

EU urged to recognise all vaccines approved by WHO

KUALA LUMPUR: The European Union should expand the bloc's recognition to all Covid-19 vaccines that have been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Covid-19 National Immunisation Programme Coordinating Minister Khairy Jamaluddin said this in the wake of reports that the European Medicines Agency (EMA) was approving only AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured in certain countries, including among the bloc's member states.

"Malaysia has made representations to the EU to expand recognition to all vaccines that have secured emergency use listing under the WHO," he said.

"That would be the most fair outcome in the recognition of vaccines for travellers.

"As long as the vaccines have been listed by the WHO, that country (under the EU) should accept travellers who have been inoculated with those vaccines."

He said this was among the three approaches adopted by Malaysia in light of reports that

the EMA only approved AstraZeneca vaccines manufactured in the EU, the United States, the United Kingdom and China.

The report stated that EMA's approval did not cover AstraZeneca doses made by South Korea's SK Bioscience or Thailand's Siam Bioscience. The two companies produce vaccines for Malaysia's order through the global Covax facility and direct orders.

Khairy said Malaysia would ask the developer of the AstraZeneca vaccine to inform the EU that the formulation used to manufacture the vaccine at all of its facilities were the same.

Malaysia would also ask the developer of the AstraZeneca vaccine to inform the EU that all manufacturing facilities for the vaccines had good manufacturing practices. He said Malaysia would also seek clarification from the EU over the policy.

"I will discuss this with the EU ambassador to Malaysia (Michalis Rokas) to obtain greater clarity on the actual policy."