

PM moots vax partnership

The Star - 28/10/2021 pg. 6

The proposal centres on an Asean-Japan collaboration

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia has suggested that Asean and Japan explore the possibility of seconding their expert researchers to the Asean Centre for Public Health Emergencies and Emerging Diseases to work towards the production of vaccines in the region.

In making the suggestion at the 24th Asean-Japan Summit, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said this would help address the regional shortage of vaccines and prepare for possible emerging diseases.

He said that Japan's contribution to the centre was important and its timely establishment was vital to Asean member states in dire need of assistance to mitigate the impact

of Covid-19.

"Asean and Japan should enhance multi-disciplinary cooperation in health to better prepare the region to meet future health-related emergencies," he said in his intervention at the summit yesterday.

Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida also attended the summit, his first since being appointed to the country's top post earlier this month.

Ismail Sabri said that Malaysia appreciates Japan's support and contribution to the Asean Comprehensive Recovery Framework to mitigate the impact of Covid-19 and the country's vaccine contribution to Asean member states.

Meanwhile, at the inaugural Asean-Australia Summit held virtually, the Prime Minister said that Asean and Australia should prepare for future public health emergencies and emerging diseases through the exchange of knowledge and capacity building programmes, including by leveraging on digital technologies.

"Malaysia appreciates Australia's strong support of Asean's efforts to mitigate the impact of Covid-19; almost A\$700mil (RM2.2bil) have been earmarked for various initiatives.

"This will greatly assist Asean in pursuing its Comprehensive Recovery Framework to implement its recovery strategies and build a

future that is sustainable and resilient," he said at the summit which was also attended by his Australian counterpart Scott Morrison.

Ismail Sabri added that Malaysia welcomed the announcement by Morrison on further assistance of A\$124mil (RM386mil) for the next 10 years.

"The proposed areas of cooperation are highly relevant.

"Malaysia looks forward to mutually beneficial projects across the three Asean Community pillars," he added.

The Prime Minister noted that an area that demanded attention was mental health, which Malaysia, Brunei and Australia had been working closely on. — Bernama