

Ten million face masks to flood market within a week

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MELAKA (Feb 21): The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) expects manufacturers to supply some 10 million face masks in the coming week to meet strong public demand in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

Its Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the huge volume was in line with the Government's assurance to get manufacturers to produce more face masks in order to address a spike in market demand.

"The department had met with local face masks manufacturers to get a clearer picture of their production capacity for the short term, and among the constraints they face were with regards to manpower, shift regulations and tax exemptions for imported raw materials.

"I gave them the assurance that the Government will fulfill their requests, and we have had discussions with the Home, Human Resources and Finance ministries so that these manufacturers can speed up production," he told reporters after the launch of the Food Bank Siswa programme for Melaka Polytechnics here today.

On the food bank programme, Saifuddin Nasution said the number of donors are expected to increase by 20 percent after the Food Donors Protection Bill was passed in October last year.

With the Bill passed, major food manufacturers and distributors have now shown keen interest to volunteer as donors for the programme.

"In view of this development, we now have plans to expand the programme to 123 private higher learning institutions, Teachers Education Institutions (IPG) and polytechnics nationwide, which will involve some 12,300 recipients this year," he said.

Last year alone, the programme benefited 12,251 students from public higher learning institutions, he added.