Rushing for a cool dip

Since the interstate travel ban was lifted last month, crowds of visitors have flocked to the Telok Kemang beach in Port Dickson. While many of them enjoyed the sun, sea and sand, several raised concerns over the packed seaside and lack of social distancing as some groups relaxed together under large blue tents and nearby eateries. >3
Business flows back to PD beach

Boost for domestic tourism as Malaysians crowd Telok Kemang after restriction lifted last month

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The popular Telok Kemang beach in Port Dickson, Negri Sembilan, is abuzz with visitors once again.

After three months of inactivity when interstate travel was banned due to the movement control order (MCO), the beach was reopened to the public on June 13.

A check by StarMetro last weekend revealed hundreds of visitors soaking up the sun.

However, social distancing did not seem to be a priority among most of them.

Many were taking shelter from the blazing sun under large blue tents that are a common but unwelcome sight to some at Telok Kemang beach.

Although the authorities had carried out an operation last month against and operators who were found to be flouting the MCO rules, they seem to be back in greater numbers.

Abdul Hadi Ahmad, who came with his family of six from Pulla, Negri Sembilan, said the tents were a nuisance. "They obstruct others and block our view," he said.

He added that the tent should not be allowed so close to the water as they spoilt people's enjoyment of the beach.

"I was not allowed to assemble the tent if there are customers wanting to rent them," he said.

Acting Tanjung Balau Municipal Council (MBPB) conducted a joint operation together with Port Dickson Municipal Council (MPDP) on the beach on June 19.

In a statement on its social media page, MBPB said 30 steel tents with two wooden ones and several others that were in state of disrepair were removed from the beach.

The council reminded operators that they could only set up tents upon request from customers and they should not be left on the beach when not in use.

It also reminded operators to ensure a distance of 1.5m between tents and to take the body temperature and details of those renting the tents as well as sanitise the equipment after every use.

Negeri Sembilan Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Aminuddin哈里安在一项24 statement thanked the tent operators for cooperating with the authorities.

"I have been told by visitors that, with the absence of the tents, they are able to enjoy their time on the beach.

"Adults are able to keep watch over their children better too," he said.

People were seen shopping at stands of stalls and shops selling clothes, swimwear and souvenirs while restaurants were brimming with diners.

MPDP said jogging and cycling were permitted at public beaches in Port Dickson, but a picnic group must not exceed 10 people.

Visitors must maintain a distance of between 1m and 2m.

Social functions, sports events, production filming, overnight camping, scuba diving and fishing are not allowed.

While the high number of visitors may spell good news for local tourism operators, others are worried about crowded beaches and the lack of social distancing.

Muhammad Azhar Mohd Azmi, 30, who came from Kuala Lumpur, said the public must remain vigilant and practise social distancing.

"Covid-19 is still a threat. With a crowd of this size, everyone must take measures to protect themselves and others," he said.

Azhar who stayed in Port Dickson for two nights.

He was pleased when the decision was made to allow activities to resume at the beach.

"These employed in the tourism and service sectors were badly affected by the MCO."

"Now that the beach is open again, hopefully it will stimulate the local economy," he added.

Kenny Lim, 51, from Puchong said the local authority should limit the number of visitors to the beach.

"Maybe they can set a maximum number of visitors at any given time and limit access once that number is reached," he said.

Siti Aina Zainal Abidin, 39, who came with her 12-year-old daughter and husband from Segamat, Johor, said she was surprised to see such a large crowd at the beach.

"We did not expect so many people. We wanted to spend some time together as a family before school resumes," she said.

Ice-cream seller Ahmad Aymaf Ramal Ariffin, 16, said the number of visitors would only surge on weekends.

Norhayati Tawong, 55, said the large crowd made up for her loss of income during the MCO.

"I see more visitors as people cannot holiday outside the country," said the petty trader who sells T-shirts and hats at the beach.

She was glad that MPDP had given them the green light for stalls to reopen.

"I opened my stall on weekdays only from 8.30am to 7pm because that is when the crowd comes," she said.