

**Government Bears Increased Sugar Subsidy Not Because Of Coming Elections -  
Ismail Sabri  
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BERA, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- The government bearing the sugar subsidy from 20 sen per kg previously to 54 sen now is not because of the general election, which is expected to be held soon.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said the allegation made by the opposition was not true as the measure was to lessen the people's financial burden.

"It is an erroneous accusation because it has nothing to do with the coming elections," he told reporters at the Bera parliamentary constituency Chinese New Year celebration, here.

The total sugar subsidy borne by the government increased from RM262.41 million to RM567 million this year and this was to reduce the people's increasing burden.

He said if the sugar subsidy was not increased, the price of the commodity in the market would go up and this would affect the price of other food products.

"If this happens, then there's no point for us trying to lessen the people's financial burden while the prices of goods keep increasing," he said.

The minister did not dismiss the possibility of sugar smuggling to neighbouring countries happening as a result of the price hike of the commodity in the world market.

He said the ministry would intensify cooperation with enforcement agencies like the Anti-Smuggling Unit and police to curb smuggling.

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