



27 JAN, 2021

Not anytime soon

The Sun, Malaysia



Not anytime soon

BY **NICOLAS ANIL**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: We may have to live with the effects of Covid-19 for some years to come, especially in Malaysia, experts have warned.

Singapore Education Minister Lawrence Wong, who is part of the city state's Covid multi-ministry task force, said wearing of face masks and avoiding crowds could continue until next year, and getting the world vaccinated will take time and has its own challenges.

Two experts *theSun* spoke to agreed with Wong, who said it may take four to five years before the world can expect a post-Covid normal.

Epidemiologist Prof Datuk Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud, who is head of the

Even with Covid vaccines available, Malaysians advised to brace for protracted effects of pandemic years down the road

Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry's Independent Covid-19 Vaccination Advisory Committee, pointed out that the pandemic is rooted for the foreseeable future, even with vaccines available.

"Even if we have effective vaccines, we need to get enough of them. Supply issues are reportedly causing problems even for countries which can pay for them," Awang Bulgiba told *theSun*.

He said pharmaceutical companies are

struggling to get vaccines manufactured fast enough.

Going by projections based on some states and large clusters, Awang Bulgiba said the country needs a vaccination target of 80%, including vaccinating children under the age of 16.

"To vaccinate that many people, it would take between 500 and 1,000 vaccinations centres working full-time for 300 to 500 working days to accomplish."

He added that virus mutations could also pose a problem to vaccines, such as the newer variants from the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil.

Malaysians must adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions, even if there is a good supply of vaccines.

Awang Bulgiba said this must be strictly followed for the next two years, depending on other factors such as pandemic fatigue and human behaviour.

The country is expected to start its vaccination programme by the end of next month, with 27 million Malaysians expected to be vaccinated by the first quarter of next year.

Chairman of the Asli Centre for Public Policy, Tan Sri Ramon Navaratnam, said the virus has become another

Turn to
 page 3



27 JAN, 2021

Not anytime soon

The Sun, Malaysia



Help ensure everyone does not go hungry: Ramon

long-term disease, like malaria and influenza.

“Nobody can say how long it will last. It all depends on us. We need the cooperation and dedication of

From front page

the people to follow the rules. If we do not follow it thoroughly, we will pay the price. It will take the will of the people to overcome it.”

Ramon added that while

vaccines are important, so is the way of living in the new norm.

He also called on Malaysians to unite and help each other by ensuring everyone does not go hungry.

“Something like a national donation drive should be initiated by the people but subsidised and implemented through the government. Daily food for survival is not expensive.”



27 JAN, 2021

Not anytime soon

The Sun, Malaysia



SUMMARIES

PETALING JAYA: We may have to live with the effects of Covid-19 for some years to come, especially in Malaysia, experts have warned. Singapore Education Minister Lawrence Wong, who is part of the city state's Covid multi-ministry task force, said wearing of face masks and avoiding crowds could continue until next year, and getting the world vaccinated will take time and has its own challenges.