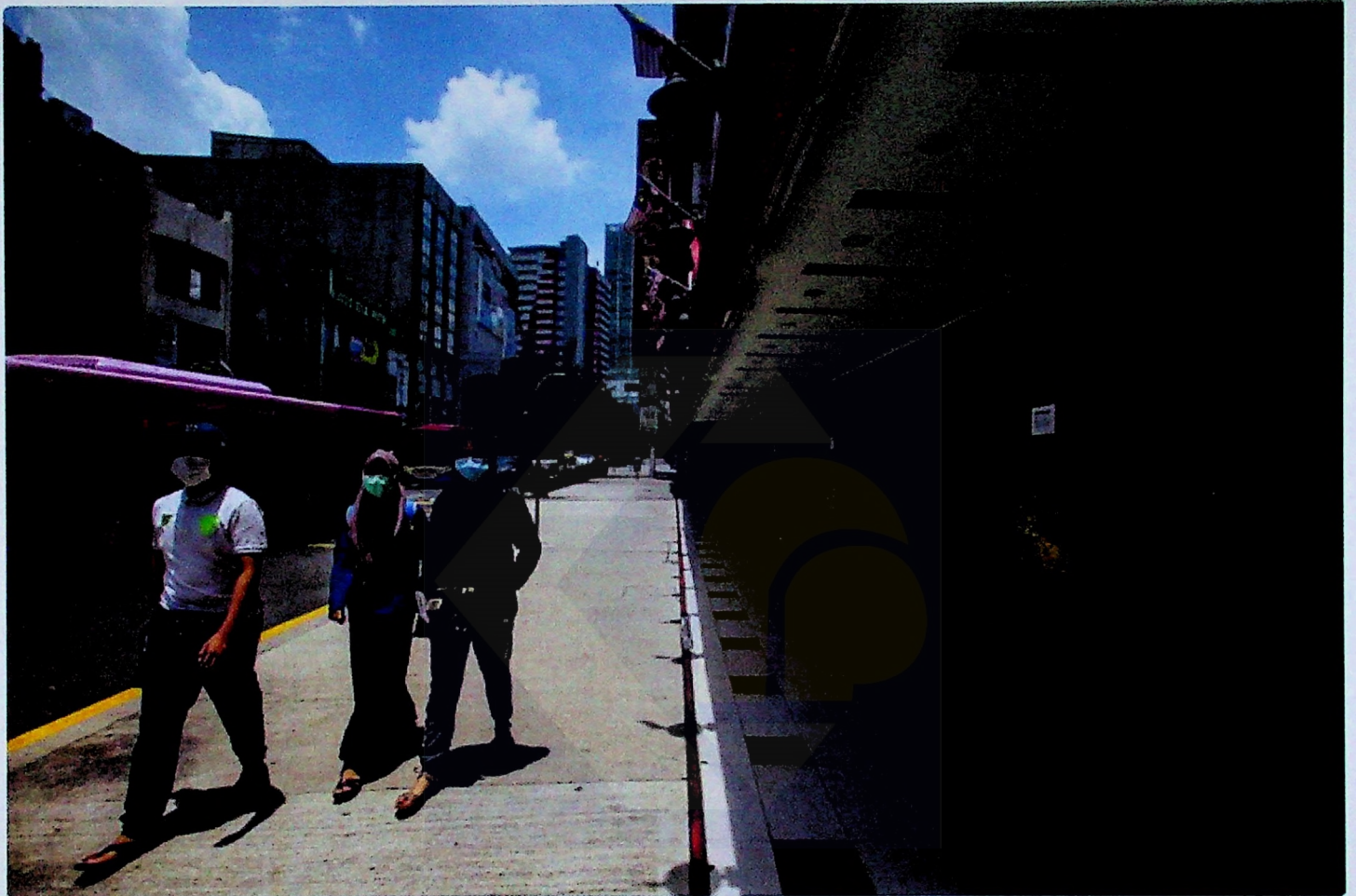


## Up to National Security Council to decide on free masks, says Nanta

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People wearing face masks walk past shuttered shops along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman as the movement control order kicks in on March 18, 2020. — Picture by Hari Anggara

**PUTRAJAYA, March 22** — It is up to the Majlis Keselamatan Negara (MKN) or National Security Council to decide on the proposal to give out free masks to the public, especially in areas at risk of contracting Covid-19, said Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi.

“It was discussed but I cannot give out any information about it. Wait for the decision, the government is concerned about the people,” he told reporters after viewing the supply of essential goods during the Movement Control Order (MCO) period at Hero Supermarket here today.

Nanta was replying to questions from reporters on whether the government was planning to distribute free masks to the public as was done in several areas in Thailand by the health units there.



He said the government was working to make sure that there was sufficient supply of masks in the country by importing from other countries and banning export.

"We are waiting for supply to come in a few days. There are many importers who want to bring them in, so we are confident that we will resolve the problem of lack of masks," he said.

Asked if the government will limit the sale of masks to one per person, Nanta said for now, there was no such plan, but he advised the public to buy only the amount needed.

"We are not at the stage where we need to limit purchase, but we urge all parties to buy prudently, think of others, if we buy too many for ourselves, this shows that we are not concerned about other people," he said.

On essential items, Nanta said so far, checks by the ministry found that there was sufficient supply throughout the country even though there was panic buying after the MCO was announced.

"There was panic buying in some places, but it was not too bad and was not prolonged. Consumers in these areas bought too much, but it did not get to a worrying stage," he said.

He added that the ministry will continue to monitor the supply and price of essential items during the MCO period. — Bernama

<https://www.malaymail.com/news/malaysia/2020/03/22/up-to-national-security-council-to-decide-on-free-masks-says-nanta/1849006>

