

New Straits Times 13/4/2020, M/S 5

## RM1,000 fine for MCO violators to stay, says Ismail Sabri

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The RM1,000 fine imposed on violators of the Movement Control Order (MCO) will remain despite criticism that the penalty was too low.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said if the penalty for the offence under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Regulation 2020 needed to be raised, it should first be brought to Parliament.

"RM1,000 is indeed too low. Many people have questioned why it is so low compared with other countries.

"This was also discussed in the meeting (Special Ministerial Committee meeting on the MCO), but the law is clear that the compound is RM1,000.

"If we want to amend it, it needs to be raised in Parliament. For now, it stays at RM1,000," said Ismail Sabri.

The RM1,000 fine is imposed on those who flout the MCO by failing to show reasonable causes for being in a disease infected area, which is an offence under Regulation 3(1) of the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases (Measures within the In-



A police officer checking a driver's travel document at a roadblock near Jalan Duta Toll Plaza in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. BERNAMA PIX

fectected Local Areas) Regulations 2020.

Ismail Sabri added that the police, however, could use their discretion to either issue a com-

pound against an offender or haul them to court, where a jail sentence would then be determined.

He said he left it to police to use

their judgment in handling such cases, adding that the Penal Code could be used against offenders.

"I believe we will lean more towards dragging violators to court

but as I have said, offenders can also be charged under the Penal Code, which carries heavier penalties.

"It can be used against them for obstructing civil servants from carrying out their duties as well as escaping roadblocks to the extent of hurting police officers."

He said police yesterday arrested 1,220 people for defying the MCO.

A total of 854 people were issued with compounds, 345 were remanded and 21 were granted bail. The total number of arrests of MCO violators is 8,125.

To date, 2,156 compounds have been issued.

Ismail Sabri said throughout the MCO, food aid had been distributed to 225,871 households, benefiting close to a million family members.

"The process of aid distribution is ongoing. I believe those who have yet to receive it will get it soon.

"In Sungai Lui, Hulu Langat, in Selangor, where the Enhance Movement Control Order was enforced, 750 families have been given food aid."