

Domestic Trade Ministry records 31 offences related to face masks

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A sign outside a pharmacy shows that face masks are still out of stock, Kuala Lumpur March 15, 2020. — Picture by Shafwan Zaidon

KUALA LUMPUR, March 22 — A total of 31 offences related to the pricing and supply of face masks have been recorded from 255 inspections conducted by the Ministry of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs (KPDNHEP), with compounds totalling RM127,400 issued.

Its Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi said of the total, 26 offences involved selling the face masks above the RM2 ceiling price.

“So far, there have been more than 30 cases (31 cases). We do have an SOP on that (inspection and action). We will first determine whether the complaint is true or not, and we have laws to deal with those who are caught (if found guilty).”

“It’s not just face masks, no party can take advantage of the situation even for essential or non-essential items. Profiteering is an offence. So we appeal to those involved in these businesses not to take advantage, what more during these trying times,” he told reporters after surveying the supply and prices of essential goods at the AEON Taman Maluri supermarket here today.

He said although suppliers and manufacturers had given assurances that the supply of face masks was sufficient, it was the attitude of those who took advantage of the situation as well as panic buying which caused the shortage in the market.

The ministry allowed face masks to be imported and sold for a maximum of RM2 a piece effective Friday (March 20).

As of yesterday, Sabah and Melaka recorded the highest number of offences with six each, followed by Selangor (4); Kuala Lumpur and Negri Sembilan (3 each); Kedah, Penang, and Johor (2 each); and Perak, Pahang and Sarawak (1 each). — Bernama

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