

KPDNHEP will look into claims of festive season airfare hikes, says PM [NSTTV]

By T. N. Alagesh - April 17, 2022 @ 12:30pm



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said if there has been a sharp increase of up to 500 per cent for flight tickets as alleged then it is an offence under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011. - NSTP/ FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

BERA: Airline operators have been cautioned not to take advantage of the "balik kampung" rush for the Hari Raya Aidilfitri festive season by raising their airfares or they might face consequences for their actions, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob today.

The Bera member of parliament said he had instructed Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi to swiftly look into the matter.

"I heard flight ticket prices have surged by 500 per cent. I told the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs minister to look into the claims and if there has been a 500 per cent spike as claimed then it is an offence under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011.

"The ministry has to be strict... regardless if it involves a big or small company. Stern action has to be immediately taken to safeguard the people's interests and the government will not allow businesses to take advantage by putting pressure on the people during the fasting month and the festive season," he said in his speech at the launch of the MG cooperatives mart's (Coopmart) supermarket and Bera Parliament Semarak Ramadan Keluarga Malaysia cheap sales, here.

Ismail Sabri said he had also spoken to the Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong to meet airline operators to study the possibility of reducing ticket prices.

"I was made to understand that the minister has met the operators to study ways to lower the current extreme ticket prices.

"If there is an increase in a flight ticket price to Kedah, the people have an alternative to travel by car but what about those living in Sabah and Sarawak? How will they go home? I was told the ticket price is about RM2,000 which is equal to the airfare to London," he said.

It was reported that flight ticket fares between the Peninsula and East Malaysia cost around RM2,000 for a return trip during the Aidilfitri festive season.

Also present at the event today was Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives minister Tan Sri Noh Omar and National Cooperative Movement of Malaysia Bhd (Angkasa) president Datuk Abdul Fattah Abdullah.

On price control for essential goods during the festive season, Ismail Sabri said during a cabinet meeting, he had sought the assistance from the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry and other relevant ministries to ensure there would be no alarming hike in prices.

"On Friday (April 15), several ministries held meetings and the Cabinet Committee on Cost of Living will meet this Friday (April 22) to discuss the findings from these meetings. The aim is to ensure there will be no drastic spike in prices during the festive season and goods are sold to consumers at a reasonable price," he said.

Ismail Sabri also said if cooperatives were able to dominate the retail chain then they would be able to significantly reduce the roles played by middlemen.

"Big and small cooperatives across the country can merge and go on to control the retail chain. If the cooperatives team up and play a more significant role, I am sure they will be able to reduce the prices of goods.

"When I was the Agriculture and Agro-based Industry minister, I launched the Jihad Memerangi Orang Tengah (Jihad Against the Middlemen) campaign. I realised fishermen will go to sea early in the morning and risk their lives while the middlemen will wait at the shore for the catch....the consumers were losing out so I was serious about eliminating the middlemen," he said, adding cooperatives can purchase goods in bulk and offer it to consumers at a cheaper rate.