AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Agong minta rakyat sokong RUU berkaitan tembakau, rokok

Shah Alam: Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, menzahirkan rasa bangga atas usaha kerajaan dalam menjamin kesihatan serta kesejahteraan generasi akan datang melalui Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022.

Al-Sultan Abdullah bertitah, seluruh rakyat Malaysia perlu memberi sokongan dan dokongan terhadap usaha murni terbabit.

"Baru-baru ini, beta mendapat maklum dan laporan daripada Perdana Menteri (Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob) satu RUU telah dibentangkan di Parlimen berkaitan RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022, yang telah pun diputuskan untuk dikaji dengan lebih mendalam.

"Beta ingin menyatakan secara peribadi, ini adalah satu usaha cukup murni yang seluruh rakyat Malaysia perlu beri sokongan dan dokongan supaya RUU dapat dikaji dan diteliti. Secara prinsipnya, kita semua sokong diadakan undang-undang ini dan mungkin dari segi pelaksanaan, (ia) terpulang pada kerajaan yang menentukan cara dan bila pelaksanaannya.

"Usaha ini agak terbaik pada beta dalam menjaga dan menentukan kesihatan generasi akan datang ini lebih terpelihara dan terjamin," titah baginda ketika berangkat merasmikan Kompleks Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH) di Setia Alam semalam.

Turut berangkat sama adalah Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah.

Yang turut hadir Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin dan isteri, Nori Abdullah serta Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Al-Sultan Abdullah dan Tunku Azizah berkenan melawat ruang pameran selepas merasmikan Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH) di Setia Alam, semalam. (Foto BERNAMA)

Zahir ucapan terima kasih

Dalam pada itu, Al-Sultan Abdullah turut menzahirkan ucapan terima kasih kepada seluruh warga Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) yang memberikan perkhidmatan terbaik mereka dalam memerangi wabak COVID-19.

"Tiada kata untuk beta mengatakan, besar kebanggaan serta berterima kasih ke atas setiap kakitangan KKM yang bertungkus-lumus bersama anggota tentera, polis dan lain-lain yang memberi seluruh jiwa dan raga dan sehingga kini kita berjaya memasuki fasa peralihan ke endemik ini.

"Beta harap KKM yang diketuai oleh Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan KKM, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, dapat terus meningkatkan perkhidmatan kepada rakyat dengan lebih ikhlas, mesra dan jitu untuk tentukan setiap kita berada dalam keadaan selamat," titah baginda.

Al-Sultan Abdullah turut menzahirkan ucapan tahniah kepada Khairy diatas pelantikan beliau sebagai Naib Presiden bagi Persidangan Kesihatan Sedunia (WHA) Ke-75 yang secara tidak langsung memberi pengiktirafan kepada beliau dan Malaysia.

Mengenai penubuhan Kompleks NIH, Yang di-Pertuan Agong bertitah, ia adalah satu lagi titik tolak penanda aras bagi masa hadapan untuk membawa soal kesihatan ke tahap yang lebih baik demi kesejahteraan dan kesihatan rakyat.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 11
RUANGAN : KOMENTAR

Rakyat kena bersatu sokong akta sekat generasi baharu merokok

Ketua Rakan Hidayah Centre Perlis

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Kesihatan baik adalah nikmat yang amat bermakna kepada setiap makhluk bernyawa. Untuk mencipta gaya hidup sihat, kita perlu lebih berani dan terbuka menerima apa sahaja usaha bagi mencorakkan hidup rakyat Malaysia ke arah lebih sihat dan baik.

Kejayaan bermula dengan langkah pertama. Untuk mencapai langkah itu, kita perlu bersedia dan kuat untuk menggapainya.

Tinjauan Kajian Morbiditi Kebangsaan pada 2019 mendapati peratusan merokok dalam kalangan remaja berusia 18 tahun (iaitu usia selepas undang-undang tidak melarang mereka merokok) adalah tinggi.

