

Exercise to send home students stranded in Labuan over by May 18

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Labuan matriculation students boarding buses at the ferry terminal.

LABUAN: The exercise to send tertiary students stranded in Labuan back to Sabah, Sarawak and Peninsular Malaysia is expected to be completed on May 18. The exercise, which began on May 2, is funded by the Ministry of Higher Education and co-ordinated by the Labuan Disaster Management Committee (LDMC) and officials of the institutions concerned, said LDMC Chairman Dr Fary Akmal Osman. A total of 786 of the 1,098 students of University Malaysia Sabah, Labuan International Campus (UMSKAL) stranded by the imposition of the Movement Control Order (MCO) on March 18 have been sent home since May 2.

For the Labuan Matriculation College (KML), 1,576 students have returned to their hometowns in the peninsula, Sarawak and Sabah since May 4. The latest batch of KML students left early Thursday via the Labuan Ferry Terminal, with 172 students boarding nine buses to Kota Belud, Kinabatangan and Lahad Datu in Sabah and 160 students heading to Miri on a MASwings flight at 3.40pm. Thirty-four students of Labuan Industrial Training Institute (ILP) have also left since May 2 while five are still on the waiting list.

Dr Fary said the return home exercise was being conducted according to the set standard operating procedure (SOP). The returning students have undergone random swab tests and health screening by the Labuan Health Department since late April, she added. "We are committed to sending the students home before Aidilfitri," she said.

Meanwhile, KML Director Mohd Idris Omar said another 703 students from various parts of Sarawak would be sent home by MASwings flights beginning Thursday.