We know where you live - Health DG warns returnees who skip second test

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CORONAVIRUS | The Health Ministry has details on all overseas returnees and will track down those who have skipped a compulsory second Covid-19 test.

This comes after a revelation that 1,472 recent returnees had failed to get tested on the 13th day of their home quarantine period.

During his media briefing today, Health director-general Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah reiterated his call for the individuals to adhere to home quarantine rules and get tested as soon as possible.

“We have identified these individuals, we have their addresses and all that.

“So now we will track them down and find out why they did not show up (for a second test)," he said.

“We have data on them and we know where they are,” he added.

Earlier today, Defence Minister Ismail Sabri Yaakob warned that the police will get involved if the returnees in question continue to resist getting tested.

Covid-19 tests can be performed at any government clinics or selected private clinics.

Malaysia began allowing returnees to quarantine themselves at home instead of at designated quarantine centres on June 10.

Among the home quarantine rules are:

1) Individuals must wear a face mask throughout the journey from the airport to their homes

2) They must contact the district health office if they show symptoms

3) Wear an observation band throughout the quarantine period

4) Get a second Covid-19 test on the 13th day of quarantine at any government clinic or private clinic recognised by the Health Ministry

5) Present the Covid-19 test result to the nearest District Health Office for clearance and removal of the observation band on the 14th day.

Those who violate these rules could risk two years imprisonment or a fine, or both, under Section 22 and 24 of the Infectious Diseases Act 1988.

Repeat offenders risk a higher punishment.

'No need for compulsory licensing of Remdesivir yet'

Asked if Malaysia will consider using compulsory licensing to access experimental Covid-19 drug Remdesivir, Noor Hisham indicated there was no need for it at the moment.

“We are still watching closely in terms of the efficacy of Remdesivir.

“But more importantly, we need to look at the situation, whether we need the medicine at the moment or not. If our case (numbers) are down, then perhaps we have other options,” he said.

Malaysia recorded just one case of Covid-19 today, an imported case from Turkey.

This marks the first time zero locally transmitted cases have been detected since March 2.

Manufactured and patented by American pharmaceutical company Gilead Sciences Inc, Remdesivir has been priced at US$2,340 (approximately RM10,030) for a five-day treatment plan for one patient.

Gilead has partnered with companies in India and Pakistan to distribute generic and cheaper versions of the experimental drug to 127 countries, but Malaysia is not on the list.

Noor Hisham previously said that Malaysia presently had access to Remdesivir through the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Solidarity Trial, but not through voluntary licensing.

A voluntary licence for a drug means the permission is given by the patent holder to a generic company to produce a patented drug as if it were generic.

A compulsory licence, meanwhile, is when a government allows the production of patented products without the consent of the patent owner or plans to use the patent-protected invention itself.

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