

## Petrol subsidy report still on drawing board



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***KPDNHEP and MoF are still ironing out the details before presenting the final report in Cabinet, says Saifuddin Nasution***

by ASILA JALIL / pic by ARIF KARTONO

THE Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) and the Finance Ministry (MoF) are still refining all the details that could be incorporated in the final report of the Petrol Subsidy Programme (PSP), that is due to be presented to the Cabinet soon.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the first meeting between the two ministries was held earlier this month, and each ministry had been assigned several tasks that would contribute to the betterment of the project.

"We have not brought forward any final report to the Cabinet ministers because we just had our first meeting on the first week of January and it will continue.

"There are a lot of things we have to consider," he told a press conference in Putrajaya yesterday.

Saifuddin Nasution, however, did not specify any timeline for the report to be presented and that he would announce it "when the time comes".

The PSP, which was earlier scheduled for implementation in January 2020, was put on hold to a later date following a Cabinet meeting on Dec 18, 2019.

Saifuddin Nasution previously said the postponement took place due to the need for elaboration and clarity to provide consumers with better understanding of the programme.

The first scheme comprises recipients of the Cost of Living Aid (BSH) who will get the subsidy in the form of cash transfer, while those under the second category — the nonBSH recipients — will receive the subsidy through Kad95.

Saifuddin Nasution said several tasks had also been assigned to the ministries and among the tasks is to provide a thorough and “aggressive” explanation.

“Until the Cabinet is satisfied with all the tasks given to KPDNHEP and MoF, then the onus is on these two ministries to prepare a report and present it to the Cabinet,” he added.

Saifuddin Nasution said the ministries would leave the decision on the implementation to the Cabinet.

As for the current concerns over the global spread of the coronavirus, Saifuddin Nasution said Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also instructed KPDNHEP to monitor prices of face masks.

“He requested for the ministry to ensure the masks are sold according to the controlled price and the second instruction is for the ministry to ensure there is enough supply of masks,” he said.

Saifuddin Nasution added that some of the masks are imported, while some are locally made and the ministry will closely monitor the supply to ensure there are enough masks nationwide.

“We will deal with the importers if the masks are imported and we will urge the manufacturers to increase the supply if the masks are locally made, if there is a potential shortage in supply,” he added.

KPDNHEP had released a statement yesterday warning traders or retailers to not increase the price of face masks amid the outbreak and stern action will be taken against those who do.

Its secretary general Datuk Muez Abd Aziz said in the statement that face masks are price-controlled items and the prices are fixed under the Price Control and AntiProfiteering Act 2011.

Retailers who are found to have increased the price will face a fine of up to RM100,000 or imprisonment of not more than three years, or both, if found guilty, while companies could be fined up to RM500,000 or compound up to RM250,000.