

Probe launched into extremely pricey onions in Penang



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (3rd-left) inspecting the goods after opening the TF Value-Mart in Bandar Baru Air Putih, Balik Pulau. - NSTP/Shahnaz Fazlie Shahrizal

By Audrey Dermawan
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BALIK PULAU: The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry has launched a probe into complaints that Indian onions are being sold for up to a whopping RM24 per kilogramme at retail outlets in Penang.

Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said he had instructed his enforcement team to check on the premises concerned to get an explanation before revealing the findings to the press.

He added that notices had been issued under Section 21 of the Price Control and Profiteering Act 2011 against the retailers.

"In Penang, the last report I received from the National Goods Price Council showed the price of onions in the state ranged from RM4.90 to RM24 per kg.

"I am trying to get to the bottom of the problem by exercising Section 21 of the Act to obtain all information from the retailers on their suppliers, wholesalers, importers and the costs involved," he said at the opening of TF Value-Mart in Balik Pulau here today.

Saifuddin said there was no shortage of onions in the country as supplies were also being brought in from China, Pakistan, Holland and Egypt at lower prices.

"However, our people prefer onions from India.

"Because of that, we are faced with price fluctuations when India stopped its onion exports recently due to a shortage there," he added.

Meanwhile, FT Value-Mart chief executive officer Ho Mun Hao said the grocery store chain was selling onions at a promotional price of 98 sen per kg, adding that they come from Egypt and the quality was similar to that of Indian onions.

On a separate matter, Saifuddin gave assurances that there was sufficient food supply for the Chinese New Year and an announcement on the maximum price scheme would be made soon.

"We are in the process of consultation and the amount of supplies will be among the factors t

