

Malaysia's state governments and private hospitals can buy their own WHO-approved COVID-19 vaccines: Khairy



Malaysia's Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Khairy Jamaluddin. (Photo: Facebook/Khairy Jamaluddin)

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03 Jun 2021 06:17PM

(Updated: 03 Jun 2021 06:22PM)

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GEORGETOWN: State governments and private hospitals across Malaysia can purchase their own COVID-19 vaccines, including those which are not used in the National COVID-19 Immunisation Programme (NIP) such as Moderna and Sinopharm, said vaccine coordinating minister Khairy Jamaluddin.

Speaking at a press conference after visiting a vaccination centre in Penang on Thursday (Jun 3), Mr Khairy said states and private hospitals in Malaysia can source their own vaccines as long as these vaccines have been approved by the World Health Organization (WHO).

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"If the state governments want to purchase their own vaccines and bring these other vaccines in, they can go ahead. We can even facilitate discussions with the pharmaceutical companies," said Mr Khairy.

 The state governments or private hospitals need only register these purchases with the Health Ministry's National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (CNRA), he added.

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However, if these parties wish to purchase vaccines that are used in the NIP such as Sinovac and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines, then they will have to wait for the suppliers to fulfil the federal government's orders first.

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"The suppliers must fulfil our orders first and once that is fulfilled, then they can supply to the states," said Mr Khairy.

"We are open to this. Don't say that there is any blocking or monopoly (by the federal government)," he added.

A medical worker prepares to administer a dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at the Malaysia International Trade and Exhibition Centre in Kuala Lumpur on May 31, 2021. (Photo: AFP/Mohd Rasfan)

The vaccines currently used in Malaysia's NIP are Pfizer-BioNTech, Sinovac and AstraZeneca. Other vaccines that have been approved by WHO include Moderna and Sinopharm.

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In April, Mr Khairy [dismissed accusations \(/news/asia/malaysia-covid19-vaccines-khairy-federal-blocks-states-procure-14665146\)](/news/asia/malaysia-covid19-vaccines-khairy-federal-blocks-states-procure-14665146) by critics that the federal government had not been helpful in allowing state governments from buying their own vaccines.

Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim had claimed that the [federal government had stonewalled attempts \(/news/asia/malaysia-covid-19-vaccines-anwar-putrajaya-stonewalling-states-14657126\)](/news/asia/malaysia-covid-19-vaccines-anwar-putrajaya-stonewalling-states-14657126) by Selangor and Sarawak state governments as well as private entities from sourcing their own government-approved vaccine supplies.

► [READ: Malaysian Medical Association says there has been lack of engagement with GPs on vaccination programme \(/news/asia/malaysian-medical-association-gp-covid-19-vaccine-khairy-14925998?cid=h3_referral_inarticlelinks_24082018_cna\)](/news/asia/malaysian-medical-association-gp-covid-19-vaccine-khairy-14925998?cid=h3_referral_inarticlelinks_24082018_cna)

Malaysia's vaccination drive, which began in February, is now in its second phase with more than 3.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered so far.

Among them are more than 1.1 million people who have already received their two-dose vaccination.

Mr Khairy had said that the vaccination rate in the country reached 100,000 doses a day since May 27 and the target now is to achieve 200,000 doses by the end of July.

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