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'Let foreigners get jab too'

The Star, Malaysia



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Group: Migrant workers, refugees should be part of programme

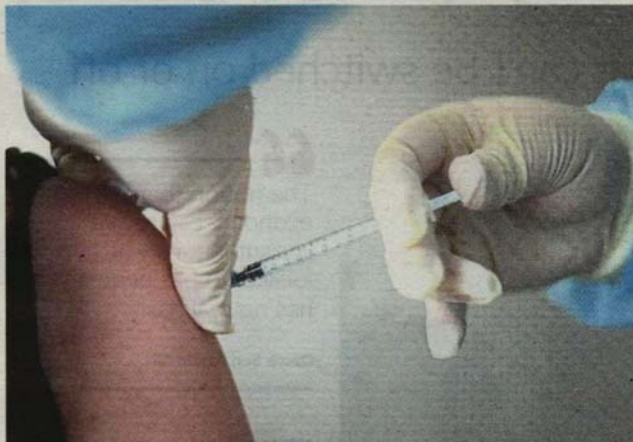
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PETALING JAYA: Migrant workers, refugees, asylum seekers and foreign spouses should be included in the mass Covid-19 vaccination programme, says the Migrant Workers' Right to Redress Coalition (MWR2R).

It said as plans for the national Covid-19 vaccination exercise were being firmed up, the government should consider the circumstances of every person in the country.

"This includes the situation facing documented and undocumented workers, those in different sectors including domestic workers, all those within the refugee communities, foreign spouses, the stateless and others.

"Every effort needs to be made to ensure that all these people are able to access the vaccination programme and are not excluded on any basis, including by the possibility that they cannot afford it," said MWR2R in a virtual press conference on issues faced by migrant workers.



The bigger picture: The MWR2R says the Covid-19 vaccination drive should consider the circumstances of every person in the country. — AFP

Earlier this month, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee Committee would be discussing the decision to provide free vaccination

to foreign workers, expatriates and permanent residents in the country.

MWR2R added that the issue of vaccination, if not addressed, could cause a serious gap in efforts to combat the Covid-19 pandemic.

On another matter, MWR2R said there were still several alarming issues affecting migrants, domestic workers, refugees, asylum seekers and foreign spouses that need the attention of the authorities.

Among the issues are long working hours, abuse of employment laws, non-payment of wages, arbitrary repatriation and neglect of support for the right to redress.

MWR2R hoped that the government would provide resources for the community to address their grievances.

"Ensure adequate resources are provided to the Labour (Department) to allow it to carry out monitoring and enforcement of conditions at the workplace far more effectively.

"This includes giving the necessary political and financial support to appoint significantly more workplace inspectors," it said.

MWR2R is also seeking a meeting with the Human Resources, Health and Home Affairs ministries to discuss action plans and to have effective communication with civil society organisations for the well-being of these communities.



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SUMMARIES

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