Indonesia Extends Covid-19 Emergency to May 29 as Cases Rise to 172

BY :BERITASATU

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**Jakarta.** The Indonesian government has decided to extend the national emergency for the Covid-19 outbreak until May 29 as the number of confirmed cases in the country rose to 172 on Tuesday, up by 38 from yesterday.

The new cases were mostly found in Jakarta, followed by East Java, Central Java and Riau Islands, a government spokesman said in a daily news conference in Jakarta.

The government has appointed 10 laboratories in different cities to conduct the swab tests for suspected coronavirus infections.

Achmad Yurianto, the spokesman for government handling of the outbreak, said the death toll from the contagious disease remained at five.

"Nine patients have fully recovered and returned home. Several more are still waiting for a second test and two days more [of quarantine]," he said.

Jakarta has the most cases out of the total 172, Achmad said without elaborating.

"Jakarta understandably has the most cases because the city serves as a gateway to the country with very high people mobility. There's a greater risk of contacts with infected persons here," he said.

Separately, the head of the government task force on Covid-19 outbreak confirmed in a statement that the emergency status had been extended until the next two and a half months.

"The emergency status applies for 91 days from Feb. 29 to May 29," Doni Monardo said.

**More Transparency Needed**

The Indonesian Doctors Association (IDI) has urged the government to disclose Covid-19 patients' identities to allow a more accurate contact tracing – identifying people who have had contacts with infected persons – at a time when the outbreak had been declared a national emergency.

The government bans the media from disclosing Covid-19 patients' identities and refuses to provide them in news conferences.

The secrecy was held to an extent that even the nationality of any foreign patient was not given.

The government only provided the sexes and ages of any Covid-19 patient.

However, the government was quick to announce when Transportation Minister Budi Karya Sumadi had tested positive for the virus, which encouraged IDI to demand a similar transparency.

IDI chairman Daeng Faqih said during an emergency situation, revealing a patient's personal data does not breach any law, especially when it is done to save the lives of other people.

Keeping their identities secret would only hamper works to trace contacts, he said.

"Revealing the names of coronavirus patients doesn't classify as violations of medical privacy, let alone the Criminal Code," Daeng said in Jakarta.

He pointed out that when the minister was announced to have been infected, Budi received a wave of public sympathies and people around the country wished him a speedy recovery.

Many people who have had contacts with Budi, including [dozens of journalists](https://jakartaglobe.id/opinion/i-try-to-get-myself-tested-for-covid19-after-interviewing-budi-karya-sumadi), have voluntarily attended medical facilities asking for swab tests after his positive status was announced, he said.