

Govt to retain original cooking oil subsidy

By DURIE RAINER FONG
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KOTA KINABALU: The government is not ending the subsidy for cooking oil but reverting to the original pricing mechanism before the Covid-19 pandemic struck, says Datuk Zuraida Kamaruddin.

The Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister said there had been some misunderstanding over the issue.

"The original subsidised cooking oil, which amounted to 60,000 tonnes a month, or 720,000 tonnes a year, will remain and will be sold in 1kg polybags.

"What will be withdrawn is the additional 25,000 tonnes of subsidised cooking oil supplied during the movement control order period.

"This was a temporary measure taken then in light of people losing their jobs, among others, due to Covid-19, so that's why we raised the supply of subsidised cooking to 85,000 tonnes a month.

"So, this is what is being stopped (25,000 tonnes of cooking oil). There is no need for panic buying – we are still exporting our palm cooking oil and we have enough for our 32 million population," she said on Wednesday.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi had on Tuesday said the ceiling price of bottled cooking oil will be removed on July 1.

Nanta said the subsidy scheme, implemented on Aug 1 last year, was meant to be a temporary three-month move but had been extended until this month.

"The maximum retail price for pure palm cooking oil in bottled packaging will not be continued from July 1.

"However, for cooking oil sold in 1kg polybag packets, which is capped at a ceiling price of RM2.50, the subsidy will remain," he said, after an engagement session with industry players and consumer groups at his ministry.

The maximum retail prices imposed on palm cooking oil was set at RM29.70 for a 5kg bottle, RM6.70 for 1kg, RM12.70 for 2kg and RM18.70 for 3kg.

Separately Zuraida, who is also Parti Bangsa Malaysia (PBM) president-designate, said she was keen for Sri Aman MP Datuk Masir Kujat and Lubok Antu MP Tambat Jugah Muyang to join their ranks.

"I would welcome them if they wanted to join me. I would appreciate them coming to strengthen my bloc," she said, when asked if the duo would move to PBM.

Masir had quit Parti Sarawak Bersatu (PSB) and pledged his full support to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob on March 30.

Tambat, left PKR in June 2020, to become an Independent lawmaker who fully supported Perikatan Nasional and Gabungan Parti Sarawak (GPS).

On PBM's presence in Sabah, Zuraida said the party has its grassroots in 26 state divisions including in Labuan.

Since launching the party in December last year, PBM has 190 divisions throughout the country, she said.