



Sufficient supply soon: The government has ensured a sufficient supply of face masks by banning exports while setting the price for face masks at RM2 each.

Export ban, new price to meet mask demand

PUTRAJAYA: The government has taken a two-pronged approach to ensure a sufficient supply of face masks by banning exports and allowing imports of the product, while setting the price for a three-ply mask at RM2 each.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi said the new price - up from 80 sen per piece - was due to the higher production cost of material.

"By allowing face masks to be sold at RM2, we hope to encourage local manufacturers to produce more. For importers, this price will help cover the costs to bring the product into the market.

"With this move, we hope to increase the availability of face masks for Malaysians to use in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic," he added.

Nanta spoke to reporters after chairing a meeting with Agriculture and Food Industry Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Khande along with stakeholders in the food production and retail industries.

He said the government's ban on face mask exports came into effect on March 18 and would remain for as long as necessary.

"During the meeting, retailers such as supermarkets and hypermarkets has had asked for the government to relax certain restrictions or regulations to make it easier for them to get supplies as goods are cleared from the shelves fast.

"We are also working on uniform operating hours for outlets selling essential items during the movement control order (MCO) period," he said.

Nanta said the meeting provided the government with information and feedback from stakeholders during the MCO and also the need for a different strategy should this situation be prolonged.

Khande said food producers had raised some issues which he would bring up with the National Security Council.

He said that for instance, while chicken and egg productions were considered essential, farmers need their support sector to also be in business during the MCO.

"For now, stakeholders say they are able to meet market demand, so there is no need for consumers to panic buy," he added.

He also said supermarkets and hypermarkets had asked for the ministry to raise their quota limit for the supply of rice as their current quota could not meet consumer demand during the enforcement of the order.

"There is sufficient food supply, so there is no need for panic buying. We are constantly monitoring the market to ensure there is supply for the people," he said.

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Saturday, 21 Mar 2020



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<https://www.thestar.com.my/news/nation/2020/03/21/export-ban-new-price-to-meet-mask-demand>

