

## **Agong: Parliament should reconvene as soon as possible**

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The Yang di-Pertuan Agong is of the opinion that Parliament should reconvene as soon as possible to allow MPs to debate the emergency laws and the National Recovery Plan.

In a statement after a special Conference of Rulers meeting today, the palace said that the Agong had come to this conclusion after hearing from heads of political parties, the Special Independent Committee on the Emergency 2021 and briefings by government experts.

"His Majesty expressed the view there needs to be a strong and stable government that can function effectively to tackle the Covid-19 pandemic and revive the economy.

"His Majesty is very mindful of Parliament's role as an important platform for elected representatives to meet and discuss various issues, particularly those pertaining to the spread of Covid-19.

"MPs can discuss government expenditures for helping people in need and to revive the country's economy," said Comptroller of the Royal Household Ahmad Fadil Shamsuddin in the statement.

The statement comes following a series of meetings from June 9 to June 15 between the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Abdullah Ahmad Shah and 18 political leaders, culminating in the special Conference of Rulers meeting today.

Parliament has been suspended since the proclamation of emergency came into force on Jan 11. It is due to end on Aug 1, subject to advice by the independent committee on whether it can be lifted earlier.

According to the National Recovery Plan announced by Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin yesterday, Parliament will reconvene during the third phase of Malaysia's recovery from the current lockdown.

The criteria to enter this phase is to have fewer than 2,000 Covid-19 cases daily, "sufficient" ICU capacity and at least 40 percent of the population completing their Covid-19 vaccination.

This is expected to be reached in September or October.

Ahmad Fadil said the king is of the opinion that vaccination is the only "exit strategy" for containing the pandemic.

"In that regard, His Majesty is of the view that the government should take stern action to cut bureaucracy and expedite vaccinations for the people to achieve the herd immunity target of 80 percent (of the population) as soon as possible," he said.

As of yesterday, 1,468,689 people have received both doses of their Covid-19 vaccines. This corresponds to 4.3 percent of Malaysia's population of 34.23 million.

Vaccination rates hit a record high of 215,876 doses administered a day yesterday, surpassing the June target of administering 150,000 doses per day and reaching the July target of administering 200,000 doses per day ahead of schedule.

However, only 13.8 million people have registered for vaccination, which is 59.1 percent of Malaysians aged 18 years and above.

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