

Mandarin orange ban over stalled pineapple exports insensitive, says DAP
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The threat to ban the import of mandarin oranges next year over China's delay in importing Malaysia's pineapples is absurd and reflects an insensitivity towards the Malaysian Chinese, a DAP lawmaker said today.

Seputeh MP Teresa Kok (pic) said that the suggestion was also not conducive for any business negotiations over pineapple exports, adding that Malaysia Pineapple Industry Board (MPIB) director-general Sahdan Salim should be removed for suggesting it.

"The idea of a ban reflects insensitivity to the feelings of the Chinese community and lacks respect for the Chinese New Year festival.

"Is Sahdan not aware that mandarin oranges are considered traditional symbols of abundance and good fortune and are used by many families as prayer items, decoration and gifts during Chinese New Year?" Kok said.

She said that according to media reports, Sahdan also said Malaysia was set to become the biggest exporter of pineapples to China, taking over from Singapore and the Middle East countries, which are currently the main export markets.

"His proposal, besides causing anger among the Chinese community here, could also be perceived by the Chinese authorities as a threat and can complicate continued talks on the export of pineapples to China," she added.

It was reported that Malaysia hoped to export fresh pineapples to China on a large scale by early next year after ironing out some bureaucratic issues with the Chinese authorities.

This is based on an agreement signed last year for Malaysia to send 100 containers of pineapples every month by 2015.

It was reported that Malaysia has yet to receive approval for the first shipment bound for China early next year.

Sahdan had expressed hope, however, that the issue could be resolved when Malaysian officials visit China next month for an agriculture expo in Xian. – August 13, 2014.

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