

AKHBAR : THE STAR

MUKA SURAT : 9

RUANGAN : NATION

## Covid-19: Current situation

(As at 7pm Dec 14, 2020)

## Malaysia

New cases

1,371

Total cases

84,846

Total deaths

419 (+4)

Total recovered

70,597 (+1,204)

	Perlis	Kedah	Penang	Perak	Selangor	Kelantan	Terengganu	Pahang	N.Sembilan	Melaka	Johor	Sabah	Sarawak	FT K. Lumpur	FT Putrajaya	FT Labuan
	0	+5	+31	+62	+532	+2	+9	0	+260	+1	+45	+283	0	+124	+1	+16
Asean+																
Confirmed cases	623,309	450,733	177,287	108,342	86,741	58,325	43,484	4,237	1,397	359	152	41				
Deaths	18,956	8,757	2,562	2,268	4,634	29	587	60	35	0	3	0				
Recovered	510,957	418,723	149,286	86,795	81,794	58,208	32,102	3,940	1,241	309	147	34				
Global Top 10																
Confirmed cases	16,737,267	9,884,716	6,901,990	2,681,256	2,376,852	1,849,403	1,843,712	1,836,728	1,741,439	1,498,160						
Deaths	306,459	143,393	181,419	47,391	57,911	64,170	64,520	16,417	47,624	40,766						
Recovered	9,724,439	9,388,159	5,982,953	2,124,797	176,995	N/A	1,093,161	1,603,780	N/A	1,335,317						

## Experts: Don't let guard down

Quarantine reduced to 10 days but SOP must be followed after

By ASHLEY TANG

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PETALING JAYA: The government's decision to reduce the quarantine period to 10 days follows updated Covid-19 scientific evidence, say health experts.

But they said those released early should still adhere to standard operating procedures (SOP).

Malaysian Public Health Physicians' Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said the 10-day quarantine would allow more flexibility for people to go about their daily lives.

"But those who have a history of close contact or have symptoms better be cautious and take the 14 days (to quarantine)."

"Better still, they should also do a

confirmatory test," he said when contacted yesterday.

On Sunday, Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said arrivals from abroad and those who had close contact with a person infected with Covid-19 would now only need to be quarantined for 10 days.

He said the decision was considered after reviewing scientific evidence on the virus and by looking at the practices of other countries.

In Britain, Germany and Belgium, self-isolation periods for those arriving from abroad and those who had contact with a Covid-19-positive patient have been reduced from 14 days to 10. In France, home quarantine is only seven days.

Universiti Malaya professor of epidemiology and public health

Prof Dr Sanjay Rampal said reducing the period makes quarantine a more sustainable intervention in the longer term.

"Shortening the quarantine is an attempt to balance the burden of quarantine against a small probability of failing to detect a case."

"But those who are released early should still adhere to the SOP and seek immediate medical attention if they feel unwell or become sick within the 14-day period," he said, adding that the government's decision appeared to have been made after considering the increased studies on Covid-19.

Universiti Putra Malaysia medical epidemiologist Assoc Prof Dr Malina Osman concurred, noting that the government's decision was in line with "compiled scientific

evidence worldwide on transmissibility of Covid-19 infection".

"The infectiousness of the infected individual has been documented in the first five days to one week after exposure," she said.

Despite the increased number of cases over the past month, she pointed out they were largely attributed to "aggressive screenings, contact tracing and poor compliance", not quarantine duration length.

With year-end holidays looming, Dr Malina advised the public to consider delaying their holiday plans.

"Lifting the travel ban is mainly for economic reasons, not for moving around without limit. Travel should be done within a shorter duration. It shouldn't involve crowded areas and there must be strict compliance with SOP," she said.

## Health DG reminds M'sians to observe SOP

PUTRAJAYA: With the year-end festivities nearing, the Health Ministry again reminds Malaysians to adhere to the standard operating procedure (SOP) at all times.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said this was especially so for those who lived in red zones and planned to travel across borders.

He urged those with symptoms not to make such travel plans.

"Our advice is for those who intend to travel across state or district borders to ensure they are not symptomatic."

"You must wear face masks at all times and frequently wash your hands with soap and water."

"Always observe physical distancing. Avoid crowded or congested areas. Also avoid having conversations at a close range." Dr Noor Hisham said at the ministry's Covid-19 press briefing yesterday.

On Dec 7, the government announced relaxations to the conditional movement control order (MCO), including lifting the ban on interstate and inter-district travel.

Meanwhile, Covid-19 cases in the country stayed at four figures for the fifth day straight, with 1,371 new infections recorded yesterday.

Dr Noor Hisham said Selangor saw the highest increase of the day of all states with 532 cases.

This was followed by Sabah with 283 cases, Negri Sembilan 260 and Kuala Lumpur 124.

More clusters linked to workers were detected, with Dr Noor Hisham announcing two new ones in Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

He said one of the new clusters, the Solar Ria cluster, was first detected in Sepang before spreading to Kuala Selangor, Gombak, Petaling and Hulu Langat districts.

## Danger zone

A banner that reads 'You are in a Covid-19 red zone' is seen hanging from a lamp post by the road side. It is one of the many banners along Jalan Langat, Kuala Langat, Selangor.

— KK SHAM/The Star



## Nepali worker Top Glove's first Covid-19 death, says company

KLANG: A 29-year-old Nepali is believed to be the first casualty among medical latex glove maker Top Glove Corporation Bhd's workers who tested positive for Covid-19.

A statement issued by the firm said Yamnaryanan Chaudhary Tharu, who had worked at the company's manufacturing facility in Meru for over two years, died at the Sungai Buloh Hospital on Dec 12.

The statement added that Tharu

had died from pneumonia with lung fibrosis.

"Top Glove offers our heartfelt condolences to the deceased's family and loved ones and is working with authorities for Tharu's burial arrangements," the firm added.

It said compassionate payment would be made to the victim's next-of-kin.

Top Glove became the centre of attention after several thousands of

its workers tested positive for Covid-19 over the last month, resulting in the area being placed under the enhanced movement control order.

People living in the vicinity also tested positive for Covid-19 during screening conducted recently by the Selangor state government.

Meanwhile, 35 employees of another latex glove maker — Hartalega Holdings Bhd — were found to be Covid-19 positive during

a routine screening exercise.

Hartalega said in a statement that the 35 were among 8,772 people from its Next Generation Integrated Glove Manufacturing Complex (NGC) in Sepang, its Bestari Jaya operations and its offices in Petaling Jaya and Bandar Sri Damansara, who underwent the screening.

Those who tested positive comprised 20 employees from the Bestari Jaya operations and 15

employees at the NGC.

Hartalega chief executive officer Kuan Mun Leong said the number of positive cases in his company was significantly lower than other similar factories.

"While it is unfortunate that we have positive cases, we are encouraged that the good living conditions and high standards of our workers' accommodation allowed us to contain the number of cases," he added.