

## DELTA VARIANT - The Underdog Tale Of Labuan F.T.

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### **ABSTRACT:**

**INTRODUCTION:** The F.T. Labuan is located on the Borneo side of the Malaysian Federation. Due to its geography and its tax haven status, it serves as an important hub for the shipping, oil & gas, and the offshore banking. However, for all the wonders of this territory, it too has similar problems to that of neighbouring states, namely, illegal immigration and the development of a stateless community. Covid-19 had begun its invasion into Malaysia in the late end of January 2020, but it was not until mid-March 2020, when Labuan had her shores breached. It was the beginning of a massive storm, which has yet to end, but the rainbow is more visible these days. These were and are testing times for all agencies involved, as creativity, innovation, and astute moves had to be implemented to halt the spread of the virus.

**CASE DESCRIPTION** The War against Covid-19 for Labuan has been well documented, but it was the Battle against the Delta Variant which brought this tiny island to the forefront. Unyielding lockdowns and the initial fear factor made sure Labuan remain unscathed from the First Wave of Covid-19. The Second Wave (synonymous with the Sabah Elections) was a trying period for Labuan, causing Labuan's transmissibility of Covid-19 to surge up to 1.80. Emergency measures were taken, and within a month, the reduction of the R-naught from 1.80 to 0.50, ensured Labuan was the talk of the town. Labuan then initiated multiple programmes to ensure the road to the Green Zone was within grasp. However, by the end of April 2021, a myriad of contributors played a role in the unexpected surge of Covid-19 cases, namely, the new Variant of Concern (VOC) - Delta, the relaxation of the cordon sanitaire, the gatherings during the Holy Month of Ramadhan and its subsequent festivities of Eid-Al Fitr. This third wave was brutal, in which it brought rise to the number of cases (up to 1,300 cases per week), causing all the quarantine and treatment centres to be filled up. Tough times call for drastic measures, although understaffed and overworked, the entire staff roster was roped in regardless of grade and position to contribute to the fight against the disease. Scrupulous and prudent planning brought about innovative public health measures, which gave new hope that victory was near for both the battle and the war.

**DISCUSSION:** The ongoing continuous surveillance programme, the mobilization of manpower within departments, the vaccination drive, and community empowerment are amongst the various programmes which helped Labuan during the times of despair. Joint efforts by various agencies had contributed greatly to Labuan becoming a poster child for her ongoing success against the Covid-19 disease. Labuan F.T. may be the smallest state / territory of Malaysia, but the gargantuan task it faced due to its geographical and political standing was unique to that of the other territories of the Malaysia Federation. The public health policies undertaken have paved the way towards the fight against other communicable and non-communicable diseases for time to come.

### **KEYWORDS:**