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Vaccinating undocumented workers

July 11, 2021 @ 12:42pm



If the government fails to vaccinate this group, it might be a continuous threat for the whole community health-wise in the long term.- NSTP/OWEE AH CHUN

LETTERS: The 2.5 million documented foreigners in the country will be included in the Covid-19 vaccination programme, says the Home Minister.

Accordingly, foreigners are getting vaccinated by using "MySejahtera" without any discrimination or hassle. But, there is no clear guideline about the 2.2 million undocumented migrants.

This is effectively seven percent of the population of the country. If the government fails to vaccinate this group, it might be a continuous threat for the whole community health-wise in the long term.

Khairy Jamaluddin, the Science, Technology and Innovation Minister, said during a press briefing that the government will work with civil society organizations in reaching out to undocumented foreigners with the assurance that they will not be detained.

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They can come forward freely. However, based on the various media reports, the authorities had increased their operation to detain undocumented workers and this is why they are in hiding.

This is making it difficult to vaccinate all of them. Another issue is, if you allow undocumented workers to register with "MySejahtera", they have to use their passport number and at the time of vaccination they have to bring their passport.

I'm sure many of them do not have passports. Perhaps, the government can stop detaining undocumented workers and work with civil society and international organisations to help vaccinate them.

Another alternative is to request to the origin country to vaccinate their undocumented workers through their embassies.

We have to remember that vaccination is a must for each and everyone to secure our community. No one is safe until everyone is safe.

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Assistant Professor, Ahmad Ibrahim Kulliyah of Laws, International Islamic University Malaysia

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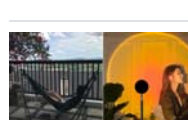
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