Dianggarkan sebanyak 24.49 peratus remaja berusia 18 tahun merokok berbanding statistik sebelum ini sebanyak 7.7 peratus sahaja. Daripada jumlah itu, 22.78 peratus menggunakan rokok tembakau.

Berdasarkan tinjauan ini, peningkatan bukanlah sesuatu yang membanggakan, bahkan perlu lebih bimbang dengan trend tidak sihat ini yang semakin menjadi normal dalam kehidupan remaja seawal usia 18 tahun ke bawah.

Vape galak tabiat merokok

Keadaan ini lebih memburukkan lagi apabila kini ada pelbagai produk rokok canggih dan mudah untuk didapati, terutama vape. Ini semua berpunca daripada tabiat merokok kian menjadi-jadi dalam masyarakat.

Justeru, Menteri Kesihatan, Khairy Jamaluddin membentangkan Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 bagi mengelak golongan remaja, termasuk mereka di bawah umur terjebak dengan tabiat merokok.

Akta baharu yang turut dipanggil RUU Generasi Penamat (GEG), bertujuan mengharamkan penggunaan, pemilikan dan penjualan produk rokok dan vape bagi mereka yang dilahirkan selepas 2007.

Trend merokok dalam kalangan remaja sudah menjadi normal pada masa kini. Sebahagian remaja hari ini beranggapan mereka yang tidak merokok tidak jantan, 'lembik' dan tidak 'macho'.

Doktrin seperti ini bukan hal baharu, namun apabila hal ini tidak dibendung dan ditangani secara serius, maka generasi muda hari ini akan terus mewarisi tabiat buruk merokok daripada generasi terdahulu.

Tabiat merokok menyebabkan pencemaran udara, mengheret orang di sekeliling menghidu asap rokok, sekali gus merosakkan kesihatan diri dan orang lain.

Tinjauan Kajian Morbiditi Kebangsaan 2019 mendapati peratusan merokok dalam kalangan remaja berusia 18 tahun adalah tinggi. (Foto hiasan)

Jika dilihat suatu laporan dikeluarkan The Tobacco Atlas 2019, fakta menunjukkan kematian pramatang bayi akibat rokok adalah seramai 27,000 bayi setiap tahun. Ini bermakna sekiranya kita masih berlengah dan tidak menyokong usaha baik ini bermaksud kita saban tahun menghadapi 27,000 kematian bayi pramatang.

Beban kerajaan tampung kos rawatan

Adakah angka ini yang kita mahu. Apakah ini yang kita mahu wariskan kepada generasi Malaysia. Sudah tentu tidak.

Peningkatan peratusan merokok ini bukan suatu menggembirakan. Kesannya, peningkatan ini juga turut meningkatkan kos harus ditanggung kerajaan. Kajian dibuat menyatakan rawatan akibat komplikasi penyakit berpunca hasilan tembakau dianggarkan RM8.77 bilion menjelang 2030.

Ini sekali gus membebankan kerajaan untuk menampung kenaikan kos rawatan ini akibat kenaikan peratusan merokok dalam kalangan remaja hari ini. Anggaran ini menggembirakan apatah lagi membabitkan duit kerajaan yang datangnya daripada hasil rakyat.

Oleh itu, rakyat Malaysia, terutama mereka yang beragama Islam, bersatu dan menzahirkan rasa sokongan kepada kewujudan akta menyekat generasi baharu 'hancur' akibat rokok.

Ia bagi memastikan kelestarian warga Malaysia lebih ceria dan sihat, bebas kelahiran bayi pramatang, kanser akibat tabiat merokok, kerosakan jantung dan sebagainya menjadi pembunuh senyap nombor satu di Malaysia.

Jika RUU ini diluluskan, generasi yang lahir selepas ini adalah golongan tidak lagi mengenal tabiat merokok. Sokongan seluruh Ahli Parlimen amat diperlukan untuk mencorakkan generasi masa depan lebih sejahtera.

