

Measures taken to curb smuggling in Tawau

Published on: Monday, November 25, 2019

By: Lagata Toyos



TAWAU: The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) has attributed the rampant smuggling of controlled items in the district to its high demand and low government-subsidised prices.

It is conducted through a modus operandi where the smuggled goods are transported through a sea route, given its strategic location along the Indonesian border of Sebatik Island and Kalabakan-Nunukan.

District KPDNHEP Chief Enforcement Officer Aslani Dabi, said the Ministry has taken note of the situation through intensified enforcement actions to curb smuggling activities.

He said the country could incur huge losses through subsidies on certain commodities, particularly liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), cooking oil, wheat flour, petrol and diesel.

"Combative measures have been planned and executed to curb smuggling of subsidised controlled items, which include imposing 'Syarat Khas Tambahan' (Additional Special Conditions) for LPG wholesale.

"Retail licence holders in Tawau are also not allowed to supply the item to Sebatik residents.

"Only licensed people can supply LPG to Sebatik Island based on a permit issued stating the quantity, time, date of descent, the jetty involved and the registration number of the boat carrying the LPG," he added.

He said this following a number of social media outbreaks related to the smuggling of subsidised controlled goods across the border.

Among the most notable is the open trading of gas cylinders.

KPDNHEP Tawau enforcement officials have been given a directive to continuously monitor every docking pier in the district, including private jetties, which are commonly found to have frequent complaints of mismanagement.

Similarly, wholesalers and retailers are also monitored and checked to ensure its supply and distribution are in line with the stock book reports that are provided or submitted.

Meanwhile, Aslani noted that KPDNHEP, which is actively engaged in joint operations with other enforcement agencies both at sea and on land, recorded 48 cases in 2017, 23 cases (2018) and 33 cases from January to November 18, this year.

On prosecution cases, it recorded 157 of various trading offences over the same period involving a seizure value of RM605,334 and compound of RM35,450.

According to Aslani, the highest confiscation recorded involved offences under the Supply Control Act 1961, at a total of RM578,399, with 51 cases and RM19,900 compound value.

