

Saifuddin: Palm oil exports not affected

PALM oil export are not affected as there has been no official decision by the Indian government on the trade boycott, says Datuk Saifuddin Abdullah.

Citing Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, the Foreign Minister said palm oil was "strictly a trade matter" during a recent meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan.

"I also told him that we have been receiving mixed signals from the non-governmental sector from India, with business associations, calling for a boycott.

"On the other hand, Tamil Nadu Congress Chapter is calling for New Delhi not to carry out the boycott," he told reporters in Parliament.

Saifuddin said he was told that the boycott would be detrimental to the 500,000 foreign workers from India, who are currently working in Malaysia.

Despite the mixed signals, the minister said that he was confident the Primary Industries Ministry would take the necessary measures to discuss the matter.

On Oct 21, it was reported that an Indian trade body, representing oil



In the spotlight: Citing Indian External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Saifuddin said that palm oil was 'strictly a trade matter' during a recent meeting in Baku, Azerbaijan. — AFP

Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail said the Cabinet had approved a regulation to ban the usage of any product labels that were negative about palm oil.

He said the prohibition included product labels that read "palm oil free", "does not contain palm oil" or "no palm oil".

"This is in line with the government's objective of supporting the palm oil industry via the Sayangi Sawitku (Love My Palm Oil) campaign," he told reporters in a joint press conference with Primary Industries Minister Teresa Kok.

Kok said most of the labels were used as a "marketing gimmick" by European manufacturers to paint a negative picture about palm oil, citing an example of a peanut butter brand that carried the label "palm oil free".

"This gives a bad impression to palm oil-based products without being supported by scientific evidence," Kok said, adding that Indonesia, the largest palm oil manufacturer in the world, had a similar law in place to protect its palm oil industry.

seed crushers, had urged its members not to buy palm oil from Malaysia, echoing New Delhi's protest against Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's remarks on the Kashmir conflict.

Dr Mahathir had defended his remarks, saying it was necessary to speak out on issues, even if some parties were unhappy with it.

Last year, Malaysia's palm oil export to Indian was worth some US\$1.65bil (RM6.9bil).

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