



Persatuan Pengguna Pulau Pinang Consumers Association of Penang

檳城消費人協會 பினாங்கு பயனீட்டாளர் சங்கம்

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Press Statement

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Prices of fresh vegetables hiked

While the Movement Control Order (MCO) has caused inconvenience and financial constraints to a large segment of consumers, the Consumers' Association of Penang (CAP) is shocked that some retailers are selling their goods at way above their normal prices.

A report claimed that Indian onions were sold at 53.85 per cent above their normal price of RM6.50 per kilogramme in Penang at wet markets and sundry shops.

The prices of other vegetables are also affected. There were earlier reports of vegetables and fruits being dumped because of disruption of the farmer-to-market supply chain and hence, an oversupply. Moreover, with MCO, fewer people went out to the market and thus the demand dropped drastically and this situation does not justify a drastic increase in price.

We urge the government to monitor food prices and also to ensure that food supply chain is uninterrupted.

We are also concerned about the food supply situation in the country because a report stated that Malaysia depends on 30 to 40 per cent of imported food to meet its local needs. It can be a dangerous situation in current times and CAP had warned about it as early as August 2018.

“In 2012, agricultural scientist Mohd Peter Davis warned that Malaysia would risk starvation if it experiences a massive economic meltdown. Unlike food-producing countries such as Thailand and Vietnam, we do not have a self-sustainable food production. In desperate times these countries would be able to feed their hungry population first before selling food to other countries like ours.”

We urge the government to introduce a comprehensive agricultural policy to ensure sustainability of food supply in the country when this bad experience is over. It is a bitter lesson for all of us.

In the meantime, it is high time for the government to ‘*turun padang*’ (go to the ground) and check on food prices in times like this. It is the best time for opportunists to hike prices when MCO is in place.

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