



Local fare: Saifuddin (right) taking a closer look at a product in the USM Malaysia's Food Bank.

Ministry's all out for 'Buy Malaysian'

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GEORGE TOWN: The Domestic Trade and Consumers Affairs Ministry is actively promoting the "Buy Malaysian" campaign to counter voices calling for the boycott of products made by non-Muslims.

Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the ministry is doing everything within its powers to enhance the appeal of Malaysian products, and will focus on the mechanism to control wholesale and retail prices.

"My stand has been clear from day one of this boycott. The fight should be against those who practise monopoly, hoarding, unfair trading practices and deliberate price increases.

"These are the real scourges we should be against," said Saifuddin after launching Universiti Sains Malaysia's Food Bank yesterday.

He was commenting on the statement by National Patriots Association (Patriot) that the Pakatan Harapan government was not doing enough to counter the boycott.

Patriot president Brig-Jen (Rtd) Mohamed Arshad Raji said the boycott, which was at first a move to support Muslim-made goods, had morphed into one that is against products and services by non-Muslims.

Patriot also felt that Cabinet ministers seemed to be waiting for the Prime Minister's cue to act.

"We are not waiting for the Prime Minister's stand on the issue and have been in the forefront to put in place various steps to reduce the import of food, which is still high," said Saifuddin in response.

"There are 1,745 local products, mainly produced by Muslims, and while they are of good quality, they

need to be marketed.

"It's the big malls, hypermarkets and departmental stores, which are mainly held by non-Muslims, who market these products. As such, the boycott campaign doesn't make sense," he added.

On the subsidy mechanism for fuel, Saifuddin said he would issue a statement after he presents his ministry's recommendations to Cabinet.

On the food bank project, Saifuddin said the nationwide programme under the Malaysian Food Bank Foundation had helped 38,000 families, and USM was the 12th university to join.

About 350 USM undergraduates were identified as being eligible to receive aid under the project.

Seven private entities are sponsoring the project, which is being managed by the university's Student's Council and USM Food Bank volunteers.