

Khairy: No more volunteer programme, people may choose own vaccine soon



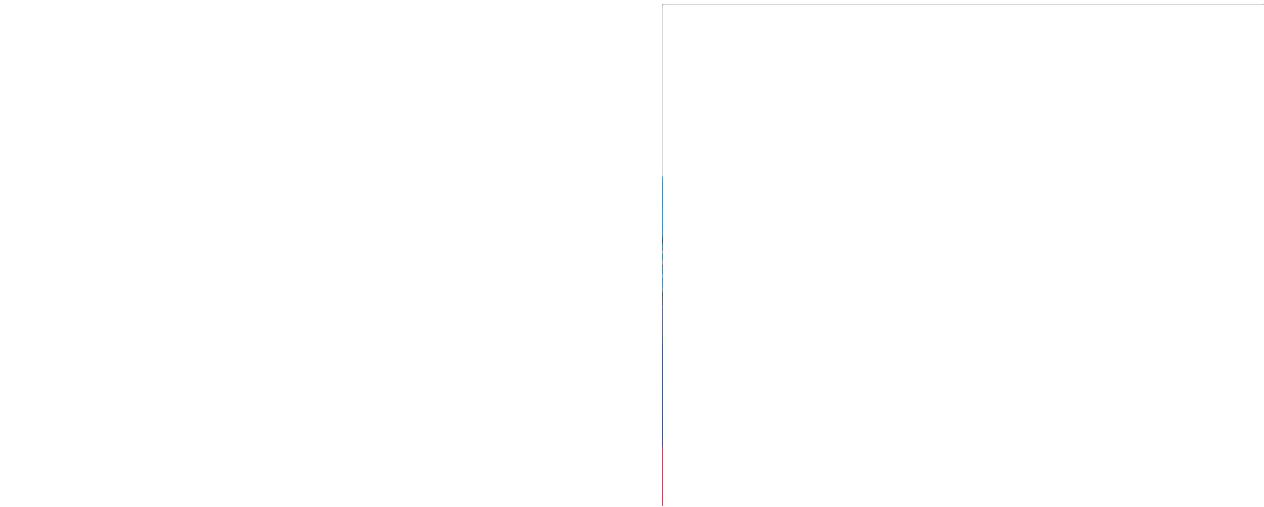
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Minister stresses that there is no segregation based on religion and race involving the vaccination programme

by S BIRRUNTHA / Pic by BERNAMA

THE government has decided to **re-include the AstraZeneca** plc vaccine into the list of mainstream vaccines under its National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme (NCIP).



Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation Khairy Jamaluddin Abu Bakar (*picture*) said the AstraZeneca vaccine registration is no longer implemented voluntarily and it will be offered through the MySejahtera application in the future.



He said the decision was made after taking into account the overwhelming and encouraging public response towards the vaccine.

“This opt-in was decided on because there was hesitancy towards AstraZeneca due to the blood clot issue. But the hesitancy is no longer there and AstraZeneca vaccine has been accepted well among the people in the country.

“We have made the decision that AstraZeneca will no longer be opt in, but now it will be added into NCIP,” he said in a virtual press conference yesterday.

He also added that the government is considering allowing people to choose the vaccine they want through the MySejahtera application soon.

In the meantime, the minister stressed that there is no segregation based on religion and race involving the vaccination programme.

He added that the country will receive over 25 million doses of the Pfizer Inc-BioNTech SE vaccine in the third quarter of 2021. With that, he said the vaccination rate is expected to increase to 150,000 injections a day by next month.

Khairy also apologised for the problems faced by those trying to register for the opt-in AstraZeneca vaccination on Wednesday.

He admitted that the user experience for registration could have been executed much better and the system issues would be investigated by the relevant parties.

“I as the minister responsible for NCIP apologise to all parties who had trouble browsing the website to book the second round of AstraZeneca vaccination yesterday.

“It was supposed to run better. For example, there’s a date displayed on the screen showing a grey colour instead of green, causing users to press non-stop just to be told the booking slot is full.

“There are some other things that should not happen, such as the registrants are not informed that their application has been successfully received or not and so on,” he added.

The minister noted that his party was fully aware of the issue, apart from understanding the anger and frustration of the public, especially those who failed to get the reservation slots they wanted.

“The Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force takes this matter seriously and after the booking closed yesterday, we have started an investigation into the cause of the problem as well as the weaknesses of the system in place.

“Currently, an investigation is being carried out and led by the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit to identify and overcome the problem for further action,” he said.

Additionally, Khairy clarified that the RM70 million ceiling allocation for NCIP is not just allocated for developing the AstraZeneca vaccine appointment second-round application website.

He said it covers all aspects of the implementation of the NCIP. The Rembau MP noted that this includes development of NCIP daily reporting dashboard; system integration to link MySejahtera database system and existing Ministry of Health system; development of vaccine registration portal site; registration and vaccination tracking system, and development of Google Maps service in MySejahtera and so on.

Meanwhile, Khairy said 5,867 media practitioners from 144 agencies will begin receiving their Covid-19 vaccine appointments, starting the first week of next month.

“I have already signed the list of names of media practitioners just now as approval to be given the vaccine as soon as possible.”

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