AKHBAR : BERITA HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 15
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

Teliti kaedah baharu rawatan kanser darah

Dr Noor Azmi merasmikan Persidangan Saintifik Persatuan Hematologi Malaysia ke-19 di Kompleks Perubatan Canselor Tuanku Ja'afar, Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz, di Cheras, semalam. (Foto Fathil Asri/BH)

Cheras: Kerajaan sedang meneliti kaedah baharu dalam rawatan kanser darah serta menyemak isu seperti regulatori yang dikatakan menyekat perkembangan rawatan penyakit itu.

Timbalan Menteri Kesihatan 1, Datuk Dr Noor Azmi Ghazali, berkata pada masa sama kerajaan menyambut baik usaha Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (UKM) yang kini menjalankan dua kajian fasa klinikal imunoterapi berasaskan sel (IBS) atau secara amnya sel terapi.

Ketika ini, UKM sedang menjalankan kajian fasa klinikal yang terdiri daripada terapi sel dendritik (DC) dan terkini, Chimeric Antigen Response-T (CAR-T) untuk rawatan kanser darah.

"Kita menyokong kajian sebegini dan akan melihat perkara ini lebih mendalam, memperbaiki keadaan dan melihat isu seperti regulatori yang dikatakan menyekat, menyebabkan kita agak ke belakang berbanding negara lain.

"Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) akan melihat perkara ini berikutan trend penyakit tidak berjangkit serta kanser menunjukkan peningkatan dewasa ini. Kanser teratas bagi wanita adalah kanser payudara, lelaki (prostat), serta kanser kolorektal didapati meningkat di samping kanser lain seperti paru-paru yang disebabkan penuaan rakyat negara ini dan amalan gaya hidup tidak sihat," katanya.

Beliau berkata demikian pada sidang media selepas merasmikan Persidangan Saintifik Persatuan Hematologi Malaysia ke-19 yang diadakan secara hibrid di Kompleks Perubatan Canselor Tuanku Ja'afar, Hospital Canselor Tuanku Muhriz di sini, semalam.

Kaedah lebih baik, selamat

Dr Noor Azmi berkata, KKM melihat terapi sel adalah kaedah terbaru yang lebih baik, selamat dan bersasar berikutan IBS menggunakan sistem imun badan untuk membasmi sel kanser yang dikhususkan kepada keperluan pesakit.

"Saya difahamkan Pusat Terapi Sel UKM sudah merekabentuk kajian klinikal yang pertama di negara ini untuk menilai profil keselamatan dan keberkesanan CAR-T untuk pesakit kanser relaps atau refraktori B-leukimia limfoblastik akut dan limfoma B-non Hodgkin," katanya.

Dr Noor Azmi berkata, kerajaan akan memperkasakan Peranan Ejen Kesihatan Komuniti (MyChampion) dalam usaha mempertingkatkan pendidikan dan promosi kesejahteraan kesihatan.

Dalam perkembangan lain, beliau berkata, peningkatan kes COVID-19, kemasukan ke hospital dan penggunaan unit rawatan rapi (ICU) serta ventilator adalah disebabkan penularan pantas sub varian Omicron BA.4 dan BA.5 yang mula dikesan di negara ini pada Jun lalu.

Terus patuh SOP KKM

"Biarpun terdapat peningkatan semua kategori, kadar kematian di negara ini terkawal kerana berada pada satu digit dan hanya sekali dua naik ia hingga 10, namun kembali turun.

"Jadi pada masa sekarang rakyat perlu terus mematuhi prosedur operasi standard (SOP) yang ditetapkan Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) kerana sub varian itu sangat pantas merebak," katanya.

Dalam peralihan ke fasa endemik ini, KKM tidak mengenakan tindakan saman, tetapi lebih menumpukan penguatkuasaan secara pendidikan (educational enforcement).

Mengulas mengenai vaksinasi COVID-19, beliau berkata, individu berusia 60 ke atas, mereka berusia 50 hingga 59 yang mempunyai komobid dan golongan 50 hingga 59 yang memang mahu menjaga diri digalakkan mengambil dos penggalak kedua.

"Remaja dan kanak-kanak juga kita sudah mengkategorikan semula dos ketiga, iaitu lengkap dos primer.

