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 RUANGAN : STORY OF THE DAY/NEWS

UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

'UNITY OF PUBLIC, PRIVATE HOSPITALS VITAL'

'Private hospitals must be prepared to manage Covid-19 patients'

KUALA LUMPUR

A HOLISTIC pandemic response involving public and private healthcare providers is essential to effectively mobilise the capacity and resources needed to beat Covid-19.

Malaysian Society of Anaesthesiologists (MSA) president Professor Dr Marzida Mansor, Academy of Medicine of Malaysia's (AMM) College of Anaesthesiologists Council president Datuk Dr Jahizah Hassan, and Malaysian Society of Intensive Care (MSIC) president Professor Datuk Dr Mohd Basri Mat Nor said this in a joint statement yesterday.

They said this in response to a call by the Health Ministry to pri-

vate hospitals and their doctors to help with the management of Covid-19 patients.

"MSA representing 1,200 members, the College of Anaesthesiologists, AMM representing 900 academicians in anaesthesiology and critical care, and MSIC representing 200 members are humbled by the call from the Health Ministry for us to stand united as a team in the quest to care for Covid-19 patients.

"We understand that meetings are being held between stakeholders from the Health Ministry and the Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM) to outline strategies for the involvement of the private sector in handling Covid-19 patients in various stages of their illness.

"We are of the opinion that there needs to be a balanced view on the whole approach to this exercise.

"We would like to assure the public that as practitioners in anaesthesiology, critical care and intensive care, we are expected at all times to manage critically ill patients, whether

they are in public or private hospitals.

"Collectively, as a fraternity, it is our view that we will stand in close collaboration with the ministry and APHM to the best of our intent and abilities, taking into account the resources that are at our disposal at the hospitals that we are attached to."

The group said while the focus was on managing Covid-19 patients, the management of critically ill non-Covid-19 cases and semi-urgent non-Covid-19 cases was also affected and should not be sidelined.

Many factors contributed to this, such as the diminishing Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, ward beds and availability of resources to manage them, they wrote.

They said it was, therefore, hoped that care of some of these patients could be handled at private hospitals so that the public hospitals could concentrate on managing Covid-19 patients.

They said it was imperative for private hospitals to prepare to manage Covid-19 patients



Medical officers handling Covid-19 swab samples in Shah Alam yesterday. PIC BY AZIAH AZMEE

with urgency.

"Private practitioners are dealing with more patients with severe acute respiratory infections in the emergency department and who require intubation.

"These patients are subsequently found to be Covid-19 positive."

They said for smaller private hospitals, cross-referrals between private hospitals for further management should be considered as part of the strategies.

"The allowance is on the individual hospitals and physicians to establish their own plans, policies and standard operating procedures (SOP) as part of their armamentarium."

More private hospitals have established a Covid-19 task force team in anticipation of the upward trajectory of cases and the likelihood of private doctors' and the establishments' involvement, they said.

"We applaud these initiatives and encourage hospitals to be in touch with our Societies and College for guidance if required. Support is available in the form of management protocols of the Covid-19 patient, webinars or SOP.

"The most important aspect to this exercise is the holistic approach as one team. We will always be willing to lend our expertise in resource coordination, close monitoring practices, infection control procedures and the management of difficult intensive care patients.

"These are unprecedented times. There are palpable concerns as we enter uncharted terrain.

"We must rise to the calling and do what is needed with the expertise that we possess. We take pride as we stand guard to protect the wellbeing of our fellow citizens."

MCO FLOURTERS

580 people compounded for SOP breaches

KUALA LUMPUR: Police issued compounds to 580 people for flouting the standard operating procedures enforced under the Movement Control Order on Saturday.

Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said 27 others were remanded and one granted bail following 51,190 checks nationwide.

Failure to wear face masks in public areas topped the list of offences with 200 people nabbed, followed by failing to record visitor details (147 offences).

"Other offences include not observing physical distancing (46), taking part in activities at entertainment centres (11), attempting to travel between states or districts without approval (66), operating premises beyond the permitted operation hours (42) and

others (96)," he said yesterday.

Meanwhile, 17 illegal immigrants and two *tekong* were detained, with seven land vehicles seized under Op Benteng.

A total of 415 roadblocks were mounted nationwide by the police, Malaysian Border Security Agency and the armed forces on Saturday.

Ismail Sabri also said 101 sanitisation operations were conducted nationwide.

On returnees, he said 105,849 individuals returned to the country between July 24 and Jan 16.

"Of the total, 8,541 returnees are undergoing the mandatory quarantine, while 540 people were sent to hospitals.

"A total of 96,768 individuals have been allowed to return home. They arrived from 37 countries."



A policeman and soldier checking a vehicle at a roadblock in Melaka on Saturday. Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (inset) said 415 roadblocks were mounted nationwide on Saturday. PIC BY IQMAL HAQIM ROSMAN