

PM CAUTIONS AGAINST AIRFARE HIKE

Domestic trade ministry must be strict, whether it involves a big or small company

T.N. ALAGESH
BERA
news@nst.com.my

AIRLINE operators are warned by the prime minister not to take advantage of the “balik

kampung” rush during Hari Raya Aidilfitri to raise airfares.

Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said he had instructed the domestic trade and consumer affairs minister (Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi) to look into the matter (price hike).

“I learned that flight ticket prices have surged by 500 per cent.

“I have told the domestic trade and consumer affairs minister to look into the claims. If there has been a 500 per cent spike as claimed, then it is an offence under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011.

“The ministry has to be strict, whether it involves a big or small company (airline operators).

“Immediate action has to be taken to safeguard the people’s interest. The government will not allow businesses to take advantage by putting pressure on the people during the fasting month and the festive season,” he said at the launch of MG Coopmart-Kop-



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob (second from right) speaking to people at the launch of MG Coopmart-Kopbera and the Semarak Ramadan Keluarga Malaysia sales for the Bera parliamentary constituency in Bera yesterday. With him is Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar (right), BERNAMA PIC

bera and the Semarak Ramadan Keluarga Malaysia sales for the Bera parliamentary constituency here yesterday.

Present were Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives Minister Tan Sri Noh Omar and National Cooperative Movement of Malaysia Bhd (Angkasa) president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah.

Ismail Sabri said he had also

asked the transport minister (Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong) to meet with airlines operators to study the possibility of reducing ticket prices.

“I was made to understand that the minister has met the airline operators to study ways to lower the current ticket prices.

“If there is an increase in the flight ticket prices to Kedah, the people have an alternative to

travel by car.

“But what about those living in Sabah and Sarawak? How will they travel back? I was told that the ticket price is about RM2,000, which is almost equal to the airfare to London.”

It was reported that a peninsula-Sabah/Sarawak return ticket cost around RM2,000 during the Aidilfitri festive season.

On the price control of essential

goods during the festive season, Ismail Sabri said at the cabinet meeting last week he had sought the assistance of the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry and other ministries to ensure that there would be no alarming increase in prices.

“Last Friday, several ministries held meetings and the Cabinet Committee on Cost of Living will meet on April 22 to discuss the findings of these meetings.

“The aim is to ensure that there is no drastic spike in prices during the festive season and that goods are sold to consumers at reasonable prices.”

Ismail Sabri also said if cooperatives could dominate the retail chain, they would be able to significantly reduce the role played by middlemen.

“Big and small cooperatives across the country can merge and control the retail chain. If the cooperatives team up and play a more significant role, I am sure they will be able to reduce the prices of goods.

“When I was the agriculture and agro-based industry minister, I launched the Jihad Memerangi Orang Tengah (Jihad against the middlemen) campaign.

“I realised that fishermen went to sea early in the morning and risked their lives, while the middlemen waited at the shore for the catch.

“The consumers were losing out, so I was serious about eliminating the middlemen,” he said, adding that cooperatives could buy goods in bulk and sell them to consumers at lower prices.