

FROM JULY 13 TO SEPT 13

# FIRST ORANG ASLI HEALTH SURVEY BEGINS

It will involve 21,000 respondents from 4,700 households in 71 villages, says health minister

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**T**HE Institute for Public Health, in cooperation with the Department of Orang Asli Development, is conducting an Orang Asli Health Survey for the very first time.

Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said the survey aimed to collect data on the health of the Orang Asli.

He added that the three-month survey, which kicked off on July 13 and concludes on Sept 13, would assist the Health Ministry in strengthening healthcare services for the Orang Asli community.

Khairy said the Orang Asli represented 0.6 per cent (200,000) of the total population.

"The health survey will involve 21,000 Orang Asli respondents from 4,700 households in 71 villages across the country.

"The survey will provide evidence-based input to the ministry and other agencies to aid in formulating new strategies to improve public health," Khairy said after launching the survey at Sahom Community Hall, here, yesterday.

He said the Orang Asli com-



Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin presenting the Anak Malaysia Sihat award to Samuel Eddy Huzairi at the launch of the Orang Asli Health Survey at Sahom Community Hall in Kampar, Perak, yesterday. PIC BY BALQIS JAZIMAH ZAHARI

munity was still plagued by basic issues in education, living standards, healthcare, amenities and socio-economic status.

"This survey is being carried out to get comprehensive health data and the disease burden of the Orang Asli community.

"The health status of the Orang Asli must be improved.

"This includes tackling nutritional issues in children, non-communicable diseases, hypertension, diabetes and cholesterol."

Khairy said the survey findings would also allow the ministry to assess the existing health programmes for the Orang Asli community.

The villages that were randomly picked for the survey repre-

sented the three main Orang Asli tribes: Senoi, Proto-Malay and Negrito from Pahang, Perak, Kedah, Terengganu, Kelantan, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Johor.

A total of 15 data collection teams will visit all households in the villages to conduct interviews, health checks and reviews of the immunisation records of children.

The health checks will involve anthropometry measurements according to age groups, blood pressure, finger prick blood tests to measure glucose, cholesterol and haemoglobin levels, and hair and nail sample collection for all age groups in 14 selected villages for heavy metal exposure testing.