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Nation

Malaysians grant Dr Noor Hisham's birthday wish by promising to stay at home. >3

Fulfilling DG's birthday wish

Malaysians pledge to stay at home for Dr Noor Hisham

PETALING JAYA: There have not been such effusive birthday greetings for a civil servant in recent memory.

From a TikTok video of a four-year-old girl to Twitter messages by a Menteri Besar and the Royal Malaysian Navy, Malaysians sent their birthday wishes to Health director-general Datuk Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah, who turned 57 yesterday.

The public attention was almost akin to rock star treatment for him.

Most of them pledged to abide by social distancing rules, as he had told Bernama that Malaysians "staying at home and observing high hygiene standards" would be a special gift for him.

The *Star's* Facebook post of his birthday wish was swamped with greetings for him.

"He doesn't ask for much, let's make this happen," wrote Rihaya Abu Kasim, imploring Malaysians to grant Dr Noor Hisham his wish.

Another well-wisher, Lim Sok Peng, said Malaysians were doing their part to stay at home as advised.

"Happy birthday, doctor. You are a person with a caring heart for all Malaysians. We are lucky at this time to have you as a responsible and knowledgeable person," she said.

Amar Singh Toor made a similar promise.

"Happy birthday. May you be blessed with good health and happiness always. Yes, I promise to stay home as per your wish. Thank you," he said.

As for Lee Teik Hoe, he spoke of having been at home the past month.



Sweet surprise: Dr Noor Hisham giving two thumbs up upon being presented with a birthday cake from *The Star* reporters after the daily Covid-19 press conference in Putrajaya.

"Happy birthday. I have been staying at home from March 18 until today and will continue to do so. I hope I have given you your birthday wish," he said.

Dr Noor Hisham has been the Health director-general since 2013. His daily updates and explanations about the ministry's strategies in countering the Covid-19 pandemic have endeared him to the Malaysian public.

The flood of greetings yesterday came not just from ordinary folk, but also from "big boys" such as Malaysia Airports, which post-

ed: "We will stay at home for you and help flatten the curve."

But not all the birthday messages were in a serious and "official" tone. Someone tweeted: "Many happy returns, brader!"

As for @JimNunHaa, she was thrilled to share the same birthdate with him.

"Birthday kita sama, gimme five," she wrote, along with a high-five emoji.

But for the birthday boy, work went on as usual. "Let us not let our guard down. The war is still ongoing," he told *The Star*.