

## 22.6.2021\_NST\_YB Khairy Jamaluddin - Mega PPVs not opened earlier due to insufficient vaccines

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**PUTRAJAYA:** The government did not open mega vaccination centres (PPV) earlier because the supply of Covid-19 vaccines was insufficient then, said Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme (NIP) Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

He said the opening of mega PPVs without enough vaccine supplies would incur the disappointment of the people in the government for wasting money.

"Mega PPVs and others were opened when supplies started arriving, enabling us to raise the rate of vaccination," he said at a media conference on the development of the NIP with Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba here yesterday.

Commenting on press reports which questioned the slow process of vaccination in Malaysia compared with other countries such as Hungary, Khairy said Hungary was part of the European Union (EU), which had negotiated with vaccine suppliers to enable the supply of vaccines in bulk and vaccine factories were mostly in European countries.

He said the vaccination rate in Malaysia depended on vaccine supply, which was monopolised by countries in the EU.

According to him, advanced Asian countries, including Japan, were also left behind compared with the EU, United States and United Kingdom. Khairy said the process of vaccination here should be compared with Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia and the Philippines, which would see Malaysia being ahead and almost catching up with Japan.

He said the inequitable supply of vaccines had long been raised because the number of vaccines the UK had bought was five times its population and the situation was similar with Canada.

It was only after countries such as the US, Japan and China had achieved herd immunity that they started supplying vaccines when Malaysia had long been waiting for its supply.

Asked when the Sputnik V vaccine was expected to get the approval of the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA), Khairy said the agreement signed between a subsidiary of Duopharma Biotech Bhd, Duopharma (M) Sdn Bhd (DMSB), with the government gave the company a period of three months to register the vaccine with the NPRA.

"I understand the NPRA is still



Vaccine recipients posing for photographs at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium vaccination centre in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

looking for information on stability before making any decision," he said.

Meanwhile, speaking to reporters after inspecting the opening-day operations of the PPV at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here yesterday, Khairy urged the World Health Organisation (WHO) to get all countries to recognise all types of Covid-19 vaccines listed by it.

He said the guidance from

WHO should serve as a reference for all countries as every brand of vaccine recommended by the world body was meant for emergency use to combat the Covid-19 pandemic. He said the issue of discrimination against certain types of vaccines in use would not arise if the whole world abided by WHO's recommendations.

Khairy said the EU currently only accepted the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines while China

approved only vaccines manufactured by China, namely Sinovac and Sinopharm.

"The question is whether countries around the world will agree to accept all vaccines that have received approval for emergency use by WHO.

"WHO must step up right now and ask the world and countries to recognise vaccines that are listed in the WHO list. Otherwise, we will have countries that discriminate based on vaccines given, and that is not the way to get out of this pandemic together."

On the National Stadium PPV, Khairy said it was expected to achieve its maximum capacity of administering 10,000 shots a day in less than two weeks.

The centre administered 3,000 jabs yesterday, and this is expected to increase to 5,000 doses daily within three days, he said.

Khairy said refugees would be given the CanSino vaccine as it required only one dose.

"For the refugee community, it is easier for us to administer the single-dose vaccination because of the nature of their presence, (involving) matter of access. We have negotiated for the CanSino vaccine and will receive it at the end of July." **Bernama**