

No shortage of supplies: Sabah consumers urged to avoid panic-buying

Saturday, 14 Mar 2020

3:27 PM MYT

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KOTA KINABALU: There is no shortage of essential goods across Sabah, and Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) officials are carrying out a two-day intensive check following the emergence of Covid-19 cases in the state.

The ministry's Sabah director Georgie Abas said food and other basic supplies were sufficiently available during checks at markets, hype-malls, warehouses and sundry shops.

"Our checks found that there was no panic-buying by consumers and basic goods were available," he said on Saturday (March 14).

Georgie said all its 200 enforcement personnel and 90 officers had been checking on the pricing of consumer goods state-wide since Friday (March 13) to ensure that there was no panic-buying of goods at 31 markets, 13 hyper-malls and 106 supermarkets and retail stores.

"We will ensure that supplies of basic necessities, including controlled items, are available and sold at the recommended prices," he added.

"Our checks were also to ensure that the controlled items, like sugar, cooking oil and flour, were available," he said.

Georgie said since January, his office had checked 11,985 premises in both urban and rural areas and seized RM236,235 worth of goods and summoned 438 traders for various offences, including hiking prices.

So far, he said they had collected RM69,420 in fines in the present operation.

He said there were a total of 395 public complaints and they had resolved 353, with the remaining 42 still under investigation.

He warned traders that the ministry would come down hard against those who increased prices amid the current Covid-19 concerns. He also urged the public not to resort to panic-buying as there was more than enough supply of various consumer goods in the state.

Following the detection of the first positive case of Covid-19 in Tawau this week, there have been reports that supermarkets in the east coast town being packed with people buying essential goods.

A similar trend of large numbers of people at supermarkets in other parts of the state was seen on Friday as the numbers of Covid-19 cases increased to 15 in Sabah and two in Labuan.