

RAPID INFECTION RATE

SIVAGANGGA CLUSTER SUPER SPREADER?

Noor Hisham says studies underway to determine if Kedah's cluster is of Genome 614

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THE Health Ministry is conducting studies to determine if Kedah's Sivagangga persons under investigation (PUI) Cluster, which has now infected 30 people, is a Covid-19 virus super spreader.

Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said there was a rapid infection rate in the cluster.

"We (the Health Ministry) are studying whether we are facing a Genome 614 (G614) cluster, which is a super spreader. There is a huge possibility that it is, but

we need to do a detailed study on this.

"We need to culture the virus at laboratories and look at its genome sequence, which infected the cluster.

"We have included the Sivagangga PUI Cluster as a targeted group. Screenings will be done on those who had not only dined at the nasi kandar eatery, but also on people who had been exposed to positive cases and had been within a 1km-radius of the premises," he told a press conference at the ministry here yesterday.

Six new positive cases were recorded in the Sivagangga PUI Cluster up to noon yesterday, bringing the total number of infected people to 30.

"One of the six, which is Case 9,032, is a close contact of a family member who went to the nasi kandar eatery in this cluster.

"Case 9,032 began experiencing breathing problems on Aug 2, and tested positive for Covid-19 on Aug 5 and was warded at the Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital in Alor Star, Kedah.



Sanitisation in progress at the Napoh Health Clinic in Jitra yesterday. BERNAMA PIC

"Family members have been screened for Covid-19 and are awaiting their results."

The other five cases — Cases 9,033, 9,034, 9,035, 9,036 and 9,037 — are from a family which had a history of visiting an area that is under the Targeted Enhanced Movement Control Order in Kedah.

"The family has been admitted to Sultanah Bahiyah Hospital and the cause of the infection is being investigated. The six cases are the cluster's second generation."

A total of 2,351 individuals linked to the cluster have been screened, 167 of whom tested negative for the virus; 704 are awaiting results.

Fifteen close contacts of the

cluster's Case 9,023 from Kulim have been identified and screened. Case 9,023 is a close contact of Case 8,976, which is a first-generation case in this cluster.

Dr Noor Hisham said there were 15 new Covid-19 cases nationwide yesterday, bringing the tally to 9,038, which included 200 cases of active infectivity.

There are two positive cases under treatment at the Intensive Case Unit, including one under ventilator support. Eleven others recovered from the virus. There were no new deaths and the toll remained at 125.

Meanwhile, Dr Noor Hisham said the ministry recommended that the body temperature be tak-

en from a person's forehead rather than any other body part.

"The most accurate body temperature reading is when a thermometer is pointed at the forehead.

"There are no reported cases of side effects. Although there are worries, there is no scientific data that states that it will cause diseases.

"The accuracy of one's body temperature is doubted if it is measured at other parts of the body, such as on the hand.

"So we do not advise that. I hope business operators and premises will adhere to the ministry's recommendation on the best way to use the thermometer."