

# Food bank programme expands

## Saifuddin: First distribution centre to be up and running next month

By **CLARISSA CHUNG**  
clarissachung@thestar.com.my

**PUTRAJAYA:** As the government's Food Bank programme expands, its first distribution centre is expected to be up and running sometime in February.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the distribution centre was vital as their resources had grown significantly since the programme

started in 2018.

"When we receive the goods from donors, we need to sort them out in a disciplined manner. With our distribution centre, we will be more organised in our preparation," he said.

He added that donated foods at the distribution centre would also be mobilised quickly "without red tape or bureaucracy" during emergency situations such as floods.

He said this in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing cere-

mony between Food Bank Malaysia Foundation and Nestle Malaysia yesterday.

The distribution centre, he added, would have donated goods stored there before they were sent to their operation centres.

Currently, donated goods are sent directly to beneficiaries.

Saifuddin added that the ministry had identified the location for the centre in Kajang.

"We are still renovating the place before inviting the media when we

launch the place," he said.

The Food Bank programme, he said, was expected to benefit more people this year as he targeted to have it in 123 higher education institutions, teacher's training institutions and polytechnics in the country.

At present, there are 21 public universities where low-income students benefit from the programme.

He also said that the recently passed Food Donors Protection Bill was expected to encourage more

donors such as hotels to donate their leftover food.

The latest legislation, when gazetted, was expected to boost contributions of these corporations by about 20%, he added.

The Bill aims to encourage individuals and corporations to donate food by affording them protection against civil action, unless it is proved that they have caused personal injury, disease or death due to their negligence or willful misconduct.