

WORRYING STATISTICS

EXPERT: AVOID A 'MINI SABAH' IN KLANG

Doctors' association head describes district's Covid-19 situation as out of control

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THE Klang district, near here, could become a "mini Sabah" if stricter measures are not put in place to contain Covid-19 community transmissions.

Malaysian Public Health Physicians Association president Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar said statistics on the number of Covid-19 cases in Klang, especially those linked to existing clusters and community infections, were "worrying".

"The situation is out of control. Klang will fast become a 'mini Sabah' in days to come.

"There are large numbers of foreign workers from the old and new clusters, as well as evidence of more community infections in the district.

"Factories (operators) are not in good control of their workers' (safety and health). Besides, a significant number of health personnel in major (Selangor) hospitals have been infected," he told the *New Sunday Times*.

He said the outbreak at Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital in Klang and other hospitals in the Klang Valley, involving medical frontliners and patients, could overstretch the government's health resources.

These resources, he said, included the number of medical staff, vehicles such as ambulances, and the locations to carry out contact tracing, screening and quarantine.

Selangor registered 692 new Covid-19 cases on Friday, with Klang logging the highest number at 360, followed by Petaling (146), Hulu Langat (67), Kuala Selangor (44), Sepang (28), Gombak (26), Hulu Selangor (13), Sabak

Bernam (four) and Kuala Langat (two).

Dr Zainal said workplace-related clusters, including areas where foreign workers resided in the Klang Valley, as well as in other states such as Negri Sembilan, should be given special attention to prevent the situation from worsening.

He called on the authorities to implement the Targeted Enhanced Movement Control Order close to foreign workers' settlements and in areas with a large number of community infections.

"There are many cases related to foreign workers and workplaces, such as factories. We do not want (Negri Sembilan) to end up like Klang."

Glove makers Top Glove Corporation Bhd and Kossan Rubber Industries Bhd were among the businesses hit by Covid-19 infections in Klang involving migrant workers.

Dr Zainal, however, advised the public not to panic, but to continue instead adhering to the standard operating procedures.

He called on the authorities to monitor and mobilise private general practitioners to the affected areas to prevent a manpower shortage.

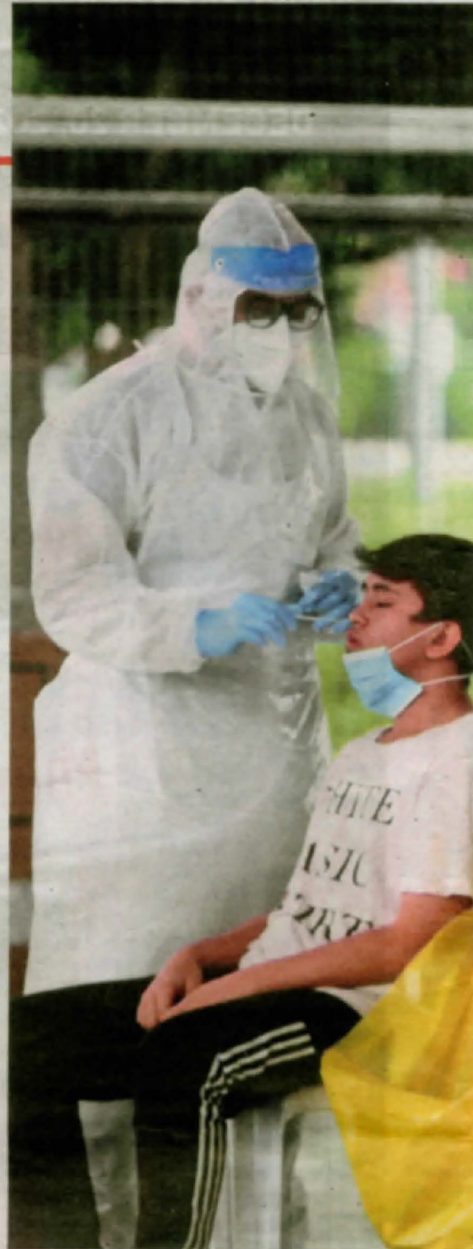
"Factories need to be rechecked, and premises at risk should be closed. The Human Resources Ministry must play a larger role in monitoring the situation.

"The authorities must ensure that foreign workers have proper dormitories so that they have a safe and hygienic living environment.

