Organ Transplantation in Malaysia: A Need for A Comprehensive Legal Regime", published by the National Library of Medicine, noted that the major impediment in procuring organs for transplants in Malaysia was the lack of cadaveric donors.

The lack of cadaveric donors, it said, had encouraged patients to go to India and China to buy organs, especially kidneys, for transplants.

The inadequacies of the Hu-

man Tissues Act 1974, it said, had contributed to this problem.

The Human Tissues Act 1974 only relates to cadaveric donors whereas live donors fall within the purview of the common law.

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Call to shed more light on Covid-19 related deaths

By GERARD GIMINO
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PETALING JAYA: It's high time that the Health Ministry released more specific findings into deaths related to Covid-19 to potential trusted strategic partners, says a health expert.

Malaysian Public Health Physicians' Association president Prof Dr Mohamed Rusli Abdullah said having such information would allow better measures to be taken by healthcare professionals towards ensuring the well-being of the public.

"Understandably, such information is sensitive and hence confidential but I suggest that professional societies or trusted partners

of the ministry are at least kept in the loop.

"We hope that this can be relayed so that these partners can play their part to not only supplement efforts by the ministry but also contribute towards strategic planning," he said when contacted.

Prof Dr Mohamed Rusli said this comprised information such as whether an individual had succumbed to Covid-19 due to their existing comorbidities, the specific risk profile of the patient affected or even understanding the instances which led to the person's death.

He added that moving forward, real-time information on fatalities related to Covid-19 was also crucial to enable professionals to gauge the expected trend.

Several members of the public also voiced out concerns regarding the increasing death rates and called for more information especially on Covid-19 related fatalities.

Assistant operations manager Mohammad Anis Taha, 32, said having these insights would allow the public to form better opinions on the situation and take better precautionary action.

"Information on whether these individuals had comorbidities, which age bracket they belonged to along with their timeline up till they succumbed to Covid-19 is important since we all have or know of family members who may belong in the high-risk groups.

"It also enables us to better educate our loved ones whereby we

can all be aligned when it comes to understanding the risks for specific profiles if they contract the disease," he said, adding that his wife and immediate family members constantly stayed up-to-date with the Covid-19 situation in the nation.

Student Ng Shyue Yann, 21, said having such information would allow the public, especially those within the high-risk bracket, to better understand implications which could arise if they contract the disease.

"As a Type 1 diabetes patient myself, I felt lost when I contracted Covid-19 last December as I did not know how fatal it could be.

"At least by having such information, I know what to expect," he said.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia health economics, hospital and health management Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh urged those who suspect they have comorbidities to get themselves screened soonest.

"It is known that those with comorbidities or non-communicable diseases (NCD) such as diabetes can get severe symptoms if they contract Covid-19," she said.

According to the Health Ministry's GitHub portal, a total of 2,399 deaths were reported during the Omicron wave.

Out of this, 597 were brought-in-dead cases with 77% or 462 of them having comorbidities.

Of the total 33,028 Covid-19 deaths so far, 78% had comorbidities with many having NCD.

Parents happy to be given a choice

Many more confident with Sinovac due to its reportedly milder side effects

By JUNAID IBRAHIM
 newsdesk@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Many parents say they prefer the CoronaVac vaccine from China's Sinovac because it reportedly has milder side effects.

Lauding the government's move to allow them to opt for CoronaVac from yesterday, parents met at the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme for Children (PICKids) venue at the Axiata Arena Integrated Vaccination Centre (PPV) in Bukit Jalil said it was safer.

Sadrudin Nasruddin, 49, a project manager from Kota Damansara, Selangor, said that since it is similar to conventional vaccines, he felt more confident about it for his seven-year-old son.

"It's not mRNA-based technology like other vaccines, plus based on my experience of those who took Sinovac, the side effects are milder. My son is still very young, so I would prefer him to get Sinovac," he said.

Sadrudin added that it is a good move to allow parents to choose the vaccine for their kids.

"We are taking chances in whatever decision we make. At least,

having the option would be a more calculated risk rather than having (no) choice," he said.

Another parent who wanted to be identified only as Wong said that since inactivated virus technology has a better track record, she decided to get her daughter the jab from Sinovac.

