

Manufacturers told to increase production of face masks, says Saifuddin

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PUTRAJAYA: Local manufacturers have been asked to increase the production of face masks by another 400,000 pieces daily to ensure sufficient supply in the wake of the novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said a meeting with the manufacturers and importers of face masks was held two days ago to get the actual supply figures.

He said the ministry was told that 90% of what is being produced in the country is surgical masks as well as masks for industrial use while the remaining is the production of the three-ply masks which is currently in demand.

"We have asked them to increase production with the guarantee that the government will buy the additional pieces from them.

"We will then set up stockpiles nationwide so that there will no longer be an issue of shortage," he said to reporters on Friday (Feb 7).

Saifuddin said the manufacturers will start producing the additional supply of face masks once the price which the government will buy from them has been agreed upon.

"We hope to settle this soon, possibly by next week," he said.

The minister said that face masks are controlled items and the price that has been set is 80 sen per unit for the three-ply masks and RM6 per unit for the N95.

With the market having sufficient supply of face masks, Saifuddin called on the public not to panic buying.

