

Anwar's claims on vaccine procurement baseless, says KJ

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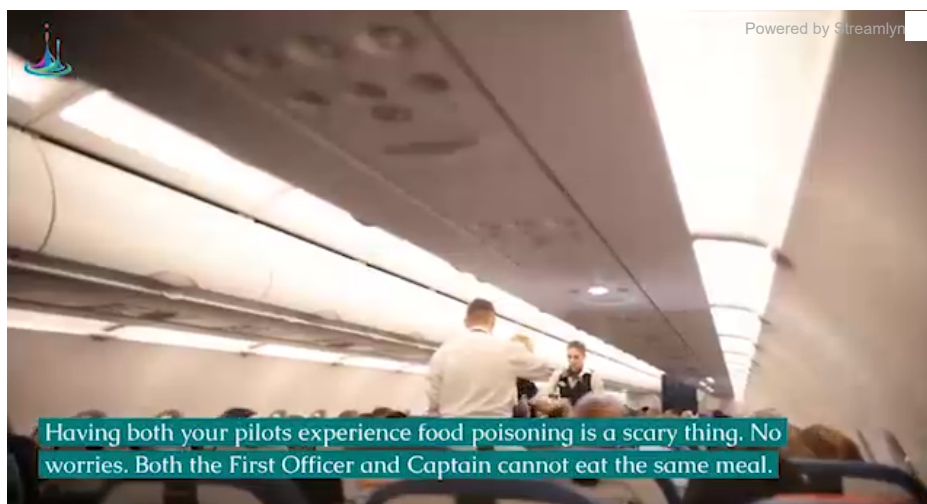
Khairy Jamaluddin says he had invited Anwar Ibrahim to a question-and-answer session on the Covid-19 national immunisation programme, but he did not attend.

PETALING JAYA: Covid-19 vaccine programme coordinating minister Khairy Jamaluddin has denied that pharmaceutical company Pharmaniaga is monopolising vaccine procurement in the country, saying the company only oversees procurement of the Sinovac vaccine from China.

He was responding to a viral video by opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim, who had alleged, among others, that the government wanted to control vaccine supply and procurement through Pharmaniaga.

Khairy, who is the science, technology and innovation minister and the Cabinet member in charge of the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme, said the claims were baseless and unfair.

He said that by law, every vaccine needed a "local product registration holder" – a local company making an application to the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA) for vaccine approval.





"For Sinovac, the local product registration holder is Pharmaniaga," he said in a video on his Facebook page last night.

However, he said, there have been a few local companies interested in securing approvals for China's Sinopharm vaccines.

"For that, we are open to any party with the capability, and information or clinical data to register the Sinopharm vaccine with the NPRA."

He maintained that the government was not looking to control vaccine procurement by states or private companies, adding that the government was "simply prioritising procurement" for the immunisation programme.

"After that, any person who wants to buy from any vaccine manufacturer approved by the NPRA is free to do so."

The private sector had already started discussing with the international trade and industry ministry on purchasing vaccines for their workers.

Khairy said the government would open vaccinations for industries soon, during Phase 3 of the programme (for the general public above 18 years old).

"This matter is already in our plans. It's just that now we want to complete vaccinations for Phase 2 recipients consisting of the elderly, patients with chronic illnesses and the disabled."

He also said he had previously invited Anwar to a question-and-answer session on the immunisation programme for all MPs, but he did not attend.

"Instead, now he has made a viral video making baseless allegations, which clearly shows his lack of understanding about the issue," he said.

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