She said she was also concerned about the adverse reactions her daughter might get from other vaccines and chose Sinovac since its reactions would be milder.

"Once I heard the news on Sunday that they allowed Sinovac vaccine walk-ins for children, I promptly registered my 10-year-old daughter for it," the 48-year-old added.

Wong said she welcomes the move as it has given parents the freedom to choose what's best for their children.

Broadcasting company associate Sharool Faiz, 39, who brought his son to the PPV, said he also chose Sinovac because of its reportedly milder adverse effects.

"We would not be sure how the child would react to other vaccines. I believe that Sinovac has milder reactions.



Freedom to choose: Jean Liew, eight, is getting her Sinovac shot at a PPV that provides walk-in vaccination under PICKids. — CHAN TAK KONG/The Star

"I feel that it is safer for my seven-year-old son," he said, adding that he is glad the government has given him a choice.

"Even if there was only one option, I would not delay my son's vaccination as I want to protect

him," said Sharool, who came from Puncak Jalil, Selangor.

A mother of two sons who only wished to be known as Ming said she even plans to purchase the Sinovac vaccine from the private sector.

"I believe Sinovac will be safer, hence my husband and I prefer it to be given to our sons.

"Once I heard the news that walk-ins for Sinovac would be allowed, I quickly registered them and brought them today," she added.

Based on *The Star's* observations at the Axiata Arena Integrated PPV, the number of children who turned up for Sinovac was significantly lower than those who took Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty vaccine.

As at noon yesterday, 150 doses of Sinovac were administered at Axiata Arena, said its PPV manager Dr Mohd Fadhl Mohd Fauzi.

He said that the centre could cater to more than a thousand Sinovac jabs a day, adding that parents would be provided consultation before they make their decision.

"We will give information and emphasise that Pfizer is recommended. However, if they insist, we can offer Sinovac," he told *The Star*.

On Sunday, the Health Ministry announced that children aged five to 11 who are unable to receive Comirnaty for health reasons can opt for CoronaVac instead.

Watch out for 'superspreading' events, warn medical experts

PETALING JAYA: With the Johor polls set for Saturday as well as Ramadan and Hari Raya taking place over the next two months, health experts are cautioning that daily Covid-19 cases may reach the 50,000-mark.

Prof Dr Moy Foong Ming of Universiti Malaya's Department of Social and Preventive Medicine said given the Omicron variant's high infection rate and the vaccines not being entirely effective against infections, a record-breaking new number of cases is possible.

"However, our high vaccination rate can strive towards minimising the number of severe cases and deaths which occurred during the Delta wave. If we are able to reach at least 80% of the adult population having received their boosters and

increased number of vaccination for children aged five to 11, we can then co-exist with the virus whereby infections for most will be mild," she said in an interview.

She warned that despite Omicron having milder symptoms, it still poses a threat to the elderly, as well as the high-risk and unvaccinated groups.

"To protect these groups, we should reduce our mobility whenever possible and strictly adhere to standard operating procedures (SOP) when in public.

"This can reduce the chances of infection and minimise the risk of having elderly or high-risk individuals within the family contract the virus," she said.

She said although the current increasing trend of cases is alarm-

ing, there is still hope in the efforts to reach endemic status for Covid-19 in which the daily number of cases would not burden local healthcare.

On the Johor polls, while Prof Moy applauded the monitoring of the SOP, she hoped that members of the public would have the preventive measures internalised in order to exist with the virus during leisure and work.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia health economics, hospital and health management Prof Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh warned that cases could continue on an upward trend if the authorities do not put their foot down on mitigating this.

"We have seen countries such as South Korea or Singapore which have implemented a back and forth

approach where restrictions are relaxed then tightened depending on the situation.

"This can similarly be done nationwide to minimise physical congestion where possible but, of course, by striking a balance between the lives and livelihoods of the people," she said.

In anticipation of increased social activities within the next few months, Dr Sharifa said it is everyone's responsibility to take his or her own precautionary measures.

"After any major congregation, take a self-test and monitor yourself for symptoms.

"If you test positive, please follow the steps laid out by the authorities and if you test negative, continue taking the necessary precautions to keep yourself and those around you

safe," she added.

Universiti Putra Malaysia public health specialist Dr Malina Osman said data for the past two weeks showed that the number of new and active cases had somewhat plateaued.

"Hopefully, this can result in a decreasing number of cases within the next two weeks," she added.

She said the current focus on the number of cases requiring hospitalisation, respiratory assistance and intensive care unit admissions could result in decisions on whether amendments should be made to existing SOP.

"Despite all this, it is still important for all members of society to practise strict SOP compliance to mitigate the risk of contracting or spreading the virus."

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : VIEWS

Women's rights to healthcare

ON International Women's Day today, we jointly call for progressive steps to improve the maternal, sexual and reproductive health of women for all residents of Malaysia. Women's health is a prime global focus, reflected by United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Three (Good Health & Well-being) and Five (Gender Equality).

(Sustainable Development Goals are a collection of 17 interlinked global goals designed to be a "blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all".)

Despite recent gains in Malaysia, we must do more to ensure that all women in Malaysia receive fair care and treatment. We call for the government – especially the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry, Health Ministry and Education Ministry – to:

Embed maternal, sexual, and reproductive health metrics into Malaysia's public agenda and international commitments

Metrics for maternal, sexual and reproductive health include the maternal mortality rate (MMR), rate of teenage pregnancies, and percentage of women able to access safe contraception.

These metrics should not be hidden in statistics or obscure reports. They are not taboo, shameful or stigmatising. Instead, these statistics should be front and centre in Malaysia's public agenda and international commitments through international treaties, conventions and declarations. When they are, progress will happen, like how Malaysia's MMR dropped from 280/100,000 in 1957 to 25/100,000 in 2018 partly due to our international commitments.

However, while we call for health issues to become political priorities, we urge all stakeholders to address implementation gaps at

the same time.

Reframe women's health issues as public health issues, not as women's issues

Women make up half the total population of Malaysia. Therefore, women's health is public health. The goal of public health is to improve health outcomes of populations.

Here, we must ensure easy access to information, screening services, self-education and self-management tools to improve women's sexual and reproductive health. This can be achieved through synergistic collaboration between the ministries and other relevant stakeholders.

Effective data collection on maternal, sexual and reproductive health must be implemented and included in Malaysia's public health analysis. This includes mainstreaming gender into the national budget and monitoring allocations directed to women's health services, sexual and reproductive health services, and services for survivors of gender-based violence.

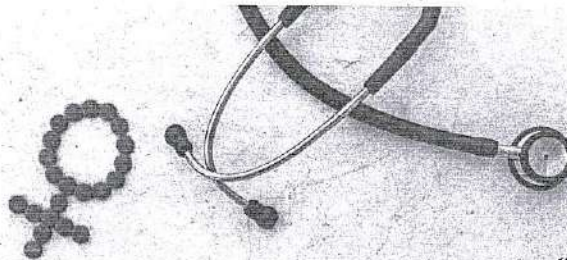
Importantly, a clear and consistent strategy must be implemented to increase the effective-

ness and accessibility of services for survivors of gender-based violence through one-stop crisis centres.

Strengthen the primary healthcare response to gender-based violence and domestic violence

The prevalence of domestic violence within public primary healthcare clinics vastly exceeds its prevalence in Peninsular Malaysia (22% versus 9%), as revealed by a Universiti Malaya study in 2019. Yet, a systematic response to domestic violence remains sorely absent at the primary care level.

Survivors who seek help from a Klinik Kesihatan do not receive adequate support as healthcare providers are not equipped to identify signs of abuse or offer first-line support, while referral pathways to other resources remain unclear. Therefore, we must improve the primary healthcare infrastructure in Malaysia through the 2,000-plus Klinik Kesihatan, to enable victims of gender-based violence and domestic violence to receive the support and interventions that they need.



123rf.com

Implement laws to ensure that every woman has a right to health

There is no dedicated or universal law on women's health in Malaysia. Therefore, it is crucial to pass new laws to protect the health rights of all women in Malaysia, and to support these laws by appropriately strengthening our health system.

