

Minister: Stop the panic buying

Govt will come up with an effective plan, says Linggi

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PETALING JAYA: The government has advised the people not to go into a panic buying frenzy due to the Covid-19 outbreak.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi said if this was not checked, it would lead to a shortage of essential items.

"We are monitoring the prices of face masks, hand sanitisers and toilet paper.

"We are in the midst of coming up with an effective plan but give us a few more days.

"We are fine-tuning it. In the meantime, stop the panic buying. Just buy what you need," he said yesterday.

He said there were still some issues with face mask stock as some components were imported from China and Europe, where the situation was critical.

His deputy Datuk Rosol Wahid also urged the public to "calm down" and avoid bulk buying as it was putting a strain on retailers and supermarkets.

"The situation in our country is under control and we will monitor for irresponsible parties taking advantage of the situation," he said.

Tesco Malaysia CEO Paul Ritchie assured customers that it carried sufficient stock and would continue to replenish essential products in its chain of stores.

"We are working hard with our suppliers to maintain the supply of food, water, toilet



paper and soap," he said.

Ritchie said that Tesco Malaysia had not imposed any limitation for purchases in-store.

"However, we are limiting quantities for purchases online to enable us to serve all customers in an efficient manner," he said.

He added that online purchases were now limited to seven units per item, previously capped at 24.

A shopper, who wanted to be known as Lim, said he had never seen people grabbing so many items at a supermarket in Bangsar.

"It seems like people are anticipating a lockdown, most of them are buying canned food, diapers and toilet papers.

"It's like panic is creeping," he said.

Another shopper, who wanted to be known as Linda, said the government should ensure that all supermarkets and pharmacies had enough items.

"The public should also keep a level head and be considerate to others as well.

"What is the point of buying up the entire shelf and then say they have spent their entire month's salary in a day?" she said.