

## Panic buying escalates in Malaysia amid fear of Covid-19 lockdown

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BY JOHN BUNYAN



People queue at Tesco in Cheras with their groceries amid fear of a lockdown by the Malaysian government following a spike in Covid-19 cases, in Kuala Lumpur March 16, 2020. — Picture courtesy of R. Mages

IPOH, March 16 — 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.

A Twitter user with the handle @Mkhairulazri posted pictures of people panic buying at Tesco in Cheras. "Come on Malaysian...Please don't do panic buying. Location: Tesco Cheras, 11.30am," he wrote.

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*Come on Malaysian..*

*Please don't do panic buying.*

*Location: Tesco Cheras, 11:30 AM. [pic.twitter.com/JYyYIHmctk](https://pic.twitter.com/JYyYIHmctk)*

*— Khairul Azri (@mkhairulazri) March 16, 2020*

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R. Mages, 58, who was doing her usual shopping at Tesco in Cheras told Malay Mail that the crowd was unusual for a weekday afternoon.

"Looks like people are stocking up on groceries due to the Covid-19. Long queues were seen at all the counters," she said.

Another Twitter user @harith2891 posted a picture of people queuing with trolleys full of groceries at Giant Hypermarket in Batu Caves.

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*Giant batu caves [pic.twitter.com/Bst1Oc6RmI](https://pic.twitter.com/Bst1Oc6RmI)*

*— harith shah (@harith2891) March 16, 2020*

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Another user @Darentiff shared a video of people thronging to a supermarket from his Instagram via Twitter by writing "Sigh it has started!".

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*Sigh it has started!#Malaysia #PanicBuying #Hoarding*

*<https://t.co/zSCMLitXmQ>*

*— Daren Lee (@darentiff) March 16, 2020*

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Twitter user @Nuraisyahusna said that Malaysians are doing exactly what Singaporeans did when their country was hit with Covid-19 infections.

"A month ago we laughed at Singaporean. Now look at our people," she wrote.

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*A month a go we laughed at Singaporean. But now look at our people ☐*

— Nunaaa 🍷 (@Nuraisyahusna) March 16, 2020

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Meanwhile, Check-in Asia, a travel and hospitality company, shared a picture of people stocking up on groceries at a supermarket and said that the hottest business right now in Malaysia is groceries.

"Forget tourism or oil. The hottest business in Malaysia right now is groceries. Rumours of an impending lockdown are fuelling panic buying in supermarkets," wrote the Kuala Lumpur-based company.

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*Forget #tourism or #oil. The hottest business in #Malaysia right now is #groceries. Rumours of an impending lockdown are fuelling panic buying in #supermarkets.*

*[pic.twitter.com/Y2BRborw90](https://pic.twitter.com/Y2BRborw90)*

— Check-in Asia (@CheckinAsia) March 16, 2020

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The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) on its official Twitter account warned people not to spread fake news on Covid-19.

"News or message relating to the suggestion by the Health Ministry urging people to buy groceries and lockdown measures is fake news," KPDNHEP wrote.

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**BERITA PALSU!**

**MOHON HENTIKAN PERKONGSIAN BERITA PALSU  
INI.**

*"Berita atau mesej berkaitan cadangan oleh Kementerian  
Kesihatan Malaysia agar rakyat mula membeli barang  
keperluan asas dan perintah berkurung ADALAH PALSU!*

*"#KPDNHEP #Covid\_19 #COVID19malaysia  
[pic.twitter.com/hlThPYJ7vE](https://pic.twitter.com/hlThPYJ7vE)*

— mykpdnhep (@mykpdnhep) March 16, 2020

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KPDNHEP also said it hopes that Malaysians will not panic buy as this situation will create a negative impact on the price and supply of grocery items.

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*KPDNHEP berharap TIADA PANIC BUYING dilakukan,  
kerana situasi ini akan lebih mendatangkan kesan negatif  
kepada harga dan bekalan barang keperluan harian pengguna*

*— mykpdnhep (@mykpdnhep) March 16, 2020*

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Malaysia yesterday saw 190 new Covid-19 cases, most of which were linked to a religious event that took place between February 28 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.

