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# NEW STRAITS TIMES

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PIC BY AIZUDDIN SAAD

## RETURN TO HEALTH

MALAYSIA has overcome the worst of the Omicron surge with declining hospital, ICU and quarantine centre admissions nationwide. None are filled beyond 50pc capacity, and only 61 Covid-19 patients remain on ventilators.

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NEWS / *Story of the day*

Health personnel at Kuala Lumpur Hospital looking after Covid-19 patients last month. Recoveries reported to the ministry have outnumbered the number of total new infections.

FILE PIC

FEWER THAN 6,000 CASES YESTERDAY

(23 April 2022) - NST - P2

# WORST OF OMICRON OVER AS CASES DIP

Hospital, ICU and quarantine centre bed usage show an overall decline, says Dr Noor Hisham

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**M**ALAYSIA appears to have overcome the worst of the Covid-19 Omicron surge, with the number of hospital, Intensive Care Unit (ICU) and quarantine centre admissions showing an overall decline nationwide.

Daily infections also dipped below 6,000 cases yesterday, the first time it has happened since early February.

Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said up to Thursday, the bed usage rates for Covid-19 critical or ICU cases, non-ICU cases and low-risk quarantine centres (PKRC) were under 50 per cent nationwide.

He said Covid-19 patients requiring ventilator support had also dropped to 61, making up only eight per cent of the total cases.

Covid-19 infections, powered by the more virulent Omicron strain, reached its peak last month with more than 31,490 daily infections reported on March 8.

However, this has since plunged to 5,899 new infections yesterday.

Selangor alone accounted for 3,579 cases.

Dr Noor Hisham said of the cases, only 23 were in categories 3, 4 and 5.

“Out of the 23 categories 3, 4 and 5 cases, 13 involved those who have completed two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine, seven were either unvaccinated or had only received one dose of the vaccine and three patients had already received their booster dose.

“In addition, 13 of the cases involved individuals aged 60 and above with comorbidities,” he said.

He said recoveries reported to the ministry — at 8,434 — had outnumbered total new infections.

“Currently, 92 cases are being ward in ICU, of which 61 are placed on ventilators.”

Dr Noor Hisham said one new cluster — an education cluster — was identified in Perak on Thursday and 208 Covid-19 cases were admitted to hospitals on the same day.

A total of 26 new education clusters were reported from April 16 to April 21. Of the total, 10 clusters were reported on April 16, six on April 17, five on April 19, four on April 20 and one on April 21.

He said up to Thursday, 16 per cent of normal hospital beds were being used for Covid-19 patients,

while 12 per cent of ICU beds and three per cent of PKRC beds were occupied.

He said the national infectivity rate stood at 0.81 on April 21.

Based on data from the Covid-Now portal, five people died of Covid-19 on Thursday, including four brought-in-dead cases.

Meanwhile, a total of 572,744 children aged 5 to 11 have received two doses of a Covid-19 vaccine and 1,44,377 or 40.7 per cent from the same group have received one dose.

Of concern was the vaccination rates among children in

Terengganu and Kelantan, which were the lowest nationwide.

Both states had vaccination rates of only 8.5 per cent and 7.3 per cent, respectively.

Sarawak was in the lead with 43 per cent of its children vaccinated, followed by Labuan, which boasted a rate of 35.2 per cent, followed by the Klang Valley (32.7 per cent).

In total, 68 per cent of the adult population or 15,998,406 people had received their booster dose up to Thursday.

Page 1 pic: People taking the opportunity to break fast at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur, recently following the drop in Covid-19 cases nationwide.



Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah