

## COUNTRY'S FIRST

# Food bank bill to be tabled next month

**NILAI:** The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry will table a new bill to regulate food banks.

Dubbed the "Good Samaritan" Bill, Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said it would be tabled at the Dewan Rakyat next month and would be the first of its kind in the country.

"The purpose of the bill is to protect contributors and donors to food banks to ensure their long-term commitment."

He said current engagement with big companies to donate to the food bank programme was experiencing setbacks due to several issues.

"One of the issues highlighted by the sponsors is safety. There are concerns about whether the recipients could proceed with legal action if the food donated by the sponsors caused any harm to them and this would definitely jeopardise their reputation.



*Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (second from right) stirring a pot after launching a state-level food bank at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia in Nilai yesterday. PIC BY ADZLAN SIDEK*

"This is the biggest issue we need to tackle as it has become the main obstacle for big brands and companies to chip in."

He said this at the launch of the state-level Food Bank and Ministerial Talk at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia here yesterday.

He said the ministry had studied food bank programmes in developed countries.

"We hope the tabling of the bill will draw the interest of various parties to join the food bank programme."

Launched by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last December, the Foodbank Malaysia programme was created to help the poor as well as to resolve food wastage.

Saifuddin said the bill was important to protect donors.

He said 430 contributors had joined the programme as donors, including supermarkets, retail companies and oil packaging companies.

Therefore, he said, the protection aspect was vital to ensure these companies' continuous commitment and cooperation.

"So far, the attorney-general has given the green light on the draft of the bill.

"We will present it to the cabinet soon, and if it agrees, it will be tabled in the Parliament session early next month."

He described the bill as dynamic and said the ministry would consider including tax exemptions for contributors.