

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Cooking oil smuggled out of Kelantan widely sold in southern Thailand, say locals

PETALING JAYA: While the smuggling of subsidised cooking oil out of Kelantan has led to consumers there having their purchases limited, there appears to be no such restriction in southern Thailand.

This comes as Kelantan faces a cooking oil crisis with customers limited to only 1kg or 2kg per purchase at grocery stores.

By contrast, cooking oil from Malaysia is widely available in 1kg packets across the border especially in Narathiwat, Sungai Golok, Weng and Sungai Padi.

A Thai national who only wanted to be known as Abe Mat Sulaiman said subsidised cooking oil was smuggled in from Kelantan and sold at business premises there.

"(Packed) cooking oil of various brands from Malaysia are easily available here, and is sold at many grocery stores.

"Traders are selling at a price of 55 baht (around RM7) in the market and also in grocery stores," he was quoted as saying by Astro Awani on Monday (July 4).

"People here (Thailand) do not have a problem with the supply of cooking oil in these packets, because it is always available and rarely runs out of stock," said Abe, who lives in a village in Narathiwat.

According to him, cooking oil from Malaysia is cheaper compared to Thai cooking oil which costs 77 baht (around RM10.30), and therefore is more popular among locals.

"There is no limit to buying Malaysian cooking oil here, if you want to buy 12 packets, you can, as long as you have money," he said.

According to him, cooking oil from 1kg packets to 5kg containers of well-known brands from Malaysia are available in southern Thailand.

Currently, subsidised cooking oil in 1kg packets is sold at RM2.50 in Kelantan.

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However, the state is facing a shortage of supply with most retailers only selling one or two packets to customers.

On Sunday (July 3), Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said his office took a serious view of the shortage of cooking oil supply caused by smuggling.

"The government provides subsidies for the locals to enjoy, but it is enjoyed by foreigners. This should not happen," he said.