

## Decision on price control for essential goods on Thursday?

KUALA LUMPUR: The National Action Council on Cost of Living (NACCOL) is set to hold a meeting this Thursday and look into and decide on medium and long term plans to address the skyrocketing prices of essential goods.

Minister in the **Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed** said the meeting to be chaired by Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob would also look into comprehensive and integrated plans to address the issue.

"Mid and long term plans would be presented by the ministries at the meeting. Among the matters that would be discussed is our dependence on imports, input cost for foods, the issue of foreign workers, subsidy schemes, grants and loans available besides agricultural technology as well as research and development," he said in response to a question from Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim (Port Dickson - PH) during the minister's question time in the Dewan Rakyat today.

To Anwar's supplementary question on the government's delay in taking measures when it was holding the meeting on Dec 9 while the crisis drew out, Mustapa said the government had taken immediate steps to stabilise prices through measures undertaken by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry and Agriculture and Food Industries Ministry (MAFI).

"Last year, the task force in charge of rising prices which is chaired by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister met twice. This year they have met three times together with MAFI and other ministries.

"I also want to explain to the opposition leader that the **Statistics Department of Malaysia** is also monitoring this. Earlier, prices would be monitored twice a month, now they are being monitored daily. Around 30-40 vegetables including chillies are being monitored," he added.

Mustapa said the government was aware that the escalation of prices of goods was a big problem to the people and required urgent action to address it.

"This is why the issue is always stressed during cabinet meetings. While NACCOL and a special cabinet meeting have yet to meet, the cabinet has already instructed all ministries and agencies to mobilise all resources in order to ensure that prices are controlled."

Anwar had earlier asked why there was a delay in calling for the NACCOL and the special cabinet committee meetings when consumers were hit by such high prices.

Mustapa replied that the Prime Minister had announced last week a clearance for the temporary import of chicken to address the shortage in the market and a RM262 million allocation to help farmers and planters who were affected by the hike in fertilisers and pesticides.

"Under the 2022 Budget, the government had allocated RM31 billion in subsidies, aid and incentives including RON95 and diesel fuel subsidies, cooking oil and flour.

"For example in the 2022 Budget, there's an allocation of RM200 million to reduce the prices of essential goods for rural folk and RM400 to stabilise cooking oil."

Anwar had also called on the government to resolve the issue of cartels and monopolies to address the issue.

<https://www.nst.com.my/news/nation/2021/12/752091/decision-price-control-essential-goods-thursday>