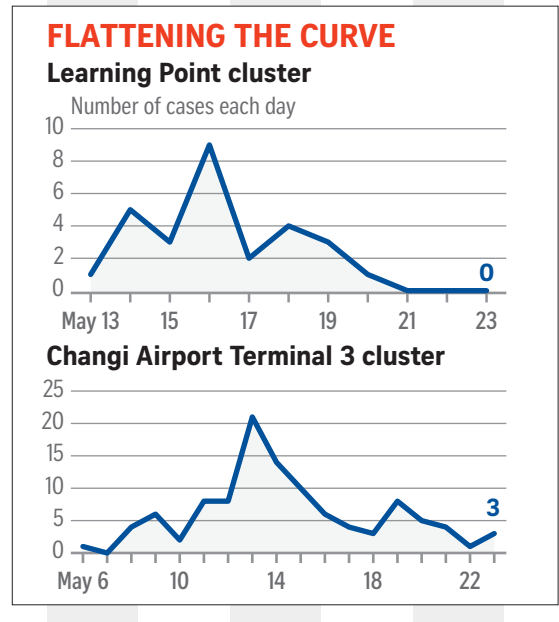
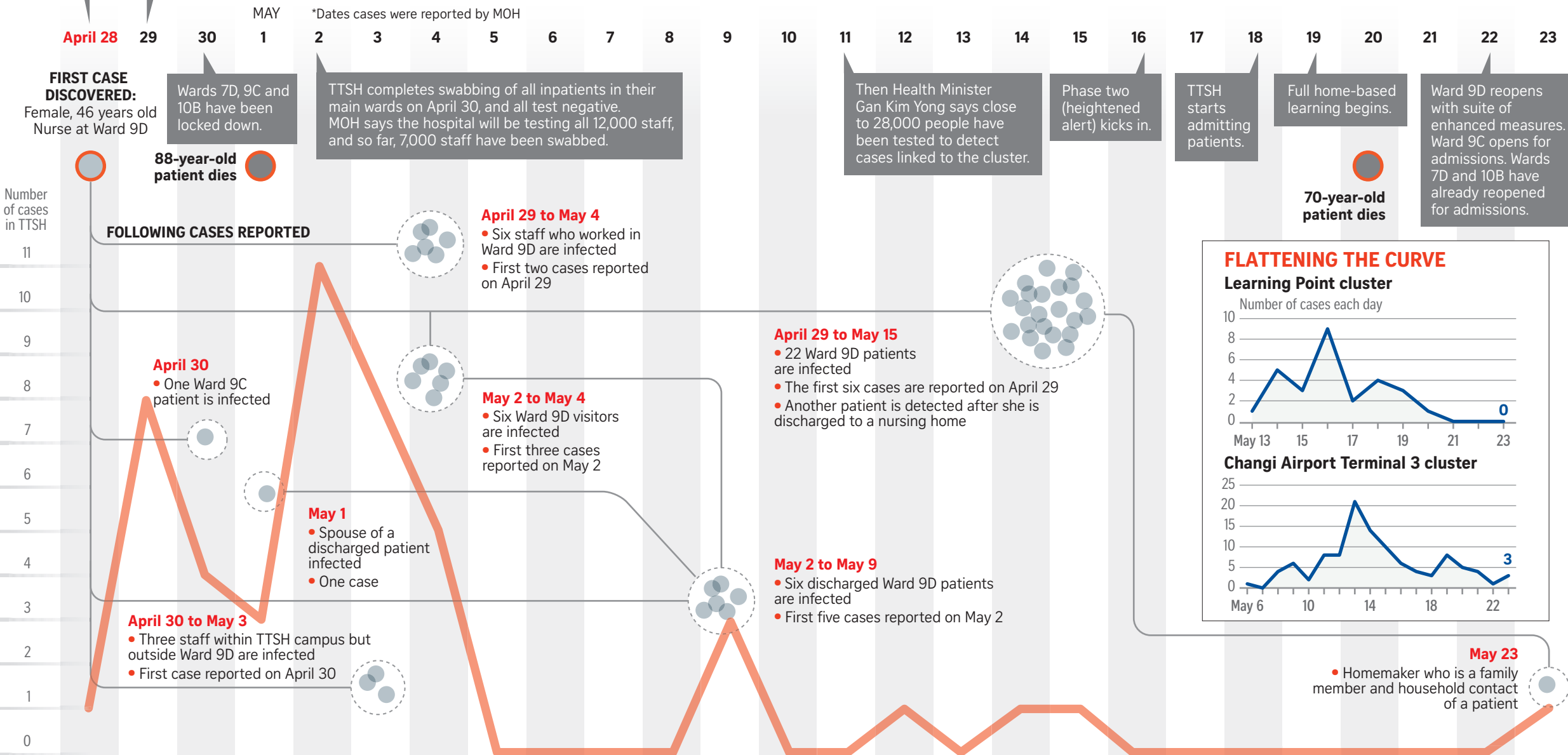


