

Pua urges ministry to order KR1M refunds
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By Melissa Chi

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 4 — The Health Ministry should instruct the operator of Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia stores to institute a refund policy for their now-recalled 1 Malaysia branded products, DAP publicity chief Tony Pua said today.

“We would call upon the minister to make the public announcement to be printed in all mainstream newspapers for all consumers who have purchased the products, to return the items to Kedai Rakyat 1 Malaysia stores for a full refund.

“That is the very least the minister could do for the ordinary Malaysians, if he has decided not to take further action against the supplier(s) of the offending product,” he said in a statement.

The Petaling Jaya Utara MP said the confirmation by Health Minister Datuk Seri Liow Tiong Lai of the E.coli bacteria in 1 Malaysia fresh milk yesterday vindicated the Pakatan Rakyat MPs’ concerns over the food safety of 1Malaysia products.

Strains of E.coli can cause food poisoning if ingested by humans.

“However, he (Liow) had attempted to downplay the incident by claiming that most of the other 13 products were withdrawn over ‘labelling’ issues and not over food safety concerns. The list of products included all the products which we have raised which had quality issues or failed to comply with Food Regulations Act 1985 — fresh milk, ice-cream, evaporated milk, sweetened creamer, ghee, fruit jam, oyster sauce, tinned sardines and curry chicken,” Pua said.

Liow was quoted in The Star newspaper as saying “the products were removed due to non-compliance with food regulations such as incomplete labelling, he said, stressing that it was not due to food safety matters.”

“Instead of giving a severe warning or even taking punitive action against the supplier of the harmful food products — where under the Food Act 1983 the supplier is subjected to a ‘fine not exceeding RM100,000 and/or imprisonment for a term not exceeding 10 years,’ the minister chose to go on a rant against me for exposing the 1 Malaysia food products scandal,” Pua said.

Over the last few weeks, Pakatan Rakyat (PR) lawmakers targeted several food products sold in the government-endorsed budget grocery as allegedly harmful for human consumption, prompting an investigation from health officials who yesterday found 13 items that did not comply with the ministry’s Food Regulations 1985.

“The minister must realise that it is his responsibility to enforce the food safety and quality standards of products sold in our stores and not the role of the opposition members of Parliament. The fact that the stores were selling all of the above products over the past six months proved that the minister had failed in his role, most likely because these products were sold under the ‘1Malaysia’ brand which was heavily promoted by the prime minister

and the government.

"Had it not been due to the exposé by the Pakatan Rakyat MPs and the subsequent public pressure, no action would have been taken," Pua said.

Pua's continued offensive on the quality of the KR1M items also touched a nerve with Datuk Dr Ameer Ali Mydin, managing director of the popular Mydin supermarket chain and the representative of local suppliers for KR1M outlets.

"Milk withdrawn on 12nov so why u still playing it up not enough cheap publicity ke," Ameer posted on micro-blogging site Twitter earlier today.

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