

## Sufficient onion supply until CNY, says minister

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India, which supplies 70% of Malaysia's needs, has raised the export price of onions recently.

**BUKIT MERTAJAM:** There will be an adequate supply of red, big and white onions until the Chinese New Year celebrations in late January, domestic trade minister Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said today.

He said the government was importing more onions from other countries such as the Netherlands, China and Pakistan, to make up for the shortfall in supply of onions from India.

"Although India is Malaysia's largest supplier, we still have onions from these three countries. I guarantee that the supply of the three varieties of onions will be sufficient until the Chinese New Year celebrations," he told reporters here.

Saifuddin said the ministry's monitoring showed that onion prices had been rising before the onions reached Malaysia, as they were already expensive in the source country.

He said the government was constantly monitoring and carrying out inspections at wholesalers and other premises to make sure no one took the opportunity to hoard onions and sell them at high prices.

FMT reported earlier today that "The eye-watering prices of onions, sold for between RM10 and RM20 per kg in major wet markets in the country over the past two months, has caused much hardship to consumers already reeling from the high cost of living."

Saifuddin said ministry officials had been told to investigate a newspaper report about alleged smuggling of onions along the Malaysia-Thai border.

The report said questions have been raised why there was an onion shortage in many states while there was an over-supply at Padang Besar.

According to media reports, a kilogram of onions used to cost RM4 but now goes for as much as RM12 a kg.

### **No limit to cheap sales from Jan 2**

Saifuddin said cheap sales can take place anytime from Jan 2 instead of just four times a year.

He said that under the Trade Descriptions (Cheap Sale Price) (Amendment) Regulations 2019, gazetted on Nov 29 and effective on Jan 2, traders may conduct cheap sales at any time without having to notify the ministry.

Before this, they had to apply for a permit 14 days before conducting such sales.

