

Call to boycott halal products sold by non-Muslims having no effects: Saifuddin

AMAR SHAH MOHSEN - SYED DANIAL SYED AZAHAR / 02 SEP 2019 / 21:34 H.



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail during the I-Keep Sales Carnival at Padang Perpustakaan Awam, Pantai Dalam, Kuala Lumpur today. — Sunpix by Amirul Syafiq Mohd Din

KUALA LUMPUR: The call to boycott halal products sold by non-Muslims has yet to show any signs of effectiveness.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution said this was based on feedback from traders' groups, following the boycott calls from Muslim non-governmental organisations (NGOs) recently.

"Business associations have not indicated that the boycott is affecting their businesses," he said at a press conference after officiating the closing ceremony of the I-Keep Sales Carnival in Pantai Dalam yesterday.

"In fact, in our meetings with wholesaler and retailer associations, everything seems to be normal, the issue (of boycott) does not arise."

Saifuddin said such boycott brings no benefit to any party, particularly the economy and national prosperity.

He said such a move was unhealthy to the country's multiracial, multicultural and multireligious society, and Malaysians should instead celebrate the societal diversity and take advantage of its strengths.

"We should understand, respect and support one another to ensure economic prosperity. It is this trait that has driven the country's economic activities and helped it prosper," Saifuddin said.

Previously, several NGOs had urged Malay-Muslim consumers to buy only Muslim-made products and boycott halal goods that were produced by non-bumiputras.

On Aug 30, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the boycott call was a narrow-minded move that would only anger the public.

On Sunday, Finance Minister Lim Guan Eng urged PAS and Umno to condemn the calls, saying a boycott was counter-productive and could jeopardise national unity.

In an immediate response, PAS deputy president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man said the choices made by Muslim consumers to pick whichever products they wanted must be respected by Lim.

“Every consumer has a tendency to pick what’s best for him, there is no compulsion. As such, they are more careful and selective to ensure they get the best possible products,” he said in a statement.

Tuan Ibrahim urged the government to focus on immoral activities existent in businesses, including cheating, monopoly and “black economy”, instead of calling for Umno and PAS to condemn the boycott.

Kelantan Umno Youth chief Noor Hariri Mohamed Noor said Lim’s statement was merely an attempt to distract the rakyat from DAP’s own failings in recent months.

On a separate matter, Saifuddin said the working paper on RON95 fuel subsidy scheme for lower income households had been completed and would soon be tabled to the Cabinet.

“I cannot speak on behalf of other ministries or Cabinet members, but on our part, we have completed the paper,” he said, adding that in the meantime, his ministry would keep fine-tuning the scheme’s mechanism.

