

Ramp up face mask production, makers told

PUTRAJAYA: Manufacturers have been asked to ensure the production of face masks is at full capacity - estimated at two to three million pieces a month - to fulfil the high demand as the country faces the Covid-19 pandemic, says Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin.

The Prime Minister said that while local manufacturers, who are not allowed to export the item for the time being, produce sufficient masks for the local market, the government will distribute free masks to those in need.

"I have directed the National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) to buy 10 million face masks from China and bring them in as soon as possible.

"We will distribute the face masks to all Malaysians who need them. This is the government's contribution at this time of crisis," he said after chairing an Economic Action Council meeting yesterday.

The ban on the export of face masks was imposed on March 18 and will remain for as long as necessary.

The government has announced that it will import 10 million face masks from China to overcome the lack of supply in the country.

The face masks from China are purchased at RM1.18 per piece.

Muhyiddin said with the export ban and if face mask manufacturers produce at full capacity, there would be more than enough for everyone.

On the new ceiling price of RM2 for face masks, he said the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry had been directed to discuss the matter with manufacturers

to review the ceiling price so that it is not too high.

"At a time of crisis, the price should not be too high. I hope manufacturers will continue to produce the masks and also agree to a reasonable price," he said.

The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry announced last week that the ceiling price for a three-ply mask was RM2 a piece, up from 80 sen previously. However, the government wants this reviewed following complaints that the price is too high.