

Time out for jabs

Employers may be compelled to grant a day off for workers to get vaccinated against Covid-19, under a government proposal. Meanwhile, health experts say various factors other than just vaccination must be considered before allowing interstate travel. > See reports on page 4



Course completed: Welfare Department officers Nurul Earliana Nordin (left) and Asdayanti binti Sakawi displaying their digital certificates after receiving two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine. — ZULAZHAR SHEBLEE/The Star

Plan to give workers day off

Move being mulled to let staff keep vaccine appointment

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PETALING JAYA: Workers may be allowed to take the day off to get their Covid-19 vaccination, says Khairy Jamaluddin.

The Science, Innovation and Technology Minister said he would bring the matter up with the Human Resources Ministry at the Special Committee on Covid-19 Vaccine Supply Access Guarantee (JKJAV) meeting today to decide whether or not to make it compulsory for employers to grant their workers a day off from work to get vaccinated.

"We will make the announcement once an agreement is reached.

"Employers cannot stop workers from keeping their vaccination appointments," Khairy said at the weekly press conference on the progress of the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme yesterday.

He said the Covid-19 Immunisation Task Force (CITF) would also recommend that interstate travel be allowed for people living away from their aged or immobile parents to bring them to vaccination centres on the day of their appointment.

However, he said this recommendation would be subject to approval from the National Security Council (NSC).

Separately, Khairy said Phase 2 recipients in the National Covid-19 Vaccination Programme would start receiving notifications for their appointment 14 days prior to the set date. The second phase begins on April 19.



Weekly briefing: Khairy (right) and Dr Adham at the joint press conference in Putrajaya. — Bernama

"We hope they will do their best to keep their appointments to avoid wasting the vaccine," he said.

The second phase will cover those aged above 60, those with comorbidity and people with disabilities.

It will kick off in Kedah, Melaka, Pahang, Penang, Sabah, Sarawak, Terengganu and Labuan before the rollout starts in other states.

Khairy said that after being notified about their appointments, vaccine recipients would be reminded twice about it via SMS and calls.

He said that they would still be given the option to accept or reject

their appointments.

"The first reminder will be sent three days before the appointment and the second one will be sent a day before.

"Once they agree to the appointment, attendance is compulsory because the vaccination process has been planned to a T, so I hope all appointments are kept," he said, adding that once vaccines have been removed from storage, they cannot be placed back.

Meanwhile, the NSC has yet to decide on Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's proposal to allow Malaysians who have received two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine to travel

freely between states and districts.

According to Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Adham Baba, the NSC is studying the findings of the World Health Organisation and US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on the matter.

"We have not received enough evidence to show that it is safe to allow those who have received both doses of the vaccine to travel across states," he told the same press conference, while noting that the suggestion made by the Prime Minister was an incentive to encourage Malaysians to get vaccinated.

Dr Adham said the NSC had agreed to make a decision on the proposal as soon as possible and it was waiting for more feedback from the CDC.

He said medical frontliners who had been vaccinated have been travelling interstate for work.

He further said that 287,737 medical frontliners had received the second dose of the Pfizer vaccine so far, 18,022 of whom are dentists and private sector doctors.

Interstate travel for tourism is allowed in special travel bubbles between states under the recovery movement control order, Dr Adham added.

On April 1, Muhyiddin said Malaysians who had received two doses of the Covid-19 vaccine might be allowed to travel freely between states and districts, and that he had raised his suggestion to the NSC for its decision.

Watch the video
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