

Shortage of masks, sanitisers to be discussed this week



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by TMR / pic by ARIF KARTONO

THE shortage of face masks and hand sanitisers in the middle of the current Covid-19 situation will be raised at the Cabinet meeting this Wednesday, said Deputy Minister of the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) Datuk Rosol Wahid.

“The minister (KPDNHEP Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi) has also said the government is ready not to export existing stock (face masks), so this will help ensure there are sufficient numbers for our country,” Bernama reported Rosol as saying while undertaking a working visit to the ministry’s Terengganu office yesterday.

He also issued a warning that stern action will be taken against any party intentionally keeping the face mask and hand sanitiser stocks away from the market, with the aim of forcing a price hike.

So far, there have been no reports of such incidents, the deputy minister added.

Rosol also advised the public not to engage in panic buying of these items to avoid a situation where traders take the opportunity to raise prices.

Meanwhile, in Arau, Perlis, state Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Committee chairman Azizan Sulaiman issued a similar warning to traders.

"I have received a few reports from consumers about price hikes (for face masks and sanitisers) and we will investigate the matter," he said when contacted by Bernama.

In a separate Bernama report, Wisma Putra is making detailed preparations to bring back 323 Malaysians from Italy and 55 from Iran, following the worsening Covid-19 outbreak in the two countries.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said preparations include identifying the locations of all Malaysians in the two countries and ensuring they were registered with the Malaysian embassies in Italy and Iran.

"This is important to facilitate our representatives obtain accurate and latest information for the mission to bring them back," he said on his official Facebook account.

He also appealed to Malaysians in Italy and Iran, or in other Covid-19 affected countries, to stay calm and be patient.

"InsyaAllah, the government including Wisma Putra will do its best to assist. The important thing is to keep communicating with our representatives there. Let's pray for all to proceed smoothly," he said.

On March 13, Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin announced that the government would be bringing back Malaysians who are in Italy and Iran through special missions.

For the record, Malaysia had succeeded in flying back its citizens in Wuhan, China, via two Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief missions.

In the first mission, the government flew back 107 Malaysians and their family members trapped in Hubei Province on Feb 4, while the second mission involved 66 people from the same province on Feb 26. — TMR