

# Singapore got Pfizer vaccine quicker because Temasek Holdings had a stake in BioNTech, says KJ



By TARRENCE TAN, RAHIMY RAHIM, MARTIN CARVALHO and CLARISSA CHUNG

**NATION**

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KUALA LUMPUR: Among the reasons why Singapore was ahead of Malaysia in procuring Covid-19 vaccines was because Temasek Holdings and other investors had invested US\$250mil (RM1.06bil) into German biotech company BioNTech, says Khairul Jamaluddin.

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"Israel paid a very high price and they agreed to share vaccination data of their citizens with Pfizer-BioNTech, which is an option not available to other countries," he said when delivering his winding-up speech in Parliament on his ministry's efforts in the national immunisation programme on Wednesday (July 28).

Khairy also explained that the reason Indonesia was ahead of Malaysia in procuring vaccines was because Indonesia is a testing location for China's Sinovac Phase 3 trials.

"Countries producing vaccines will prioritise countries that were clinical sites for their vaccines," he added.

At the same time, Khairy said the vaccine produced by BioNTech-Pfizer was manufactured on a messenger-genetic (mRNA) platform, which was a relatively new technology.

"The vaccines developed by Pfizer was made on an mRNA platform, which was never used before in the world," he said, adding that there is also an absence of clinical trial data available.

Khairy said Malaysia took the ethical path by looking at interim reports and made orders after being satisfied with the efficacy and safety reports.

He also said Malaysia isn't the only country that was late in procuring vaccines, as there are many other first-world countries who chose to wait as well.

"Australia, South Korea, and Japan also received their vaccine supplies around the same time, this shows we made the same judgement as the other developing countries in the Asia Pacific region," he added.

Earlier, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (PH-Kulim Bandar Baharu) had claimed that the initial delays in the procurement of vaccines under the National Covid-19 Immunisation Programme were caused by unnecessary red tape by the National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (NPRA).

As of Tuesday (July 27), a total of 553,871 Covid-19 vaccine doses were administered, bring up the cumulative total number of doses given

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