

# Busy and crucial months ahead



By RAHIMY RAHIM

**NATION**

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PETALING JAYA: The next few months will be the “busiest and most crucial” part of the national immunisation plan as Malaysia ramps up its vaccination drive across the country, says Khairy Jamaluddin. The National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme coordinating minister said this was because in July alone, Malaysia would be receiving 12 million vaccine doses.

“As I mentioned before, this is when a large part of our vaccine supply will be arriving.

“To put that into context, to date we have cumulatively administered around eight million doses since February.

“So this is going to be an extremely busy month for us as we ramp up capacity across the country,” he said in his updates in a pre-recorded video released yesterday.

Khairy said the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme had made significant progress since his previous update last month.

“Our average daily vaccination rate for June was almost 170,000, surpassing our target of 150,000.

“We are vaccinating people at a higher rate daily per capita than the world average.

“We are now consistently vaccinating 250,000 people a day and will target a monthly average of 300,000 people a day in July.

“At the end of May, only 5.9% of our population had received at least one dose. That number is now 18% – that’s a 200% increase in June alone,” he added.

Khairy said he had also previously voiced out his concerns on global vaccine supply inequity.

“This is a view shared by many developing nations and the World Health Organisation. We are thankful that some countries have started to address this injustice by kindly offering contribution

“We have received one million doses of the AstraZeneca vaccine from Japan and will be receiving

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He said Malaysia was also working hard to secure the delivery of CanSino vaccine doses this month.

“Not only is this vaccine safe and effective, it is also a single-dose vaccine. The CanSino vaccine will be invaluable in states with communities living in interior and hard-to-access areas.

“It will also be convenient to administer to the refugee community, who will also be vaccinated under our national programme,” he added.

To meet such challenges in the upcoming months, Khairy said the government had increased vaccination capacity by opening up more vaccination centres (PPV) of all types and deploying more healthcare workers and other volunteers.

He said currently, Malaysia had a total of 1,400 PPVs operating across the country.

“While many are focusing on the mega PPV, we have PPV in all shapes and sizes.

“We have mini pop-up PPV in the Orang Asli villages. We have PPV at places of worship, schools, universities, community halls, places of work, plantation estates and even in restaurants.

“We also have drive-through PPV and mobile units that we deploy to interior areas and for on-house calls.

“People in rural areas have no access to the MySejahtera app, so we simply record their details during the vaccination and upload them into the system later,” he explained. The minister added that more than 1,500 GP clinics and 120 private hospitals would also be operating as PPV.

The government will also expand its vaccination programme for essential economic sectors that are operating during Phase One of the National Recovery Plan.

“These workers have to physically report for duty and are therefore at risk of Covid-19 transmissions.

“We will be focusing on the manufacturing, transport, construction and plantation sectors first, with a target of vaccinating at least 300,000 workers over the next few weeks,” Khairy said.

Meanwhile, on the prevalence of the Delta variant in Malaysia, he said the government would continue to draw on real-world data on vaccine effectiveness against this and possibly other emerging variants.

“Like many other countries, we are now studying whether a third booster dose might be necessary.

“We need to accept that Covid-19 is most probably endemic and will possibly require regular vaccination, much like the flu jab in certain countries.

“The next few months is everything. More than ever, we need to come together and win together. Let’s do this,” he added.

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