In specific terms, this means that all women should have access to healthcare, without any physical, cultural, religious, emotional or financial barriers. This requires a multi-stakeholder approach led by the Women, Family, and Community Development Ministry and the Health Ministry working together with the Human Resources, Trade, Religious Affairs and Education Ministries.

The lack of access to adequate maternal, sexual and reproductive health services is a global issue, and Malaysia is not spared. This issue is more pronounced in certain populations such as adolescents, unmarried women, documented and undocumented migrants, refugees, stateless people, women living with HIV, women with disabilities, and LGBTQ+ groups.

Healthcare must not condone discrimination. Regardless of circumstance, every person must receive fair and non-judgemental medical treatment. Women's rights are not only basic human rights, but also a global public health issue.

Coordinated by the Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC), Obstetrical and Gynaecological Society of Malaysia (OGSM) & the Women's Aid Organisation (WAO)

This letter was signed by 44 organisations and individuals

Control the price of test kits, stop exploitation

WITH the escalating number of Covid-19 cases due to the highly transmissible Omicron variant, we cannot be lax and must continue to adhere to the SOP. Among the advice given is to do an RTK antigen saliva self-test in the event one has symptoms that might point to Covid-19 or has come into contact with someone who is positive. This is the best way at the moment to get results within minutes.

With case numbers in the 30,000s, many more people are taking these tests now. This means we will need a lot of test kits in the immediate, short and likely long-term future if the Covid-19 virus keeps on mutating – only God knows when this pandemic will end.

Therefore, I call upon the authorities to set firm ceiling prices for all the different brands of Covid-19 test kits in the market as prices have skyrocketed to more than double the original price for some brands. And I believe some stores are hoarding kits with the intention of inflating the price even further.

Unscrupulous and exploitative stores must be exposed and reprimanded as a strong deterrence to others not to resort to unethical means to make excessive profits.

The Health Ministry and related ministries and statutory authorities must check on pharmacies and other shops where test kits are sold to ensure they are made available and at a reasonable price.

To make excessive profits out of the people's misery and hardship is greedy and self-serving, and such shops must be publicly reprimanded and issued heavy fines. I hope the authorities will act with urgency and bring the price of test kits down to an acceptable level.

In fact, test kits ought to be classified as controlled items to deter price increases for no apparent reason.

DR TAN ENG BEE
 Kajang, Selangor

AKHBAR : THE SUN ON TUESDAY

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RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Causeways to reopen simultaneously with borders

JOHOR BARU: The land route between Malaysia and Singapore via the Johor Causeway and the Second Link will be reopened simultaneously with the reopening of the country's borders, said Tourism, Arts and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Nancy Shukri.

She said the move would facilitate travel by Singaporeans to Malaysia, thus reviving the country's tourism sector, adding that an announcement on the reopening of borders would be made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob soon.

"The Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry is ready and prepared (to receive tourists from abroad)," she

Move would facilitate entry of Singaporean visitors and boost revival of economy, says tourism minister

said after a meeting with industry players yesterday.

On Saturday, Ismail Sabri said the country's borders would be reopened soon and the move would allow members of Keluarga Malaysia (Malaysian Family) who had not seen one another for a long time to return home, especially for Hari Raya Aidilfitri in May.

On Nov 29 last year, the land

Vaccinated Travel Lane (VTL) via the Johor Causeway and the Second Link were opened simultaneously with the air VTL between Changi Airport and the KL International Airport.

Land travel between Singapore and Johor Baru is for long-term pass holders who are working in Singapore and Johor Baru.

On yesterday's event, Nancy said

the programme was an initiative by the government to get closer to tourism, arts and culture industry players in Johor, Bernama reported.

She also launched the Jom Balik Kampung Homestay Malaysia Campaign organised by Tourism Malaysia, in line with the launch of the jomhomestay.com portal, which was completed on Nov 27 last year.

She added that the campaign was aimed at promoting homestays as an alternative to hotels.

The campaign is also aimed at encouraging homestay operators, including youths, to produce attractive packages—as well as highlight local products, to make their operations attractive.



