

People urged not to engage in panic buying of face masks

04 FEB 2020 / 18:35 H.



KUALA LUMPUR: Members of the public are advised not to trigger sudden panic purchasing of face masks in the wake of the 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) outbreak in China.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the government would ensure a sufficient supply of the face masks to meet the current high demand.

"The government is working with responsible parties to ensure a sufficient supply of the face masks in the market, but at the same time, I would like to ask people not to do a panic buying," he told reporters after officiating the meeting of the Intellectual Property Offices of the 20 regional countries on the Madrid System at the Intellectual Corporation of Malaysia (MyIPO) headquarters, here today.

Saifuddin Nasution said local manufacturers and importers had been told to increase production and import of the face masks during a meeting with the ministry last week.

He said previously, almost 90% of the face masks, most of them imported from China, Europe, the United States and Singapore, were surgical and industrial masks, whose usage would only spike during the periods of intense haze.

At the same time, Saifuddin Nasution also reminded retailers not to increase prices of the face masks, an item under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011, or face stern actions from the ministry. - *Bernama*