

KERATAN AKHBAR

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PM: Steps taken but not so easy to curb cooking oil smuggling



KUALA LUMPUR: Measures are being taken to curb cooking oil smuggling, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

"Cooking oil has been swindled. Firstly it is because the price is very low whereby it is priced at RM2.50.

"Just imagine the original price is RM9," he said during the Oral Question and Answer session in the Dewan Rakyat Monday (July 18).

"If a smuggler sells the cooking oil for RM5, he would make a profit of RM2.50 per packet. It is a very lucrative business for smugglers," he added.

Therefore, Ismail Sabri said the government had been conducting audits on companies producing and repacking cooking oil.

He said the government would get details from the companies on where the stocks had been dispatched and would then cross-check with suppliers on the stocks they had received.

"Sometimes the cooking oil does not reach the suppliers," the Bera MP said.

While on the smuggling of cooking oil at the border, Ismail Sabri said the government had enlisted the police and the military to step up enforcement to ensure that no stocks were siphoned out of the country.

He, however, conceded that it was not easy to regulate the use of packet cooking oil meant for domestic use by street food vendors.

Ismail Sabri was responding to a supplementary question by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (PH-Port Dickson) on measures taken to curb the issue of rising prices.

Anwar also questioned why big palm oil companies which had been making lucrative profits had not been required to lower prices.

"Why is (the government) not prepared to force companies which make billions of ringgit in profit to ensure there is a quota to sell cooking oil in the domestic market at a lower price and not at the international market price," he asked.

"What is the problem with putting a 10-15% quota to force them to sell at a lower price to the people?," the Opposition leader added.

Ismail Sabri also said that the government was also looking at ways to come up with a mechanism to ensure that the proper implementation of targeted subsidies and those who were eligible were not left behind.

He also acknowledged that the government was at loss due to subsidies not being given on a targeted basis.

Meanwhile, on what sets the Jihad Against Inflation Special Task Force apart from other committees set up previously to curb issues of cost of living, Ismail Sabri said the committee met twice a week and were required to provide regular public updates.

Ismail Sabri said this in response to a question from Datuk Seri Mohd Salim Sharif (BN-Jempol).

Chaired by communications and multimedia minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa, the committee also comprise of Finance Minister Datuk Seri Tengku Zafrul Aziz, Agriculture and Food Industries Minister Datuk Seri Ronald Kiandee, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi, Economic Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Zuki Ali.

