

Don't worry, there is enough food for all, says PM in response to panic buying by Malaysians

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BY YISWAREE PALANSAMY



People are seen stocking up on food and other goods during the panic buying at a hypermarket in Kajang March 16, 2020. — Picture by Shafwan Zaidon

PUTRAJAYA, March 16 — Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin today called for calm, reassuring Malaysians that there is enough food for all, amidst reports of panic buying in parts of the country in response to the Covid-19 outbreak.

"Buy what is necessary, stop what is unnecessary, and we will ensure that food is available for you at all times," Muhyiddin said.

He said that the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) will ensure there is enough supply for all, and advised against panic buying.

"But just to be truthful, do not worry so much. There is enough food around, and we have instructed KPDNHEP to ensure that essential food items must be made available. So there is no need for rush.



Panic buying in Malaysia escalated today, after the country yesterday saw a sudden spike in new Covid-19 cases. — Picture by Farhan Najib

"I know there is a certain degree of panic, I think among you, I saw some serious worry there is no food around to eat. But I think, we believe, there will be a sufficient amount," he said, adding that he has also instructed the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry to monitor the situation on the ground.

Panic buying in Malaysia escalated today, after the country yesterday saw a sudden spike in new Covid-19 cases.

Pictures and videos of Malaysian heading to their nearest supermarkets and grocery stores to stock up on goods have been making the rounds on social media.

Long queues, similar to the festive season, were seen at most shopping centres, with people loading dry goods into trolleys and emptying shelves as fear grows that the government could implement lockdown measures to combat the infection rate.

Malaysia yesterday saw 190 new Covid-19 cases, most of which were linked to a religious event that took place between February 27 and March 1, in Sri Petaling, bringing the country's tally to a whopping 438 cases.

This figure represents the biggest single-day jump in Covid-19 cases in Malaysia to date. It also makes Malaysia the worst affected country in South-east Asia.



Empty shelves are seen at a hypermarket in Kajang March 16, 2020. — Picture by Shafwan Zaidon



People are seen shopping for groceries and other essentials at Mydin Meru Raya in Ipoh March 16, 2020. — Picture by Farhan Najib