"Bagi kanak-kanak lima hingga 11 tahun, remaja 12-17 komobid sama ada sederhana, serius memang kita galakkan mengambil dos ketiga, sebelum mengambil dos penggalak," katanya.

AKHBAR : HARIAN METRO
MUKA SURAT : 22
RUANGAN : LOKAL

AL-SULTAN Abdullah bersama Tuanku Hajah Azizah Aminah berkenan melawat ruang pameran selepas merasmikan Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH) di Setia Alam, semalam.

Seri Paduka bangga usaha kerajaan banteras rokok

Shah Alam: Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah menzahirkan rasa bangga atas usaha kerajaan dalam menjamin kesihatan serta kesejahteraan generasi akan datang melalui Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022.

Al-Sultan Abdullah bertitah, ia adalah usaha murni dan seluruh rakyat Malaysia perlu memberi sokongan dan dokongan supaya RUU berkenaan dapat dikaji serta diteliti.

"Baru-baru ini, beta bangga mendapat maklum dan laporan daripada Perdana Menteri (Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob) yang mana satu RUU dibentangkan di Parlimen berkaitan RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 yang mana telah diputuskan untuk dikaji dengan lebih mendalam.

"Beta ingin menyatakan secara peribadi, ini adalah satu usaha cukup murni yang seluruh rakyat Malaysia perlu beri sokongan dan dokongan supaya RUU dapat dikaji dan diteliti. Secara prinsipnya mungkin kita semua sokong diadakan undang-undang ini dan mungkin dari segi pelaksanaan, (ia) terpulang pada pihak kerajaan yang menentukan cara dan bila pelaksanaannya.

"Usaha ini agak terbaik pada beta dalam menjaga dan menentukan kesihatan generasi akan datang ini lebih terpelihara dan terjamin," titah baginda pada Majlis Perasmian Kompleks Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH) di Setia Alam di sini, semalam.

Turut mencemar duli Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah.

Hadir sama Menteri Kesihatan Khairy Jamaluddin dan isteri, Nori Abdullah serta Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

AKHBAR : KOSMO
MUKA SURAT : 4
RUANGAN : NEGARA

AL-SULTAN ABDULLAH (dua dari kiri) bersama Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah (dua dari kanan) selepas merasmikan Kompleks Institut Kesihatan Negara, Shah Alam semalam.

Agong sokong RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022

SHAH ALAM – Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah menyokong penuh Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 yang telah dibentangkan kerajaan dalam sidang Dewan Rakyat baru-baru ini.

Baginda bertitah, kerajaan telah membuat keputusan baik bagi memastikan kesihatan rakyat Malaysia sentiasa dalam keadaan optimum di samping untuk kebaikan generasi masa hadapan.

"Saya begitu bangga dengan (pembentangan) RUU tersebut dan ini merupakan satu usaha murni (daripada kerajaan).

"Ini adalah salah satu usaha baik supaya generasi akan datang (mempunyai tahap kesihatan) yang lebih baik," titahnya dalam Majlis Perasmian Kompleks Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH), di sini semalam.

Titah baginda, kerajaan khususnya Kementerian Kesihatan (KKM) telah membuat pelbagai pertimbangan seperti kos perbelanjaan kesihatan dan lain-lain lagi bagi memperkenalkan undang-undang itu.

Justeru itu, Al-Sultan Abdullah berharap semua pihak dapat memberi dorongan serta sokongan penuh kepada kerajaan supaya rang undang-undang menjadi sebuah undang-undang di negara ini.

"Dari segi pelaksanaan (sekiranya rang undang-undang ini diluluskan), kerajaan akan tentukan," titah baginda.

Dalam pada itu, Al-Sultan Abdullah turut menzahirkan penghargaan kepada seluruh warga KKM yang telah bertungkus-lumus bekerja semasa pandemik Covid-19 melanda negara ini.

