

## Muhyiddin to take the lead

**SEPANG:** Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Health Director-General Tan Sri Dr Noor Hisham Abdullah will be among the first to receive the Covid-19 vaccine when the immunisation begins on Wednesday, ahead of schedule.

National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the government decided to start the first phase of the programme on Feb 24 instead of Feb 26 as initially scheduled.

"We have decided to bring forward the Covid-19 immunisation rollout to Wednesday, with the prime minister and health director-general to get their first vaccine jab at the Putrajaya Health Clinic," he told a press conference after witnessing the arrival of the first batch of Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine yesterday.

Medical and non-medical frontliners will join Muhyiddin and Noor Hisham to be vaccinated on the same day.

Khairy said the efficiency and preparedness of the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) and the Pharmacy Division of the Health Ministry (MOH) in ensuring the smooth delivery and receipt of the vaccine had made it possible for the immunisation programme to be launched earlier.

"We now realise we can launch it earlier although we had initially expected to take several days to deliver the vaccine to the vaccine storage centres. NPRA also has to assess the log list for every delivery of the vaccine and check to ensure there are no defects.

"But when we saw the efficiency of NPRA (and) the Pharmacy Division of MOH and found that everyone is ready after inspecting the vaccine storage centres, the prime minister said: 'Let's start early, there is no need to wait until Friday,'"said Khairy, who is also Science, Technology and

Innovation minister.

He said 571,802 frontliners had registered for the vaccination programme.

According to him, 57.3% of them are medical and health personnel while 42.7% are from other sectors such as the Armed Forces, police, Volunteer Department, Prisons Department, Customs Department and the Fire and Rescue Department.

The immunisation programme will be implemented in three phases, targeting 80% of the country's population, or 26.5 million people, who will be given the jabs free.

Registration for the vaccination programme is expected to be opened to the public on March 1, and inoculation is on a voluntary basis.

The government has signed an agreement with Pfizer (Malaysia) for the procurement of 12,799,800 doses of the vaccine, covering 20% of the population with two doses per person. - Bernama