

Bill to regulate food bank, protect donors to be tabled: Saifuddin

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NILAI: The government will table a Bill aimed at regulating activities under the Food Bank Malaysia (PFBM) programme at the Parliamentary sitting next month.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail (*pix*) said the Bill would also protect donors from legal action in the event of unforeseen circumstances from the contributed food.

"The Bill is more about protecting the contributors. Sometimes, international companies are quite cautious in participating in such a programme as they are concerned of issues arising from the food donated which could lead to legal action against them.

"So far, there are no such issues yet, as we carry out rigorous screenings (on the quality of the goods). We only give away good products," he said here today.

He told reporters after launching the Siswa Food Bank programme at Universiti Sains Islam Malaysia (Usim). The event was also attended by ministry secretary-general Datuk Muez Abd Aziz and Usim Registrar Prof Datuk Dr Roshada Hashim.

Commenting further, Saifuddin explained that the proposed Bill has been submitted to the Attorney-General's chamber for review.

"The Attorney-General's chamber has returned the Bill without any objection and it will be tabled at the Cabinet for approval before being brought to the Parliament.

He said based on similar practice in other countries, the number of contributors showed a significant increase of about 20% after the same laws were passed.

“When such law exists, potential donors would felt more confident to contribute,” he said, adding that donors are an important component to ensure the success of any food bank programme.

Asked whether the bill would also offer tax relief incentives to contributors, Saifuddin said so far it had not been included.

“The law is dynamic and it (tax relief) could be introduced later,” he said.

To date, the ministry had managed to secure the commitment of over 430 contributors for the Food Bank programme nationwide.

On the Siswa Food Bank programme, Usim becomes the 15th university out of 20 public universities (IPTA) to join the initiative.

Earlier, Saifuddin met up with some 600 undergraduates for a chat session. — *Bernama*

