

Online buyers know their rights

PM: Increase in consumer complaints indicate a shift in online transaction trends

By ALLISON LAI
allison@thestar.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: More complaints on online transactions have surfaced following a shift in consumer trends since the first movement control order in 2020, says Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

The Prime Minister said that between March 2020 - when the first MCO was imposed to stem the spread of Covid-19 - and Feb 28 this year, the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry had received 24,150 consumer complaints about online transactions, which accounted for 36.45% of the total grouses received during this period.

"This indicates that the change in the trend towards online transactions has made consumers more aware of their rights, including channelling their complaints to the



The way forward: Ismail Sabri delivering his speech at the launch yesterday. - Bernama

ministry whenever there's wrongdoing by the sellers.

"With the rapid growth in e-commerce, complaints related to online transactions have increased and

become the highest of all types," he said after launching the national-level World Consumer Rights Day at Nu Sentral mall here yesterday.

Also present were Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi and his deputy Datuk Rosol Wahid.

Themed "Consumer Digitalisation", this year's programme is aimed at encouraging all parties to increase awareness of digitalisation at all levels of society.

The Prime Minister, who was once a minister in charge of consumer affairs, said this year's focus is on the development and adoption of technology that has taken over the conventional methods of doing business.

Ismail Sabri also urged caution when conducting transactions online.

"Avoid being duped, check all

information before conducting any business, including online payments and negotiations," he added.

Nanta noted that among the frequent grouses received by the ministry on online transactions were products differing from advertisements, undelivered items and counterfeit goods.

He said that according to the consumer empowerment index (CEI), Malaysia's score of 63.1% shows its level of consumer awareness to be only moderate.

"The ministry will continue to promote initiatives to raise the people's awareness, such as providing platforms for them to do price comparisons and sales, filing complaints and a tribunal."

Nanta noted that as of March 15 this year, 3,347 business operators have gone digital in their payment system through the Retail

Digitalisation Initiative (ReDI).

"By 2025, we expect to see some 15,000 business operators nationwide adopting ReDI," he said.

He also said the ministry will fine-tune the continued implementation of the Malaysia Sales Programme (Program Jualan Malaysia) during the upcoming Ramadan month to benefit the people.

"Many industry players, hypermarkets and representatives have expressed interest to come on board.

"We will fine-tune the programme to help ease the people's burden amid the rising cost of living," he added.