

Price uniformity programme to continue, says minister

Tracy Patrick - September 16, 2018 2:40 PM



Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Saifuddin Nasution says under the price uniformity programme, consumer items such as cooking oil, diesel and sugar will be sold at the same price nationwide.

KOTA KINABALU: The federal government will continue to carry out the previous administration's price uniformity programme for Sabah, Sarawak and the peninsula, said Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Saifuddin Nasution.

He said the ministry was aware that the high cost of transportation, particularly shipping cost, was the main reason for the price disparity.

"For this reason, under the price uniformity programme, consumer items such as cooking oil, diesel, sugar and others will be sold at the same price nationwide. Sugar is sold at RM2.85 in Sabah's interior just as in Petaling Jaya, for example," he said after a courtesy call on Sabah Chief Minister Shafie Apdal here today.

He admitted that maintaining the policy requires a large investment from the federal government but for now, his ministry will continue with the programme and he vowed to improve on the current system to reduce the financial burden on the government.

The issue, he said, was one of the main issues he and Shafie discussed during their meeting earlier today and Saifuddin said the chief minister was informed on how the process could be further improved in Sabah.

He said both the federal and state governments were committed to reducing any possibility of inefficiencies to the system that could cause wastage and leakages of the programme's funds.

"I will bring the matter to my officers in the ministry and find ways to further improve the delivery system so that the people can benefit more from this programme.

"What is important for us is to ensure that these subsidised items will reach the intended target groups," he said.

Commenting on the impact of the sales and services tax (SST), Saifuddin said there had not been any drastic price increases, especially for essential consumer items in main supermarkets.

He said he has been following the price pattern of 25 essential consumer items including rice, sugar, cooking oil, bread and milk these past two weeks and found that there had not been any marked increase.

However, he believed this may be due to the supermarkets still selling old stocks.

"So far, only the prices of certain grades of eggs have increased, maybe due to supply and demand. I will be in touch with several egg suppliers soon to get their explanation on this.

"But generally, prices are still under control. I would advise consumers to use their consumer power and I would also like to advise traders to be ethical in doing business," he said.

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