

Gov't to study TPPA impact on SMEs

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Taking on board public grouses, the government will study the impact of the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA) on small medium enterprises and bumiputera interests.

International Trade and Industry Minister Mustapa Mohamed said that the study by Unit Peneraju Agenda Bumiputera (Teraju) will also look at the memorandums by opposing quarters.

"Their (Teraju) terms of reference include analysing 75 red lines (marked by the anti-TPPA NGOs)," he said.

He said that the study is separate from one on cost and benefit analysis on national interests by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies.

The terms of reference for this study has not yet been set.

Mustapa was speaking to reporters after a three-hour ministry open day on the TPPA.

He said that 500 stakeholders attended the event and "everyone who wanted to ask a question managed to".

Compared to the first open day on Aug 1 which saw more than 1,000 attendees, he said that people left the event today with "smiles on their faces".

"We started with a big (information) gap, leading to speculations and many have now been reassured," he said.

He said that the government will not dismiss any grouses, especially on matters like health and environment.

This, he said, led to the carve out of the tobacco industry due to health considerations.

Asked about claims by big tobacco companies that they were not consulted on the carve out, he said that there is bound to be opposition but this is a position the government had chosen to take.

He said while there are no more rounds of negotiations, country leaders are expected to have inter-sessional discussions at the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meet in Bali next month.

“Bali will be a stock take as there was not much progress in (the just-concluded) Brunei (negotiations),” he said.

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