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Decision on booster shots, mixing and matching of Covid-19 vaccines expected next week

By [NURADZIMMAH DAIM](#) and [ARFA YUNUS](#) - July 28, 2021 @ 6:32pm

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The government is expected to make a decision over proposals on booster shots and mixed use of different Covid-19 vaccines after consulting the Institute for Clinical Research next week. - NSTP/MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

KUALA LUMPUR: The government is expected to make a decision over proposals on booster shots and mixed use of different Covid-19 vaccines after consulting the Institute for Clinical Research next week.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the government would also consider procurement of vaccines for next year based on reports in other countries, as well as vaccines for children.

"We are still waiting for recommendations from experts. We will not only refer to the experience of other countries, but will also look at heterologous vaccination and whether we can mix different types of vaccines.

"We don't know how long the vaccine will work as there is no data available in other countries. At best, we have data of antibodies for about seven months since the Covid-19 vaccine was first administered," said the Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme (NIP) coordinating minister.

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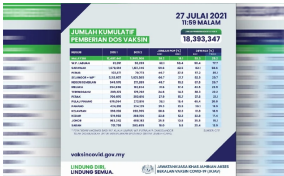
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Khairy was replying to queries by members of parliament during the third day of the special sitting of Parliament today.

On the procurement issue raised by some MPs, Khairy said the government took prudent steps in deciding to procure Covid-19 vaccines in November last year based on interim data by producers like Pfizer at the time.

He cited Indonesia, which was used as a Sinovac vaccine clinical trial site, that was given priority by the producer in receiving doses.

Meanwhile, countries in the Asia Pacific region like Australia, South Korea and Japan received the first batch of Covid-19 vaccines around the same time, he said.

"Temasek, Singapore's sovereign wealth fund, has invested US\$250 million in BioNTech, that was developing vaccine with Pfizer, in June 2020."

Some MPs had earlier raised their concerns on among others, delays in vaccine procurement, inequality of vaccine distribution in states and booster doses.

The special sitting was the first parliamentary session since the vaccine rollout under the NIP was launched in February.

Khairy earlier told the Dewan Rakyat 20,134,971 people have registered under the NIP, accounting for 61.7 per cent of the population in Malaysia (32.7 million people) as of July 26, lower than the 80 per cent national target for herd immunity.

He said 12.49 million people in Malaysia (38.2 per cent population) have received at least one vaccine dose as of July 27.

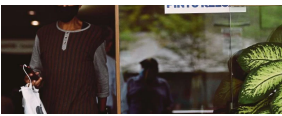
Of this, 5.9 million people, or 18.1 per cent of the population, have received full doses.

Overall, 18.4 million vaccine doses have been administered.

Khairy said 53.3 per cent of the adult population in Malaysia received at least one vaccine dose and 25.2 per cent have received two doses.

He said the details of the expenditure for Covid-19 vaccine procurement and execution of the NIP, including opening of vaccination centres (PPVs), were presented to the Public Accounts Committee on two occasions – on Jan 5 and Tuesday.

Khairy said six suppliers for eight vaccine types were listed under the NIP, namely, Pfizer & Biontech (to cover 70 per cent population); AstraZeneca (10 per cent population), Sinovac (19.4 per cent population), CanSino (for 10.9 per cent population) and Gamaleya (10 per cent population, pending assessment by National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency), as well as the global Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access or Covax (10 per cent population).



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population).

In addition, three countries have also contributed vaccine doses to Malaysia, namely, Japan (998,400 doses of AstraZeneca), United States (1,000,350 doses of Pfizer) and China (500,000 doses of Sinovac), he said.

To date, said Khairy, the government has received about 26.38 million Covid-19 vaccine doses in total.

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