

No more AP to import food, says PM Ismail Sabri

By Arfa Yunus - May 18, 2022 @ 5:03pm



A general view of traders at the Chow Kit wet market in Kuala Lumpur. -NSTP/MOHAMAD SHAHRIL BADRI SAALI

PUTRAJAYA: The government has decided to do away with approved permits (AP) for Malaysians to import food from abroad, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob.

With this decision, he said, anyone could now import food into the country without having to first obtain an AP to do so.

"The Agriculture (and Food Industries) Ministry will release the details soon, but basically we have agreed to do away with the AP for food, effective immediately.

"We previously have APs for everything from cows to meat and others but now, it is no more.

"This means that anyone can now import food from overseas to ensure that the country will always have sufficient food supply," he told reporters when met at the Prime Minister's Department Aidilfitri celebration here today.

In today's cabinet meeting, said Ismail Sabri, issues surrounding the people's cost of living took centre stage as the country was expected to face inflation around the middle of this year.

He said the Russia-Ukraine war largely contributed to today's weak economy and the rising cost of living, but gave his assurances that Putrajaya would be taking all necessary steps to help cushion the impact on Malaysians.

"Earlier in the cabinet (meeting), we discussed firstly the cost of living and secondly, food security.

"The entire cabinet has agreed and asked the agriculture ministry to take immediate action because we want to make sure that any impact caused by the war, is something we can handle."

Previously, several consumer groups and prominent figures in the business sector including Mydin hypermarket managing director Datuk Dr Ameer Ali Mydin had urged the government to review the award of APs for the importation of various food items, from vegetables and meat to seafood.

Consumer groups also urged Putrajaya to be transparent in awarding APs to import whole chicken as some big companies failed to get any response from the government regarding their applications.

On criticisms being thrown at Datuk Seri Tajuddin Abdul Rahman who was recently appointed Malaysian ambassador to Indonesia, Ismail Sabri said it would be best to let the Pasir Salak member of parliament perform his duties first before judging him.

"It appears that everyone is disappointed with all appointments. (But) we have agreed to the appointment, and Indonesia agreed to it too. I was told that Tajuddin already received a letter from the Indonesian president (Joko Widodo) who also agreed to his (Tajuddin's) appointment.

"He (Tajuddin) is a seasoned player in politics which means he has the experience. So, let's see him carrying out his duties first."

The post of ambassador to Indonesia has remained vacant since Datuk Zainal Abidin Bakar, who was appointed on March 21, 2019, retired on April 4, 2021.

Tajuddin was in Ismail Sabri's entourage to Indonesia for a three-day official visit in November, reinforcing speculation the month before that he would be appointed ambassador to Indonesia.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob speaks to Home Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin during the ministry Aidilfitri open house in Putrajaya. Also present is National Recovery Council chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin. - NSTP/MOHD FADLI HAMZAH