



MAJLIS PERBANDARAN AMPANG JAYA
BAHAGIAN PERHUBUNGAN AWAM DAN SEKRETARIAT
MENARA MPAJ, JALAN PANDAN UTAMA,
PANDAN INDAH, SELANGOR,
55100 KUALA LUMPUR

KERATAN AKHBAR
11 MEI 2020 (ISNIN)

AKHBAR

MUKA SURAT

News Straits Times

- | | |
|--|---|
| - Reopen others sectors in phase | 8 |
| - Medical association calls for guide lines on screening workers | 8 |



MAJLIS PERBANDARAN AMPANG JAYA
BAHAGIAN PERHUBUNGAN AWAM DAN SEKRETARIAT
MENARA MPAJ, JALAN PANDAN UTAMA,
PANDAN INDAH, SELANGOR,
55100 KUALA LUMPUR

KERATAN AKHBAR 11 MEI 2020 (ISNIN)	
Akhbar	News Straits Times
Tajuk Berita	Reopen others sectors in phase
Muka Surat	8

REBOOTING THE NATION

'REOPEN OTHER SECTORS IN PHASES'

Malaysian Health Coalition says govt will face pressure to open other sectors quickly

DAWN CHAN
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

THE Malaysian Health Coalition (MHC) has urged the government to cautiously and gradually resume the activities of sectors shut due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

MHC, which represents 45 organisations and 19 people, said it was vital that the government stipulated guidelines while taking into account the recommendations of various parties, including public health experts.

MHC said this as people were slowly resuming their livelihood since the Movement Control Order was enforced on March 18.

"As the economic sector has begun to reopen, there will be pressure for the religious, social and educational sectors to quickly follow suit.

"However, we urge the government to reopen the other sectors in phases.

"Any planned reopening of other sectors must be preceded by the introduction of strict guidelines and standard operating procedure (SOP) developed alongside medical and public health experts as well as stakeholders, including state and local governments, religious authorities and the private sector."

It said health and public policies must be consistent and communicated to the public to ensure that people did their part to fight Covid-19.

It reiterated its stance for the government to embark on expanding Covid-19 tests to include asymptomatic carriers, as well as increasing contact tracing and isolation capacity.

As the economy restarts, MHC said the government must provide a clear and non-contradictory position on testing, especially for foreign workers, that must be shared across all health, economic, security and human resources agencies.

In this aspect, the private sector must be consulted and allowed reasonable time to prepare, it said.

MHC said people must prepare to adopt new ways of celebrating festivities, such as Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Hari Gawai and Pesta Kaamatan.

They should practise social distancing and refrain from returning to their hometowns for the celebrations.

"We recognise that this may be a difficult reality to accept as it is meant to be a time of celebration and bringing communities closer together, but it is vital that we stay vigilant until Covid-19 is eradicated.

"We urge the government to develop and implement clear communications strategies that educate Malaysians about the importance of the new normal, while developing concrete guidelines for Malaysians.

"Covid-19 will not be eradicated until a vaccine is found and distributed throughout the population.

"It is imperative that the government develop a clear and consistent ultra-long-term strategy, and communicate this to the public."

Stalls selling Ramadan fare while enforcing social distancing among customers in Desa Pandan, Kuala Lumpur, yesterday. PIC BY MUSTAFFA KAMAL



MAJLIS PERBANDARAN AMPANG JAYA
BAHAGIAN PERHUBUNGAN AWAM DAN SEKRETARIAT
MENARA MPAJ, JALAN PANDAN UTAMA,
PANDAN INDAH, SELANGOR,
55100 KUALA LUMPUR

KERATAN AKHBAR 11 MEI 2020 (ISNIN)	
Akhbar	News Straits Times
Tajuk Berita	Medical association calls for guide lines on screening workers
Muka Surat	8

CONFLICTING STATEMENTS

Medical association calls for guidelines on screening workers

11/5/2020 msd

KUALA LUMPUR: Employers, employees and general practitioners (GPs) are seeing red over the alleged lack of clear-cut guidelines on the testing of the workforce for businesses resuming operations under the Conditional Movement Control Order (CMCO).

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) said since the government's announcement on using antibody Rapid Test Kits (RTK) for screening employees, employers had been calling clinics to arrange screenings for their staff.

MMA president Dr. N. Ganabaskaran said GPs, however, could not conduct the screening without guidelines.

"Guidelines for GPs are a safety requirement to conduct the tests. Otherwise, even GPs and their staff can be at risk of infection," he said.

On Saturday, the Social Security Organisation (Socso) announced that it was discontinuing the use of rapid test kits (RTK) for workers' mandatory Covid-19 screening.

Dr Ganabaskaran said MMA was informed by the Health Ministry three weeks ago that Socso would launch the RTK antibody tests for workers with the participation of GPs.

He said that up to four days ago during a meeting with Socso's top management, it was told that the screening of workers would be initiated via GP clinics on their HSP panel.

"Now we've been informed that under the Socso screening programme, only the Reverse Transcriptase-Polymerase chain Reaction (RT-PCR) method of screening will be used."

He said RT-PCR test results received after three days would not have any clinical value and results must be received between 48 to 72 hours after testing or the results may not reflect the health status of the person tested.

The testing capacity nationwide in the private sector stands at around 9,000 per day, and laboratories testing such samples were also testing non-Covid-19 cases.

Dr Ganabaskaran said while it had been established by the ministry that the RT-PCR remains the gold standard for Covid-19 detection, the ministry must also be clear on the purpose of the antibody RTK.

He asked what the RTK would be used for now.

"MMA has advised GPs not to perform the antibody RTK without guidelines on its usage, infection prevention and control protocols, interpretation guidelines and quarantine criteria that have yet to be received from the ministry."

"The local validation report of the antibody RTK that has been allowed for commercialisation should also be published by the ministry."

"The public must be aware as their safety should never be compromised."

He said adding further to the confusion was the announcement by the International Trade and Industry Ministry (Miti) two days ago that companies may resume operations from May 4 without an approval letter from Miti and that Covid-19 screening of workers is not mandatory.

This ran contrary to its earlier announcement for a requirement to screen all workers.

"Stakeholders are confused now as to why the screenings were needed at first and no longer needed now, and are feeling unsafe knowing that the threat of Covid-19 is very much around."

He added that the government must also be clear on the screening of foreign workers.

"MMA supports the government's targeted approach in screening foreign workers."

"However, which sectors will be targeted and who will be screening them must be made clear."

"We wish to appeal to the government for more clarity and guidelines for the implementation of the SOPs, as many are in the dark over the next steps to be taken."

Dr Ganabaskaran said: "Proper coordination between ministries is also needed."