

AKHBAR : THE SUN

MUKA SURAT : 4

RUANGAN : NEWS WITHOUT BORDERS

Queen pays tribute to frontliners

KUALA LUMPUR: Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Hajah Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah has extended her deepest appreciation to frontliners for their contributions and sacrifices in the battle against Covid-19.

Tunku Azizah said the Covid-19 pandemic has put significant pressure on everyone's life but the frontliners continued to devote their time and energy to contain the scourge.

"On this memorable occasion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude and thanks for the contributions and sacrifices made by all frontliners, who continue to carry out their responsibilities regardless of their hardships and health risks.

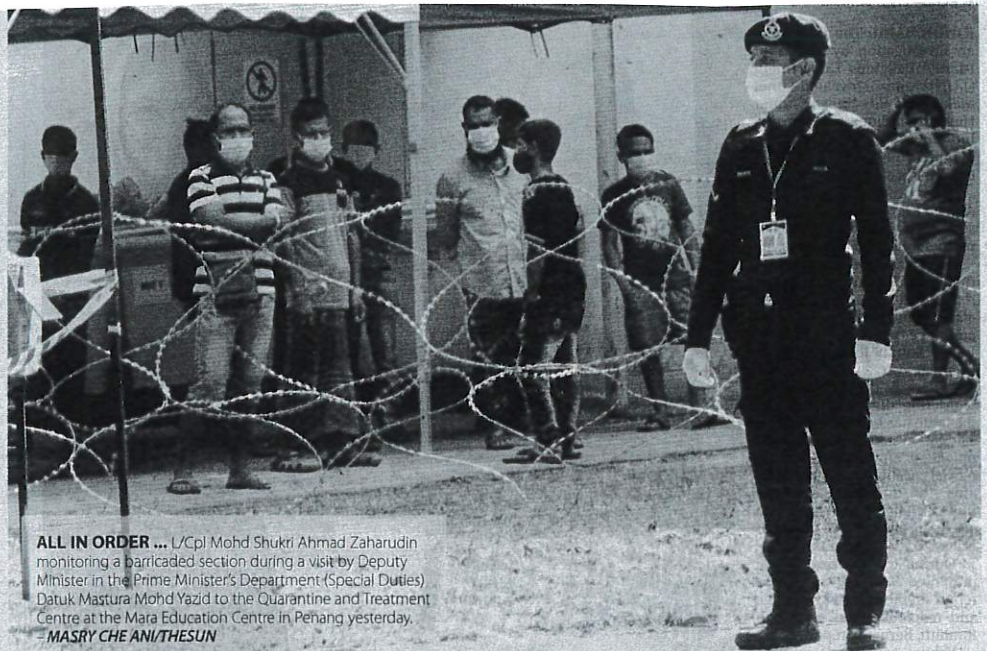
"Thank you for being dedicated, courageous and selfless to overcome the challenges we are currently facing. I would like to take this opportunity to thank members of the public who have volunteered to assist our frontliners."

The Queen was speaking in conjunction with the Ibn Khaldun Merit Award for Global Social Transformation to frontliners at the International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilisation, International Islamic University of Malaysia (IIUM).

Tunku Azizah, who is also Constitutional Head of IIUM, said she was very proud that Malaysia was one of the first countries to come up with various quick responses to protect its citizens from the virus. Apart from efforts by the government, many contributions were made by Malaysians to overcome Covid-19.

"I am deeply honoured to present this award to frontliners as a symbol of appreciation, gratitude and recognition for the services and efforts you have made during the rapid outbreak that our country and the world are grappling with."

Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah received the award on behalf of frontliners. - Bernama



ALL IN ORDER ... L/Cpl Mohd Shukri Ahmad Zaharudin monitoring a barricaded section during a visit by Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Special Duties) Datuk Mastura Mohd Yazid to the Quarantine and Treatment Centre at the Mara Education Centre in Penang yesterday. - MASRY CHE ANI/THE SUN

Be fair when issuing fines, authorities urged

► Transparency essential to reassure public that everyone is treated equally, says rights activist

BY ALISHA NUR MOHD NOOR
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: The government has been urged to ensure clarity, transparency and consistency when penalising people for flouting the Covid-19 standard operating procedures (SOP).

Women's rights activist Ivy Josiah said there are those who feel they did not do anything wrong, so there must be a way to appeal against being issued a compound.

"The appeal process must also be simple, not overly bureaucratic and daunting," she told *theSun*.

On Wednesday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan announced a set of guidelines that determine the quantum of fines for flouting the SOP.

Among others, fines will be reduced by up to 50% if the compound is settled early.

Josiah said there is also a perception that VIPs are not subjected to any fines even if they

violate the SOP. "Transparency is essential to reassure the public that everyone is treated equally."

She pointed out that every party, from the public to enforcement agencies, wants the same thing and that is to ensure health and safety for all.

"It is therefore essential there is cooperation rather than mistrust," she added.

Former deputy health minister Dr Lee Boon Chye said the frequent changes in the SOP have left people confused.

"The SOP should be clear and consistent for it to work. (If there are too many variables) it can be subject to arbitrary interpretations," he told *theSun*.

"Before the ordinance was enacted and enforced, shouldn't there be a detailed study or deliberations?" he asked.

Lee said the need for frequent amendments reflects the "incompetence" of the minister who initially signed it.

Under the guidelines, as announced by Takiyuddin, the compound fine is reduced by 50% if settled within seven days of it being issued. Those who settle it between the eighth and 14th day are entitled to a 25% discount.

Due consideration will also be given to those with disabilities, the B40 group, students and those with chronic illnesses.

Appeals can be made to the district health officer, the state health director, deputy director of public health services and an epidemiology officer.

Private hospitals want more involvement

KUALA LUMPUR: The Association of Private Hospitals Malaysia (APHM) wants to see greater participation of private healthcare, including general practitioners, in the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme.

Its president, Datuk Dr Kuljit Singh, said only a few private hospitals have been enlisted for the vaccination drive.

"In some states such as Malacca, even doctors and staff of private hospitals have not been vaccinated. Their immunisation has been slated only for the end of the month or under phase two of the programme."

Kuljit said private hospitals are big economic contributors to the country and their

respective states in terms of medical tourism.

"We hope the vaccination programme can be enhanced in some of these states including the east coast of Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

Earlier this month, Coordinating Minister for the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Khairy Jamaluddin announced the number of private hospitals already being used as vaccination centres for private healthcare workers in phase one of the drive.

Kuljit said APHM is looking forward to strengthening its partnership with the government to ensure the vaccination exercise can be completed before the end of the year. - Bernama