"The Health Ministry must work with non-governmental organisations and general practitioners to look for symptomatic cases as part of efforts to test, isolate and treat patients.

"(It should) mobilise the whole community to do a risk assessment and undertake preventive actions."

Hospitals in the Klang Valley



Frontliners taking swab samples from people at the Meru Multipurpose Hall in Klang yesterday. PIC BY MUHD ASYRAF SAWAL

that reported the highest number of Covid-19 infections were Tengku Ampuan Rahimah Hospital with 54 cases, Serdang Hospital (29), Sungai Buloh Hospital (15), Kuala Lumpur Hospital (10), Ampang Hospital (five) and Selayang Hospital (four).

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah had, on Friday, said the spike in cases among health workers in the Klang Valley was related to an uptick in community infections.

He said Sabah experienced a spike in cases among health workers when the state saw an increase in the spread of Covid-19 in the community.

He said the cases at all the affected hospitals were under control and that health services were ongoing.

Up to Dec 18, the total number of Covid-19 cases among health frontliners identified during the third wave of the pandemic stood at 1,359.

At 690, nurses had the highest number of health frontliners infected by the virus, followed by medical officers (211), healthcare assistants (146) and assistant medical officers (144).



Datuk Dr Zainal Ariffin Omar



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60pc of new cases from Selangor, KL

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia reported 1,153 new Covid-19 cases yesterday with Selangor and Kuala Lumpur accounting for nearly 60 per cent of the new infections.

Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said this raised Malaysia's cumulative confirmed infections to 91,969, including 15,294 active cases.

Selangor, he said, continued to log the highest number of new cases at 401 or 34.8 per cent of the total, followed by Kuala Lumpur (281) and Sabah (199).

Dr Noor Hisham said the ministry had detected five new Covid-19 clusters.

They are the Jalan Zuhrah construction site cluster in Petaling, Selangor; Keris Residence cluster in Kota Kinabalu and Tawau, Sabah; Jalan Timah cluster in Johor Baru and Kulai, Johor; Brumas cluster in Kalabakan, Sabah; and Long Panji cluster in Kota Baru and Machang, Kelantan.

"Of the new cases in Selangor, 130 are from existing clusters, 26 from the new Jalan Zuhrah construction site cluster, 119 from close contact screenings and the remaining 126 cases from other screenings.

"In Kuala Lumpur, 207 of the 281 cases are linked to existing clusters, 35 from close contact screenings, and 37 from other screenings, while two are import-

ed cases.

"In Sabah, of the 199 cases, 33 are from existing clusters, 44 from new clusters (Keris Residence and Brumas clusters), 73 from close contact screenings and one from another screening."

Dr Noor Hisham said other states that recorded new cases were Perak with 82 cases, Johor (75), Penang (30), Labuan (19), Negri Sembilan (18), Pahang (16), Kedah (13), Kelantan (10), Putrajaya (four), Melaka (three) and Sarawak (two).

Of the new cases reported yesterday, he said only two were imported. The rest were local transmissions.

"A total of 176 cases reported on Saturday were related to clusters in prisons and Immigration detention depots involving the Jalan Harapan Prison cluster (96 cases) and Tembok cluster (80)."

He said 998 patients had recovered and were discharged yesterday, bringing the cumulative recoveries to 76,242.

He said only one death — a 76-year-old woman (Case 75,991) — was recorded yesterday in

Penang, bringing the total number of fatalities to 433.

"A total of 112 patients are being treated in the Intensive Care Unit, with 56 requiring ventilator support."

Meanwhile, he said 440 clusters had been reported up to yesterday.

"A total of 241 clusters have ended, including the three clusters that ended today (yesterday), namely the Softwood LD cluster in Sabah, Besi Demak cluster in Sarawak and Rajawali cluster in Penang."

He said the clusters with the highest number of cases were the Jalan Stadium construction site cluster (167 cases), Jaan Harapan Prison

A total of 112 patients are being treated in the Intensive Care Unit, with 56 requiring ventilator support.

TAN SRI DR NOOR HISHAM ABDULLAH
Health director-general

cluster (96) and Tembok cluster (80).

Earlier, Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the Recovery Movement Control Order police compliance task force arrested 249 people on Friday for flouting rules.

On Op Benteng, he said 46 illegal migrants and two skippers were arrested. Eight land vehicles were seized.