AKHBAR : SINAR HARIAN
MUKA SURAT : 12
RUANGAN : NASIONAL

RUU Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 usaha murni – Agong

SHAH ALAM - Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah berkenan menyokong Rang Undang-Undang (RUU) Kawalan Produk Tembakau dan Merokok 2022 sebagai satu usaha murni daripada pihak kerajaan.

Seri Paduka bertitah, seluruh rakyat Malaysia harus memberi satu sokongan dan dukungan supaya RUU ini dapat diteliti dan dikaji secara mendalam.

Al-Sultan Abdullah bertitah, ia merupakan satu usaha terbaik untuk menjaga dan menentukan kesihatan generasi akan datang supaya lebih terpelihara.

"Kita perlu menegaskan iaitu perlu mendidik anak-anak muda kita untuk mencapai satu tahap kesihatan yang paling baik.

"Amalan-amalan baik perlu diteraskan supaya perkara yang boleh menjejaskan kesihatan dapat dikurangkan.

"Lebih penting lagi, ia dapat kurangkan perbelanjaan di hospital di negara kita," titah Seri Paduka semasa merasmikan Institut Kesihatan Negara (NIH) di Setia Alam di sini pada Selasa.

Turut berangkat Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah.

Dalam pada itu, Seri Paduka turut menzahirkan penghargaan kepada semua warga Kementerian Kesihatan Malaysia (KKM) yang memberi perkhidmatan sewaktu memerangi wabak Covid-19 yang melanda negara.

"Tiada kata untuk beta mengatakan, besar kebanggaan serta berterima kasih ke atas setiap kakitangan KKM yang bertungkus-lumus bersama anggota tentera, polis dan lain-lain yang memberi seluruh jiwa dan raga dan sehingga kini kita berjaya memasuki fasa peralihan endemik.

"Beta harap KKM yang diketuai oleh Ketua Pengarah Kesihatan, Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah dapat terus meningkatkan perkhidmatan kepada rakyat dengan lebih ikhlas, mesra dan jitu untuk tentukan setiap kita berada dalam keadaan selamat," titah Seri Paduka.

FOTO: BERNAMA

Al-Sultan Abdullah (tengah) dan Tunku Azizah berkenan melawat ruang pameran selepas merasmikan Institut Kesihatan Negara di Setia Alam pada Selasa.

AKHBAR : NEW STRAITS TIMES
MUKA SURAT : 8
RUANGAN : NEWS/COURTS

Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah at the launch of the National Institutes of Health Complex in Setia Alam, Shah Alam, yesterday. Present are Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin (seated, third from left) and Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham (seated, left). BERNAMA PIC

NOBLE EFFORT

Support GEG Bill, king urges rakyat

SHAH ALAM: Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah is urging all Malaysians to throw their support behind the Control of Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill 2022.

He described the bill as a noble effort by the government to protect and preserve the health of young Malaysians.

"I was pleased when I was told by the government, specifically the prime minister, that a bill regarding the control of tobacco and smoking has been tabled in Parliament and is awaiting further review," he said at the launch of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Complex in Setia Alam here yesterday.

Present was Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah.

The bill, also known as the tobacco generational endgame (GEG) law, contains a clause that bans smoking and prohibits ownership of tobacco products by people born in 2007 and after.

His majesty said young people must be educated to adopt the best health practices by avoiding things that could be detrimental to one's health, and by doing so could reduce the government's expenses on hospital care.

Al-Sultan Abdullah expressed his gratitude to the Health Ministry's staff who had given their all when Covid-19 struck the country.

On the NIH Complex, the king said it was a future benchmark to address and improve health efforts for the sake of the people's health and their wellbeing. **Bernama**

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 2
RUANGAN : NATION

A helping hand: Sultan Abdullah and Tunku Azizah at the opening of the National Institutes of Health in Setia Alam inspecting a robot system used to assist frontliners. Looking on are Khairy (left) and Dr Noor Hisham (right). — KK SHAM/The Star

King: Support smoking control Bill to protect the future

SHAH ALAM: Support must be given to efforts to protect and preserve the health of future generations of Malaysians through the tabling of the Control of Tobacco Products and Smoking Bill, says the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah said he feels that the matter is a noble endeavour and hopes that all Malaysians will give their support so that this Bill can be studied and scrutinised.

"For its execution, we leave it to the government. They will decide how and when to implement the Bill when it is passed," His Majesty said when opening the National Institutes of Health Complex in Setia Alam here yesterday.

On Aug 2, a motion to refer the Bill to a Parliament Special Select Committee was passed by the Dewan Rakyat.

The committee will look into the enforcement clause as well as proposed penalties under the Bill, otherwise known as the tobacco generational end game (GEG).

Sultan Abdullah said the Bill is crucial to ensure the health of future generations.

"We need to educate the younger generation to take good care of their health, which in return could reduce the activities that could be harmful towards public health.

"And most importantly, the Health Ministry can reduce their spending on providing treatment (for tobacco-related diseases)," His Majesty said.

Also present during the event were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, and Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

Watch the video
TheStarTV.com

AKHBAR : THE STAR
MUKA SURAT : 6
RUANGAN : NATION

Reports by JOSEPH KAOS Jr, GERARD GIMINO and JUNAID IBRAHIM

Positivity rate at highest peak since April with relaxation of protocols

PETALING JAYA: With Malaysia now conducting fewer Covid-19 tests following the relaxation of protocols, the country's positivity rate has shot up to 9.9% – the highest since April this year.

The positivity rate refers to the proportion of Covid-19 tests that return positive, and it was used as a guide during the height of the pandemic to see if a country is conducting tests adequately.

The highest positivity rate ever recorded in Malaysia was 15.3% on Aug 31 last year, during the peak of the Delta variant wave.

But with the country no longer conducting mass testing since it began its transition into endemicity, it has mainly come down to self-administered tests.

According to the Health Ministry's CovidNow website, the number of Covid-19 tests conducted on Aug 6 was 26,238 – of which 21,755 were done with rapid test kits (RTK).

During the peak of the Omicron variant wave in February, the number of daily tests conducted was around 200,000 a day.

Since May this year, the number of tests conducted fluctuated between 20,000 and 50,000 daily.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin has said that the under-reporting of results is expected as testing protocols are not as strict as before, since Malaysia entered the transition to endemicity phase.

He, however, reminded the public that reporting a positive test result on the MySejahtera app is still required by law.

Since the country's reopening, the ministry has also shifted its focus to keeping hospitalisation and severe case numbers under control.

It has also changed its reporting of Covid-19 cases from daily figures to a weekly analysis published by Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah.

The latest weekly figures from epidemiological week 31 (from July 31 to Aug 6) saw a slight increase, 0.8%, in new cases and a 22.4% jump in the number of deaths compared with the week before.

The number of admissions to hospitals and quarantine centres was 12 per 100,000 population – the same as the previous week.

The percentage of occupied beds in intensive care units nationwide remained unchanged at 14%.

Looking at the right numbers

Ministry warns of under-reporting as it views severity of Covid-19 cases

Staying vigilant: A Home Isolation notification on the MySejahtera app. By law, people who are infected with Covid-19 must report their results. – YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

PETALING JAYA: Covid-19 reporting has begun to steadily move away from daily infection numbers towards the severity of cases.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said due to the relaxation of Covid-19 testing protocols, the number of actual cases is bound to be more than what is reported.

"Everywhere else in the world, not just Malaysia, they are reporting fewer Covid-19 cases than the actual situation on the ground.

"We have loosened the protocols for Covid-19 tests. Last time, we had to take RT-PCR tests but now most people do self-tests on RTK (rapid test kits).

"And there are many people who take self-tests but do not report the results on MySejahtera," he told reporters at the launch of the National Institute for Health Complex in Setia Alam.

The minister stressed that the more important metric in monitoring Covid-19, now that the country has begun its transition out of a pandemic, is case severity.

"Instead of case numbers, we focus more on the number of hospitalisations and deaths.

"As long as these figures are low, the situation is under control. Case numbers will fluctuate from time to time," said Khairy.

