

Food supplies adequate, action to be taken against illegal price hikes



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FAMA has implemented a distribution channel for daily wet essentials such as fruits and vegetables, fish and meat

by LYDIA NATHAN/ pic by BERNAMA

THE government will take action towards businesses including manufacturers, wholesalers and retailers that attempt to take advantage of the Covid-19 pandemic by increasing prices of essential items.

Senior Minister (Security Cluster) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) conducted checks on 25 different essential items last Sunday.

The checks were made at 1,052 business premises including 839 retailers, 183 wholesalers and 30 manufacturers.

Ismail Sabri said there are enough items to accommodate the needs of the people for the long term.

...should not worry about the supply of food and everyday items for the fasting month of Ramadhan because I can guarantee it is enough," he said in a daily press conference yesterday.

He added the Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (FAMA) has implemented a distribution channel for daily wet essentials such as fruits and vegetables, fish and meat.

"From March 18 until May 10, FAMA's distribution channel involved 1,882 farmers, 1,700 entrepreneurs and 11 supermarkets, and this effort has benefitted 2.81 million people," he said.

Ismail Sabri recently announced that KPDNHEP implemented a Maximum Price Scheme starting April 14 until April 28, 2020.

Despite it only being used during festive seasons, he said the scheme initially ensured control over 12 daily essentials.

So far, KPDNHEP has received 8,145 consumer complaints between March 18 and April 11, through four various channels, including 4,140 on WhatsApp, 1,766 on E-Aduan website, 1,631 via hotline and 609 on its enforcement command centre.

Additionally, according to Ismail Sabri, Putrajaya has prepared 32.6 million face masks to be distributed across the country.

He said the face masks have been given out to states and to the district management committees through its 162 district offices to be given to households.

Meanwhile, Ismail Sabri said the government decided to implement the eighth Enhanced Movement Control Order (EMCO) in the Jalan Othman market area, Petaling Jaya, on Sunday following a spike in Covid-19 cases.

It was reported that 26 new cases of Covid-19 were reported in the area to date.

Under EMCO, residents are prohibited from leaving the designated zones for the entire period while visitors are not allowed to enter.

Ismail Sabri said the EMCO will be effective on May 10 until May 23, 2020, and will involve 2,900 residents and commercial premisses.

"The Health Ministry will screen residents in stages and food aid will be given to them, so I urge residents to remain calm and fully cooperate with medical staff from the Health Ministry while following instructions from relevant authorities," he said.

The minister also advised against bringing small children to shopping malls for their own safety. Although such a restriction is not provided under the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases Act 1988, it is the family's responsibility to not expose the children to danger.

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