

Highest daily COVID-19 cases recorded: Now's not the time to point fingers

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By Noor Shamsiah Mohamed

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 5 -- The one thing that Malaysians feared most as a fallout from the Sabah state election came true when the number of new COVID-19 positive cases today jumped to 432 - the highest daily figure recorded since the government implemented the Movement Control Order (MCO) in March.

The number of new positive case detected has been rising daily since the Sabah state election ended on Sept 16, with just 58 cases recorded nationwide on nomination day on Sept 12 to a massive 432 today.

According to the Ministry of Health's (MOH) records, as of today, a total of 235 of the positive cases detected had a history of travelling to Sabah since Sept 20, of which 29 were recorded today.

For the first time too, the positive cases involved a Cabinet minister, namely Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Religious Affairs) Datuk Seri Dr Zulkifli Mohamad Al-Bakri, who also had a history of travelling to Sabah.

Rumours of this went viral on social media this morning when two press conferences supposed to be held by Senior Minister (Security) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob and Health director-general Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah were cancelled.

This was followed by a statement by Dr Noor Hisham, who announced that an individual who attended a meeting at the Prime Minister's Department on Oct 3 had been tested positive for COVID-19, before Dr Zulkifli himself ended all speculations by uploading a statement via social media confirming that he was currently undergoing treatment after contracting the virus.

Following that, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin issued a statement that all close contacts, including Cabinet ministers who attended the meeting, be

issued Home Surveillance Order (HSO) for 14 days beginning from Oct 3 and told to wear the surveillance wristband.

Muhyiddin also said that he too would undergo self-quarantine for two weeks as advised by the MOH.

Ismail Sabri, through a statement on his Facebook page tonight, said he learned of Dr Zulkifli's condition after chairing the Special Ministerial Meeting today and the move to cancel his press conference was to prevent the risk of spreading the virus to members of the media.

Other than Dr Zulkifli, state assemblymen Lim Yi Wei (Kampung Tunku) and Shatiri Mansor (Kota Damansara) also announced today via social media and press statement respectively that they too had tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from Sabah on Sept 27.

At the same time, Media Prima Berhad also confirmed that one of its editorial staff, who had covered the Sabah state election, had also tested positive after returning from Sabah on Sept 30 and is currently undergoing treatment at a government hospital.

However, looking at the critical situation faced by the country, now is not the time to point fingers at any party as there are also new clusters which have been detected due to the complacency of the general public.

There are still many who refuse to adopt the new normal in their daily lives in facing the rising number of cases due to the pandemic despite the daily dose of advice from the authorities.

Just yesterday, according to Ismail Sabri, a total of 979 people were detained for violating the standard operating procedure (SOP), with failure to maintain physical distancing being the most common offence apart from not wearing face masks.

With regard to this, and as frequently mentioned by Dr Noor Hisham, continue to obey the health recommendations and advice that are always given, make it a new norm in our daily lives and don't leave home if there's no need to do so.

Have empathy for our health workers, don't let their tears and sweat be in vain. Let us together play our roles to flatten the pandemic curve.

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