

'Ceiling price of RM2 per face mask too high'



Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob reiterates that the government is in the process of purchasing 10 million face masks from China to support demand in Malaysia. – Bernama file pic

By Tharanya Arumugam
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KUALA LUMPUR: The government will review the ceiling prices of face masks.

It was recently announced that the ceiling prices have gone up, for example, one piece of a three-ply face mask would now retail at RM2 from 80 sen.

This was met with complaints that the new ceiling price is too high, especially considering that the item has been exempted from import duties amidst the ongoing Covid-19 outbreak.

“Prime Minister (Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin also feels that) the price is high. This matter will be discussed in a meeting tomorrow morning, which will have the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry relook at the prices.

“We will determine if the price can be significantly reduced from the initial price set. There is no reason for a hike in prices, since the government has already agreed to abolish import duties for the purchase of face masks.

“Hence, we hope to bring down the price, which will be decided tomorrow,” said Senior Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today.

He was speaking at a press conference which was telecast live on RTM after a special meeting with ministers on the implementation of the Movement Control Order (MCO) today.

Ismail Sabri also reiterated that the government is in the process of purchasing 10 million face masks from China to support demand in Malaysia.

"This is all paid for by the government. The National Disaster Management Agency (Nadma) is in charge of supplies and distribution. We can't wait long for the supply, thus we hope Nadma can expedite the process," he added.

Ismail said the face masks will first be distributed to frontliners managing the pandemic, which include medical personnel, the armed forces, the police and enforcement officials.

The rest will be distributed in areas at high risk of the disease, he said.

Ismail Sabri added that should there be a surplus of face masks, they will be distributed accordingly.

"We will also look into bringing in more face masks to cater to the peoples' needs. Nadma is also looking into the essentials, including the demand for hand sanitisers," he added.

On March 21, the government fixed new ceiling prices for face masks to the following:

- 1 ply (ear loop) face mask (surgical/medical) sold at RM7 per box (Wholesale price: RM5 per box).
- 2 ply (ear loop) face mask (surgical/medical) sold at RM10 per box/ 20 sen per unit (Wholesale price: RM8 per box).
- 3 ply (ear loop/head loop/head tie-on) face mask (surgical/medical) sold at RM100 per box/RM2 per unit (Wholesale price: RM75 per box/RM1.50 per unit).
- N95 face mask (surgical medical) sold at RM6 per unit (Wholesale price: RM100 per box).

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2020/03/577052/ceiling-price-rm2-face-mask-too-high>