

Covid-19: Domestic trade minister urges public not to panic, says essential goods in sufficient supply

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People walk by near empty shelves are seen at Tesco Ampang, amid panic buying following the restriction of movement order announced by the government, in Kuala Lumpur March 17, 2020. — Picture by Firdaus Latif

PUTRAJAYA, March 17 — The Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP) today gave an assurance that there is an adequate supply of essential items in the country and that the public need not engage in panic buying.

Its Minister, Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi said he had ordered all the ministry's 2,500 enforcement officers nationwide to visit supermarkets and convenience stores to ensure they restocked essential items and did not raise prices.

"All consumers are advised not to engage in panic buying. There is no need to overstock as there is a sufficient supply of essential items, based on the ministry's information," he told reporters, after opening a Tealive branch at his ministry here today.

Nanta was asked to comment on panic buying undertaken by the public since yesterday (March 16).



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi (right) speaks during a press conference in Putrajaya March 17, 2020. — Bernama pic

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin in a live broadcast last night, announced that Malaysia would impose a nationwide Movement Control Order effective March 18 to 31, to curb the spread of Covid-19.

This is the first time such an order has been enforced in Malaysia.

The control order was made under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988 and the Police Act 1967.

Nanta said he was also seeking cooperation from the public to stop panic buying, while grocery stores should ensure they restocked their supplies.

Asked if the ministry would limit the number of items allowed for purchase by each consumer, he said at the moment, the ministry did not intend to impose such restrictions.

"If we deem it necessary, we will take appropriate action," he added.

Asked about those who took advantage of the situation by selling a pack of 150 face masks for RM150, Nanta said the ministry would monitor the situation.

"At the same time, consumers also need to act smartly. Why make a purchase when the price is high?," he said. — Bernama

RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT ORDER

IMPLEMENTED UNDER THE PREVENTION & CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES ACT 1988
& THE POLICE ACT 1967

IN EFFECT FROM MARCH 18 - 31

PROHIBITS:



- The movement of persons & mass gatherings e.g. religious, sports, social & cultural
- All places of worship must close & halt activities including the Muslim Friday prayer

- All business premises except supermarkets, public markets, sundry & convenience shops must close



- The operation of nurseries, government & private schools e.g. day schools, boarding schools, international schools, tahfiz centres & pre-university institutions

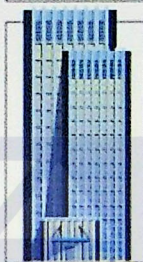
- Includes public & private higher education institutions, as well as skills training centres



- Malaysians from going overseas

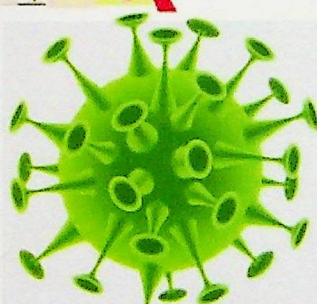
- Those returning from overseas must undergo a medical examination & self-quarantine for 14 days

- Foreign tourists/visitors banned from entering the country



- The operation of non-essential public & private premises

- Essential services like water, electricity, telecommunications, postal, transportation, irrigation, oil, gas, fuel, lubricants, broadcasting, finance, banking, health, pharmacies, the fire brigade, prisons, ports, airports, security & defences, cleaning, retail & food supplies allowed to remain open



- Drastic immediate action is required to stop the spread of COVID-19

- For more information on the restriction of movement order, call the National Operation Management Centre hotline at 03-8888 2010 when it opens from noon on March 17

- Everyone in Malaysia must comply with the order