He also reminded the Malaysian public that reporting a positive test result on the MySejahtera app is still required by law.

"We asked that the people report their test results.

"Currently, by law, people who are infected with Covid-19 must report their results so they can be issued a home surveillance order and they must undergo quarantine at home.

"But of course, there are people who test positive and do not do this, even though it is required by law.

"We have reached the phase where we are learning to live with Covid-19. I do self-tests three times a week and I always report the results on MySejahtera.

"If we report our test results, it makes it easier for the Health Ministry to gauge the current situation in the community, even though the more important figures to focus on are hospitalisation and death rates," said Khairy.

As at Aug 8, there are 43,875 active Covid-19 cases in Malaysia.

Of that number, nearly 96% are mild cases involving patients undergoing home quarantine.

There are about 1,800 patients who are hospitalised – of these, 55 are currently in the intensive care unit (ICU).

Khairy said Malaysia is currently facing a small but prolonged Covid-19 infection wave linked to the Omicron BA.5 variant.

"Compared with Singapore, their Covid-19 wave is a big one. Ours is small but prolonged, so our baseline of cases has gone up a bit.

"But as long as the number of hospital and ICU admissions is low, the wave is under control," he explained.

Malaysia began transitioning into endemicity from April 1, which resulted in the country reopening its borders to travellers and removing most Covid-19 restrictions.

Gatherings have since resumed while businesses, schools and workplace attendance have also returned to pre-pandemic levels.

However, health experts say mask wearing, physical distancing and hand hygiene is still required.

Experts: Not the time to take Covid-19 lightly

PETALING JAYA: Despite the government moving the emphasis away from the number of Covid-19 cases, health experts say this does not mean that the virus should be taken lightly, noting that the situation could be under-reported.

They say the actual figures could be much higher than reported, given that many have not tested themselves, along with unreported positive cases.

They also advised the public to continue to adopt precautionary measures such as mask wearing, physical distancing and hand hygiene.

Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia health economy and public health specialist Dr Sharifa Ezat Wan Puteh said the actual number of cases could be up to 30% higher than what is currently reported.

"This lax attitude in the reporting of positive cases is concerning as these individuals have the potential to spread the virus to those who have yet to be vaccinated, such as children.

"Similarly, there is also concern of spreading it to immunocompromised groups including the elderly or even those with high comorbidities," she said.

Dr Sharifa Ezat was asked to comment on yesterday's statement by Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin on phasing out the emphasis on daily infection numbers to be in line with the transition to endemicity.

He added that due to the relaxation of Covid-19 testing protocols, the number of actual cases is also bound to be more than reported.

Dr Sharifa Ezat said among the reasons why people choose to conceal their positive results is the wish to continue with work or their social life.

"This is unethical and selfish because the person is continuing to expose the public to risk and can cause community infections," she said, adding that those who have suspected infections should isolate themselves and carry out the necessary procedures.

Dr Sharifa Ezat also said schools should be prepared for potential instances of students showing symptoms of Covid-19 but added that many have already prepared an isolation room.

"The room should at least be attached to the toilet, with someone trained also monitoring the student during the isolation period.

"At the same time, facilities such as self-test kits should be readily available as a precautionary measure," she said.

Universiti Putra Malaysia's consultant clinical microbiologist Prof Dr Zamberi Sekawi agreed with the government's move of shifting the focus to severe cases which involve hospitalisations and deaths.

"Instead of the number of reported cases, a better indicator to evaluate the burden of the disease on our healthcare system is indeed cases requiring admissions and also fatalities," he said.

He also noted how the positivity rate of conducted Covid-19 tests would be a good indicator to evaluate whether sufficient tests have been conducted.

"According to the World Health Organisation's threshold, countries with more than a 5% positivity rate should actually conduct more Covid-19 tests, to paint a better picture of the overall situation.

"Given that Malaysia has a 9.9% positivity rate as at Aug 6, it could indicate that we should be conducting more tests to get a more accurate figure," he said.

As at Aug 6, Malaysia's positivity rate stands at 9.9% with only 26,238 tests reported to be conducted that same day.

