

Minister of Research and Technology Builds "Merah Putih" Vaccine Acceleration Team

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The Minister of Research and Technology and the Head of the Indonesian National Innovation Research Agency (BRIN), Bambang Brodjonegoro, built a team to expedite the production of the "Merah Putih" vaccine production. The team consists of several experts from various universities. Hopefully, the team can assist the vaccine release from the youth's innovation of the nation. The submission of the Decree of the "Merah Putih" vaccine acceleration team was decided directly by the Minister of Research and Technology to university delegates at the launch of Bakti Inovasi Indonesia and the exhibition of innovative products for handling Covid-19 at the Royal Ambarrukmo Ballroom, in Yogyakarta, on Friday (27/11).

The Minister of Research and Technology said to a journalist that WHO had permitted and approved "Merah Putih" vaccine development, with community as the primary purpose. This reason is due to the tremendous need for vaccination to prevent Covid-19 transmission. "We will use it domestically first because we have quite large demands for vaccines. There are about 187 million people who need to be vaccinated," he said.

He revealed that every person who will be vaccinated would get at least two vaccinations. The Minister of Research and Technology assessed, around 360 million vaccines needed to handle Covid-19 transmission. He also maintained that this vaccine prioritizes domestic demands. "If later we

have fulfilled the domestic needs and we are allowed for a mass production, then we will offer it to other countries," he said.

According to the Minister, the public can't wait for the "Merah Putih" vaccine to be released. Their party also took prompt steps by building a team to stimulate the manufacture of the vaccine. Besides, they also encouraged the other releases of innovative products to support the handling of Covid-19. "We expect the innovative products produced by universities and research institutions to be valuable as a way to accelerate the Covid-19 handling," he said.

Dr. Yodi Mahendradhata, MSc., Ph.D., as the Deputy Dean for Research and Development, UGM FKKMK, mentioned two UGM parties appointed to be as part of the "Merah Putih" acceleration team. The two researchers are Prof. Microbiologists. Tri Wibawa and Child Health Specialist, dr. Ida Safitri Laksanawati, Sp. AK.

Yodi said that the UGM research team conducted the development of "Merah Putih" vaccines in the FKKMK laboratory. He explained the development of the "Merah Putih" vaccine at UGM would be emphasized in developing the recombinant and adjuvant protein DNA models.

"This vaccine development is incorporated in a consortium at UI, ITB, and UGM through many platforms. However, UGM will be more highlighted in the development of procuring materials for recombinant and adjuvant protein," he said.

There were at least 18 innovative products presented at the exhibition of innovative products for handling Covid-19. Some of them are RI-GHA as an antigen-based rapid diagnosis tool for Covid-19 from UGM, immunomodulators from LIPI, ventilator products from Polman Bandung, robots of door-opening from ITS, and wedang uwuh drinks products and ginger tea from UGM.

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