

Dewan Negara: Government Allocates RM296 Million To Standardise Prices
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KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 8 (Bernama) -- The government has allocated RM296 million to absorb the cost of transportation to rural areas in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan in order to standardise the prices of goods.

Deputy Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism Minister Datuk Ahmad Bashah Hanipah said RM60 million of the amount was for transport costs to Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (KR1M), Kedai Coop 1Malaysia and for the produce of Federal Agriculture Marketing Authority (Fama).

He said this was the government's effort to standardise the pricing of basic necessities, including subsidised goods nationwide this year.

"With this standardisation, traders no longer have an excuse to hike prices indiscriminately as the government has absorbed the transport cost which was the main reason for increasing prices," he said.

He was responding to a supplementary question by senator Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, who had queried on the sum allocated to standardise the prices of goods and services in Sabah and Sarawak's rural areas in comparison to Peninsular Malaysia's urban areas.

Ahmad Bashah said the price standardisation programme benefited an estimated 44.5 million rural folk, particularly in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan as well as several areas in Peninsular Malaysia.

"This programme has stabilised the supply of goods and retail pricing of controlled items at the prices set by the ministry," he explained.

Replying to Koh's initial question, he said the government had taken a number of steps to standardise the prices of subsidised essential goods in Sabah, Sarawak and Labuan, the same as in Peninsular Malaysia.

The government has been subsidising seven items, namely RON95 petrol, liquid petroleum gas, palm oil based cooking oil, rice, sugar and wheat, since 2009, he noted.

To a question by senator Datuk V. Subramaniam, Ahmad Bashah said 390,659 inspections had been carried out on traders as of yesterday during the nationwide Ops Harga which started on July 6.

He said this brought the total number of action taken to 2,917 cases under the Price Control Act 1946 and Control of Supplies Act 1961.

During the same period, RM814,451.53 worth of goods were seized and compounds amounting to RM249,000 were issued, he said.

"The ministry is continuously monitoring the situation to detect any hikes.

Apart from that we are also focusing on educating consumers on their responsibility to help

curb the increase in prices," he said.

Referring to restaurants which indiscriminately hiked the prices of beverages and roti canai, Ahmad Bashah advised consumers to report such matters to the ministry.

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