On the current wave of cases, Dr Zamberi, who is also the Malaysian Society of Infectious Diseases and Chemotherapy president, said it is still unclear how things will pan out due to the unpredictable nature of the virus.

"The most important thing is that our healthcare system will be able to cope with it," he said.

Both experts also reminded the public that not reporting positive cases is an offence under Section 22 of the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act, which risks a jail term of up to two years, a fine, or both.

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

ROYAL VISIT ... The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah visiting an exhibition held in conjunction with the opening of the National Institutes of Health Complex in Setia Alam, Shah Alam, yesterday. – BERNAMAPIX

NGO seeks to turn tide on citizenship ruling

Family Frontiers and six mothers to appeal decision that overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers cannot automatically be accorded citizenship

BY **SHIVANI SUPRAMANI**
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PETALING JAYA: Should Malaysian women be treated like second-class citizens and inferior to their male counterparts? Shouldn't women, who bore children, have the same rights as the men who fathered them?

These are some of the questions that will invariably be raised when Family Frontiers and six mothers make their appeal at the Federal Court to overturn a Court of Appeal decision that overseas-born children of Malaysian mothers cannot automatically be Malaysian citizens.

Executive council member of Family Frontiers Chee Yoke Ling pointed out that Malaysia is one of only 25 countries left in the world that does not recognise equal rights for mothers to automatically pass on their citizenship.

"Malaysia joined the United Nations Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women in August 1995 and today, there are 187 countries that are part of the international treaty. Malaysia also joined the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in February 1995.

"Yet, every government since then has not implemented the obligation to ensure that children are guaranteed the nationality of both parents, that is enshrined in those two treaties," she told *theSun*.

She said as bi-national families are becoming increasingly common, Malaysians who want to be home with their children and contribute to the country should be welcomed.

"If that same child was born in Malaysia, he or she would automatically be a citizen. The mere fact of being born overseas, rendering that child a non-citizen, is illogical.

"It is unacceptable that we remain trapped in a situation where women are treated as inferior to men, and throughout the court hearings in Suri Kempe's case, the government's defence of this gross discrimination is that the framers of the Federal Constitution in the 1950s wanted this inequality. This is a perpetuation of discrimination against women," she added.

Although their struggle has gained traction among the public, especially through the media, Chee said there is a lack of appreciation for the impact for generations of this gender discrimination on the children.

"There are many families with siblings who are Malaysian citizens, and ones who are not because they were born abroad. If it had been a Malaysian father, that child would be registered in Malaysian embassies overseas and be issued a certificate confirming the child's Malaysian citizenship in a matter of days."

Former minister Tan Sri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil also expressed her dismay with the Court of Appeal decision.

"Malaysian mothers are telling us of the real struggle they are facing.

"It is important for our leadership to remain responsive to their plight and provide a remedy for the challenges women face by amending the Federal Constitution, and breathing life into the promise of equality and non-discrimination enshrined within the Constitution, and put an end to their suffering.

"There is no reason Malaysian mothers should not be granted the same rights as fathers."

Additionally, Shahrizat said as a result of this inability, Malaysian women are made more vulnerable and have had to endure hardships, including the fear of being separated from their non-citizen children.

"If a provision in our law has a negative effect on a segment of the population, then it must be amended so that women and their children have the same protection that are accorded to men.

"This was the intention behind the 2001 amendment to the Constitution when we included gender as a basis for non-discrimination, and our leaders have the ability and opportunity now to make good on this promise."

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

BA.5 Covid cases low and under control

SHAH ALAM: The wave of the Covid-19 Omicron caused by the sub-variant BA.5 in the country is low and under control, unlike in other countries, said Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

He added that positive Omicron cases did not spike uncontrollably, and increased slowly and stayed at a low level.

"In certain countries, the Omicron BA.5 wave is high. However in Malaysia, cases have been low for a long period."

On positive Covid cases that have not been self-reported on the MySejahtera App, Khairy said the situation does not only occur in Malaysia but happens globally. – Bernama