

Extra supply of face masks selling fast

Friday, 06 Mar 2020

12:46 PM MYT

By MAZWIN NIK ANIS



PUTRAJAYA: The promised additional supply of face masks are already available in the market, but are fast flying off the shelves due to high demand, says Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

Its secretary-general Datuk Hasnol Zam Zam Ahmad said some areas would have to face a longer waiting time, as more supplies were being channelled to certain areas such as Johor, where there was a lot of movement of people to and from Singapore, which is also affected by the Covid-19 outbreak.

"The additional face masks are already in the market, but because the demand is high, the products are going fast. I am told that face masks that arrive in the morning are gone by midday.

"Manufacturers, which are already producing the additional face masks, are looking to see how they can further boost production," he said after a farewell do for former minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail.

Hasnol said local manufacturers produced around five million pieces of three-ply, industrial and surgical masks a month but the viral outbreak had seen demand rose by three folds to 15 million pieces.

There are fewer than 10 mask manufacturers in the country focusing on the production of masks for surgical and industrial use.

" Last month, the government had announced that shortage of three-ply face masks would be resolved once local manufacturers increased production with an extra 400,000 piece daily, giving its guarantee to buy the products for stockpiles.

Hasnol said the high level committee dealing with the Covid-19 outbreak discussed the issue of temporarily stopping the export of the face masks.

"The committee accepted the idea but certain processes need to be carried out first, " he said

