

## Saifuddin: Govt developing e-commerce to reduce cost of living



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the initiative was under the supervision of the National Cost of Living Action Council. NSTP/Mikail Ong

By Audrey Dermawan

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**GEORGE TOWN:** The government is developing an e-commerce system for consumer goods to drive down prices and the cost of living.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the initiative was under the supervision of the National Cost of Living Action Council chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

He said, during a recent visit to Shanghai, China, his delegation had visited JD.com.

It is reputedly China's largest online retailer and biggest Internet company by revenue.

"We are impressed by how they operate and are able to lower their costs along the whole supply chain.

"We hope to apply what we learnt from them in the new e-commerce system we are developing.



"Our ultimate aim is to bring down the prices of goods in a bid to reduce the cost of living as is often stressed by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad," he said during a visit to the Asean Products Trade Centre, here, today.

Present were Bai Jian Wen, the consul from the Consulate General of China in Penang, state Local and International Trade, Consumer Affairs and Entrepreneurship Development Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Halim Hussain, state Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority director Dr Habibah Sulaiman and Suiwah Corporation Bhd managing director Datuk Hwang Thean Long.

However, Saifuddin, said, no time frame had been set for getting the e-commerce system on board.

"Once the detailed framework is ready, we will table it to the Economic Action Council," he added.

Saifuddin said his ministry would send over 20 high-ranking officials to China for two weeks of intensive training under Alibaba's Jack Ma on e-commerce.

He said it was not impossible for Malaysia to go into e-commerce in a big way as the country used to be ahead of China in terms of the digital economy.

When the Multimedia Super Corridor was launched in 1998, he said some 30 per cent of Malaysians were already using the Internet.

"China started a year later than us, but look at where it is now," he added.

