

New SOPs for markets

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By: Anthea Peter

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KOTA KINABALU: The State Government issued new Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the operation of markets under Phase Three of the National Recovery Plan (NRP).

Sabah's Covid-19 Spokesperson Datuk Seri Masidi Manjun said this applies to daily markets, farmer markets (tamu and pasar tanj), wholesale markets, night markets and weekly markets.

Under the SOPs, the operating hours would be determined by the Local Authorities (PBT) and all staff and operators must be fully vaccinated.

"Stalls must be spaced 1.5 meters to two meters apart and the number of visitors must be limited based on the permitted capacity," said Masidi in a statement, Thursday.

He added that operators would be required to provide sufficient face masks for their staff and ensure that they wear it at all times.

"Staff that have a body temperature of more than 37.5 degrees Celsius and display symptoms such as sore throat, cough, flu and breathing difficulties are not allowed to work.

"It is also compulsory for all premise operators to download the MySejahtera application for contact tracing, while each stall operator must prepare a QR code at their respective stall," he said.

The market premise must be sanitised daily after operations and a designated entry-and-exit prepared to prevent congestion.

Operators should also prepare hand sanitisers or a handwashing facility with soap and water, and make it compulsory for staff to wash their hands after carrying out a task.

Other mandatory SOPs apply to operators, staff and visitors, such as the use of face masks, physical distancing, body temperature checks and logging details on MySejahtera.

Sabah's cases spiked to 651 on Thursday from 426 on Wednesday, while 16 deaths were recorded --- six in Tawau, two in Lahad Datu and one each in Semporna, Ranau, Kota Marudu, Kota Kinabalu, Keningau, Beluran, Tuaran and Tenom.

Masidi said two new clusters were identified in Beaufort, namely the Kg Bawan Cluster and Kg Batu 66 Cluster.

The Kg Bawan cluster was sparked at a government clinic and stemmed from a 31-year-old male health practitioner who lives at the government quarters with his colleague when on call.

Masidi said the source of infection is believed to be from an eating activity at the index patient's family's house in Kg Bawan a week before he tested positive on Oct 7 at the Membakut Health Clinic.

"The majority of positive cases involve family members and colleagues. Close contact screenings found 24 family members and 10 colleagues positive. From Oct 7 to 24, 34 were found positive out of 51 contacts screened," he said.

The Kg Batu 66 Cluster involved community transmission stemming from a local 36-year-old woman who was tested positive at the Beaufort Hospital on Oct 8.

"The source of infection is believed to have sparked from a 40th-day feast of her father's death on Oct 4 in Kg Batu 66, which was attended by family members and neighbours.

"Besides that, the funeral ceremony on Oct 11 is also believed to have contributed to the rise of infections within the community," said Masidi, adding that a majority of cases involve family and guests around Mukim Montenor.

He said from Oct 8 to 21, some 29 individuals were found positive out of 36 contacts screened.

On Sabah's caseload, Masidi said Kota Belud topped the list 60 cases, followed by Beaufort (52), Kota Kinabalu (47), Kudat (45), Tenom (43), Keningau (40), Kota Marudu (38) and Ranau (33).

"The main contributing factor to the rise in cases on Thursday is the number of districts recording a significant increase in cases, such as Beaufort (+38), Kudat (+35), Lahad Datu (+22), Tawau (+20), Papar (+16), Kota Belud (+15), Keningau (+13), Beluran (+13) and Sipitang (+10)," he said.

Overall, 22 districts have recorded an increase while five districts recorded a decrease, he added.

"However, there are no districts that have recorded cases above three digits and only two districts recorded cases above the 50 mark," he said.

Of the caseload, he said 35.02 per cent were symptomatic cases, while 55.45 per cent were close contacts.

Masidi added 61.44 per cent of cases occurred the day earlier while the remaining were backlogs overdue for at least two days.

"Of the total cases, 94.93 per cent are in category one and two, while four are in category three, eight are in category four and three are in category five. 18 cases are still being evaluated by the health department," he said.

Some 541 Covid-19 patients have been discharged from the hospital while 2,051 patients are currently receiving treatment at hospitals, low risk quarantine and treatment centres (PKRCs), prisons/temporary detention centres and private facilities.

Masidi said 98 patients are under critical care, with 94 are in the Intensive Care Unit (ICU)/repurposed critical care as well as seven in the open ward (high dependency ward (HDW)/acute cubicle), with 30 needing ventilator support.