

## It won't be an onion-less Chinese New Year



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said Malaysia currently imports onions from India, China, Pakistan and Holland. -NSTP/ RAMDZAN MASIAM

By Audrey Dermawan  
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**SEBERANG JAYA:** The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry has assured that there would be ample supply of onions in the market, including for Chinese New Year, which falls on Jan 25.

Its minister, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said Malaysia currently imports onions from India, China, Pakistan and Holland.

"Despite India halting the export of its onions due to severe shortage following flooding, we have ample supply of onions, including during the festive season.

"This is because we do not rely only on India for their onions. We also import from three other countries," he said after the launch of a "Back to School" programme at Tesco Extra, here, today.

Some 150 underprivileged children received school bags, courtesy of Tesco.

On Friday, the ministry had said that a shortage of onions from India had led to the increase in prices following an export ban from the producing country.



According to media reports, one kilogramme of Indian onions previously priced at RM4 have now skyrocketed to RM12.

Saifuddin said based on the existing trend, the price increase had nothing to do with the shortage of onions from India.

He said the price of onions was already high when they were brought in from the producing countries.

“Then, as it moves downstream, there are further increases,” he added.

On reports that onions imported by Malaysian companies were found in Thailand, Saifuddin said he had ordered his ministry to investigate the claims.

“We will look into the claims. For now, we will enhance checks at all entry and exit points into the country to prevent our onions from being taken out.

“We need to ascertain if there is any smuggling activity,” he said.

