'Couriers and postmen should also get vaccination priority'

PETALING JAYA: The government should prioritise workers in the courier or last-mile delivery service for Covid-19 vaccination, given the likelihood of them coming into contact with high-risk households.

Association of Malaysian Express Carriers president Teong Teck Lean said there are more than 80,000 courier and postal workers in Malaysia who interact with almost one million households daily.

He noted that vaccination for these workers would prove to be an important step towards curbing the spread of the coronavirus in Malaysia.

"Due to the nature of their job, last-mile delivery personnel face a high risk of exposure to Covid-19.

"It is in our best interest to keep all frontliners safe during this pandemic but it is our view that this should also include workers in last-mile delivery service, " said Teong, who is also the group chief executive officer of GDEX Bhd, one of the biggest courier companies in the country.

He said the association had written to the Science, Technology and Innovation Ministry to prioritise workers in the courier and delivery service in the vaccination rollout.

"The vaccination of courier workers will also help reduce delays in last-mile delivery and this, in turn, will benefit many businesses that rely on this service, " he said.

"The movement control order has caused delays in delivery due to precautionary measures such as Covid-19 screening for courier staff, sanitisation of hubs, warehouses and distribution centres. There have also been cancellations of passenger flights to Sabah and Sarawak, " he

said.

Despite the challenges, Teong expects the volume of last-mile and courier delivery to remain high as more companies move their business online.

Science, Technology and Innovation Minister Khairy Jamaluddin has said Malaysia will receive its first one million doses of vaccines from Pfizer in the first quarter of this year.

He said priority will be given to frontliners such as health workers and policemen, among others.