

**Ismail Sabri Raps Mahfuz For Politicising Price Increase Issue**  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today hit out at PAS vice-president Datuk Mahfuz Omar for trying to politicise the issue of price increase of controlled items of late.

He said the price hike was a global phenomenon and had nothing to do with whether the Barisan Nasional government had failed to manage the country's economy and finances well as claimed by Mahfuz.

"If you believe what he (Mahfuz) says, it means the whole world has failed because the whole world is experiencing rising food prices. He should name the countries where prices have gone down.

"I think these people (critics) have not read the newspapers, that's why they don't know what's going on in the world now," he said after launching a video recording of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak's special Hari raya message at the National Defence University of Malaysia (NDUM), here, today.

Also present was the university's vice-chancellor, Lt Gen Datuk Allatif Mohd Noor.

Regretting Mahfuz's baseless claim, Ismail Sabry said the government had never denied there was price increase of essential goods, but what was more important was the government's initiative in cushioning the effects of the price hikes and the rising cost of living on consumers.

"If in other countries their governments leave it to the markets to decide, here the government undertakes various measures to lighten the people's financial burden," he said.

He cited the introduction of the price control scheme during the festive seasons, setting up of 1Malaysia shops and the National Key Result Area of tackling the rising cost of living as among the measures.

He said the federal government had never curtailed any of the opposition-led state governments from helping the people cope with rising costs like offering subsidies and supporting eateries that introduced lower food prices.

"The opposition can only talk but in the end, they do nothing....it's easier said than done," he added.

Asked about enforcement of the price control scheme for controlled items during the festive season, Ismail Sabry said it was being enforced from today with 3,000 enforcement officers monitoring prices for 14 days (seven days before Hari Raya and seven days after) and assisted by some 50,000 consumer friends.

At the event, the minister also handed over Raya contributions to selected NDUM students and Raya cards from Najib to his campaign friends such as Felcra Berhad, Bank Rakyat and Huawei Technologies (M) Sdn Bhd to be distributed to 2,000 students of the university and the public.

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