Breaking the chain of transmissions

Ring-fencing, with aggressive testing and vaccinations, is a key strategy in preventing further transmission of Covid-19 while keeping other sectors open. **Shabana Begum** and **Clara Chong** take a deeper look at how this worked at Tan Tock Seng Hospital.

Ward 9D has been locked down.
No visitors allowed except for critically ill patients.



TYPES OF TESTS

- 1. Rapid tests**
 - For example, antigen rapid tests
 - Cheaper, faster but not as accurate as a reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test.
 - Used for large-scale events that require pre-event testing.
- 2. RT-PCR test**
 - Gold standard for testing; can detect samples with very low viral load.
 - Detects the genetic sequences specific to Sars-CoV-2.
- 3. Serology test**
 - Looks for antibodies, can show if a person has been previously infected.
 - Patients develop antibodies around two weeks after they recover from infection.
- 4. Phylogenetic tests**
 - To assess which variants infections belong to.
 - The genome of the virus is first sequenced before a phylogenetic analysis is done. Allows for cases to be linked to clusters and variants to be identified.

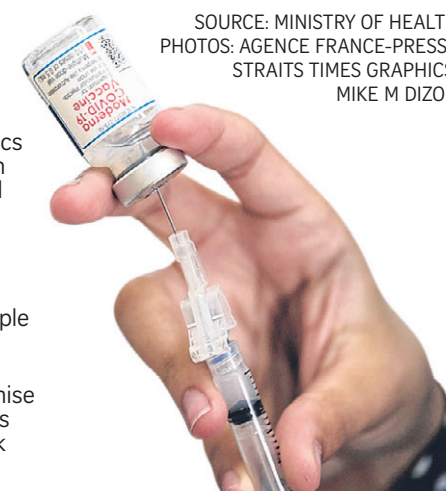
TESTING STRATEGIES

- 1. Routine rostered testing (RRT)**
 - Picks up silent reinfection cases for those vaccinated and with a history of infection.
 - Has been rolled out for workers at various sectors like the construction, aviation and maritime sectors.
- 2. Surveillance testing**
 - Good precautionary measure to pick up Covid-19 cases lurking in the community. For example, all residents of Block 506 Hougang Avenue 8 will have to be tested, after a few cases were found there.

VACCINES

- 1. Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna:** Approved for use
 - More than 3.4 million doses administered as at May 18, covering close to two million individuals.
 - This makes up over 30 per cent of the whole population who have received at least their first jabs.
 - Goal is to have around 80 per cent of the population vaccinated, the higher the better.
 - The Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine has been expanded to include teens aged 12 to 15. Dosing interval has been lengthened to 6-8 weeks.

- 2. Sinovac:** Pending approval
 - 3. Made in Singapore:** United States-based Arcturus Therapeutics is jointly developing a vaccine with the Duke-NUS Medical School; still undergoing trials.
- ARE VACCINES EFFECTIVE?**
- It was reported on May 23 that there were 78 cases involving people who were infected despite being vaccinated.
 - Vaccination is designed to minimise serious symptoms and side effects but not meant to completely block the risk of infection.



NOTE: There were a total of 32 active clusters as at May 23

SOURCE: MINISTRY OF HEALTH
PHOTOS: AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
STRAITS TIMES GRAPHICS:
MIKE M DIZON