



29 JAN, 2021

'Clarity needed on vaccination plan'

The Sun, Malaysia



Page 1 of 3

'Clarity' needed on vaccination plan'

► Malaysia lagging behind other countries in getting population immunised, says former health minister

■ BY **ALISHA NUR MOHD NOOR**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: The government should finalise the Covid-19 vaccination plan as soon as possible and make it public, a former health minister and his deputy said.

Former health minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and his ex-deputy Dr Lee Boon Chye told *theSun* that it is imperative for the government to disclose important information such as the exact dates to receive the first dose, the price per dose as well as the logistical details.

"At the moment, the government has yet to reveal the dates and there must be transparency on this. I am also curious as to why they have yet to reveal the dates," Dzulkefly said.

Their comments came after many nations including Singapore and Indonesia started vaccinating their citizens. However, it is still unclear when exactly Malaysia will kickstart its vaccination exercise.

Although the Health Ministry has said that the first phase of vaccinations is expected to be rolled out from March and completed by year-end or early next year, health experts have urged the government to finalise plans as soon as possible and make them public.

"Honestly we are falling behind compared with Indonesia. But having said that, we will catch up soon as we are better equipped in terms of facilities. It's just that we are starting late and if we plan well enough we may achieve herd immunity," Dzulkefly said.

According to a media report, Indonesia started its Covid-19 vaccination programme early this month with health workers being given priority.

Indonesia's vaccine is developed by China's biopharmaceutical company Sinovac Biotech while Singaporeans are receiving the Pfizer BioNTech vaccine.

Malaysia is expected to receive the Pfizer vaccines by the end of next month.

The government is still in the midst of making a decision on giving free vaccinations to

everyone residing in Malaysia.

Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah said the vaccination programme would involve three phases.

The first phase involves half a million vaccines for frontliners.

Lee, meanwhile, said the government should not have entered into a non-disclosure agreement with Pfizer as other countries which bought the vaccines were able to avoid the non-disclosure agreement and make it very transparent about doses, logistics support from Pfizer as well as price.

Universiti Malaya epidemiologist Prof Datuk Dr Awang Bulgiba Awang Mahmud, who is also heading the Independent Covid-19 Vaccination Advisory Committee set up by the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry, said the committee had made its recommendations to the government but the Health Ministry has yet to finalise the plan and reveal them to the public.

"I do not know why it has not yet been revealed and this is a question for the ministry to answer."

He added that for the vaccination exercise to succeed, there must be widespread direct protection and his committee has made a number of recommendations including that a vaccination target of 80% is needed.

"The government seems to agree with this and has started to try to get enough vaccines to cover 82.8% of the population.

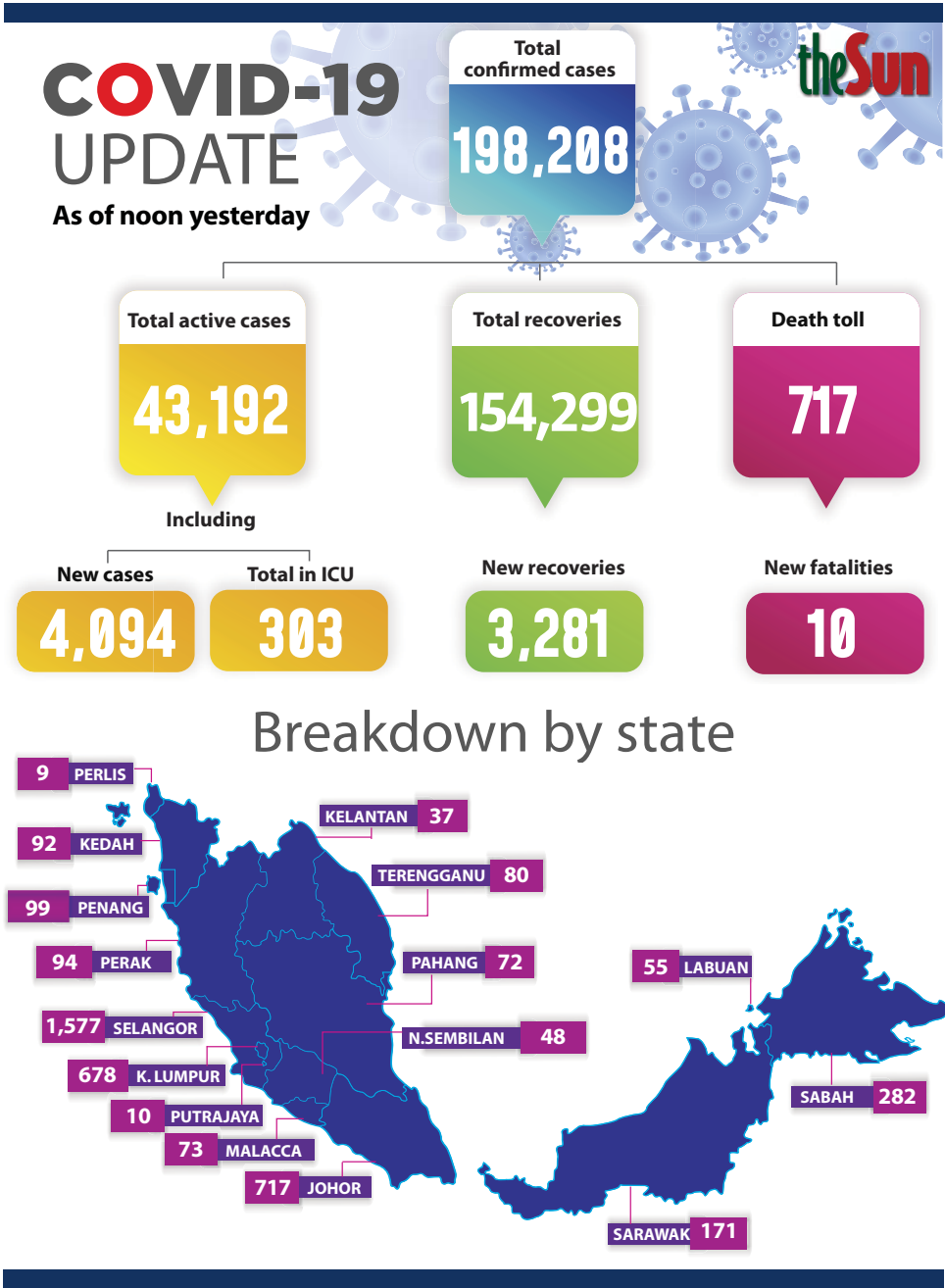
"To vaccinate that many people, it will take between 500 and 1,000 vaccination centres working full time for 300 to 500 working days. However, we might not need to wait that long to see a sustained reduction in cases if non-pharmaceutical interventions continue to be strictly followed."

According to health news portal CodeBlue, Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the government aimed to vaccinate 75,000 people daily, involving 600 sites including public health clinics, university hospitals, and other private health care facilities.



29 JAN, 2021
`Clarity needed on vaccination plan`

The Sun, Malaysia





29 JAN, 2021

`Clarity needed on vaccination plan'

The Sun, Malaysia



SUMMARIES

OMalaysia lagging behind other countries in getting population immunised, says former health minister

PETALING JAYA: The government should finalise the Covid-19 vaccination plan as soon as possible and make it public, a former health minister and his deputy said.