

Domestic Trade Ministry urges local mask producers to increase production to meet demand

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Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the ministry had met with five main producers of face masks in the country to discuss the matter following complaints of insufficient supply to meet demand. — Picture by Firdaus Latif

KULIM, Feb 14 — The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) has urged local mask producers to increase production of the three-layered facial masks in order to meet public demand now.

Its minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the ministry had met with five main producers of face masks in the country to discuss the matter following complaints of insufficient supply to meet demand.

“After listening to their views, the ministry has asked local producers (to produce more masks) and know how much they can produce,” he said.

He added that some of the producers can produce 200 masks a day while others can come up with 100,000 a week.

Speaking to reporters after launching the opening of the first branch of the 99 Speed Mart store in the state in Serdang near here today, Saifuddin Nasution said some of the producers also have a ready stock of up to 200,000 pieces of masks.

He said the ministry will also be monitoring the production of facial masks by the producers each week, subject to their capabilities.

He said the Ministry of Human Resources has also agreed to immediately approve applications to allow 24-hour operations shifts in factories to increase the production of face masks.

"They also have their problems, for instance to increase production, they have to add shifts. They asked me to talk to the Human Resources Ministry to expedite approval for factories to add shifts in order for them to operate 24 hours," he said.

In connection to this, Saifuddin Nasution urged the public not to panic in purchasing the masks as the government was working to ensure sufficient supply.

He also said the ministry will discuss price with the producers so that it can distribute masks to the public either free of charge or otherwise.

"I have held discussions with the Finance Ministry for an allocation for this purpose," he said.

Saifuddin Nasution also advised traders not to take advantage of the situation by increasing the price of masks which is listed as a controlled item under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011. —
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