Sisters (from left) Eileen Udrey Johany, Eliza Ester and Eslea Arlene in high spirits after being vaccinated at the IDCC inoculation centre in Shah Alam yesterday. —BERNAMAPIX

55 Covid related deaths recorded

KUALA LUMPUR: A total of 15,017,166 adults (63.8% of the population) have received their booster shots as of Sunday.

The CovidNOW website showed a total of 22,927,624 individuals (97.4% of the adult population) have been fully vaccinated, while 23,204,433 (98.6%) have received at least one dose.

For children aged five to 11, a total of 1,026,732 (28.9%) have received a first dose under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme for Children (PICKids) as of Sunday.

A total of 2,831,197 (91% of adolescents aged between 12 and 17) have completed their vaccination, while 2,931,709 (94.2%)

have received at least one dose.

On Sunday, a total of 57,106 doses of the vaccine were administered, with 24,342 as first doses, 882 as second shots and 31,882 as boosters, with the cumulative number of doses given under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme currently at 67,731,132.

The Health Ministry Github

portal showed 55 Covid deaths were recorded on Sunday, with Kedah recording the highest with 12 cases, followed by Penang with eight, Johor with seven, Terengganu with six, Kelantan with five, four cases each in Perak and Selangor, two cases each in Malacca, Negri Sembilan and Perlis and one case each in Pahang, Sabah and Sarawak. —Bernama

Cuepacs: Include Covid-19 in quarantine leave list

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has been urged to list Covid-19 as an infectious disease in its service circular to enable parents nursing infected children to use the quarantine leave option.

Congress of Unions of Employees in the Public and Civil Services Malaysia (Cuepacs) president Datuk Adnan Mat said the move was especially for parents who are asymptomatic, close contacts and have received their booster shots.

Individuals in that category are

no longer required to undergo quarantine, according to the Health Ministry standard operating procedures (SOP).

But based on Service Circular No 11/2016, quarantine leave is only granted to parents of children sick with infectious diseases, including hand-foot-mouth disease, dengue, chickenpox and malaria, but not Covid-19.

"As such, they cannot send their children to childcare, and it is difficult to manage their children.

So, Cuepacs is requesting that quarantine leave be given to one parent to allow them to tend to their children until they recover.

"If leave is not provided, the head of service or department can consider allowing them to work from home and return to the office five days later."

Adnan said Cuepacs understood the importance of civil servants being in the field or at the office as they are required to be on duty to ensure the government's delivery

system is implemented as best as possible.

"Heads of service need to be smart in ensuring that the delivery system remains unaffected even as infections occur," he added.

On Feb 24, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin announced that from March 1, individuals aged 18 and above who are close contacts and have received their booster doses and do not display any symptoms on the first day, need not undergo quarantine. —Bernama

ICU in five states filled above 50%

KUALA LUMPUR: Only 184 of the 27,435 new daily Covid cases recorded on Sunday were in categories Three, Four and Five, said Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

He said the other 27,251 cases were in categories One and Two, adding that the total number of cases recorded nationwide now stood at 3,622,607.

"Of the 184 category Three, Four and Five cases reported, 55 were unvaccinated or had not been fully vaccinated while 85 involved individuals who had been fully vaccinated but had not received a booster and 44 had received a booster dose," he said in a statement yesterday.

He also said for the category Three, Four and Five cases, there were 98 involving those aged 60 and above, 64 with comorbidities and three involving pregnant women.

Noor Hisham said 1,756 cases were admitted to hospitals on Sunday and of the number, 724 (41.2%) were in categories Three, Four and Five, while 1,032 (58.8%) involved categories One and Two.

He added that a total of 379 cases required treatment in the intensive care units (ICU), with 216 needing respiratory assistance while 30,335 recoveries were reported on Sunday, with the total number of recovered cases recorded now at 3,281,128.

On ICU bed occupancy in hospitals, he said five states recorded 50% or more, namely Selangor and Putrajaya at 83%, Johor at 70%, Kelantan at 69% and Kuala Lumpur at 54%.

He said the infectivity rate (IR) was now at 1.05, with Sarawak recording the highest IR of 1.38, followed by Perak at 1.24, Kuala Lumpur at 1.22, Terengganu at 1.14 and Negri Sembilan at 1.12. —Bernama