

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Traders stumped by scarcity of chicken eggs, polybag and cooking oil

SINCE NOVEMBER

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KUALA LUMPUR: Traders, including those running sundry shops and mini-markets, are baffled by the continuous shortage of basic necessities over the past few months.

They said the ongoing scarcity of polybag cooking oil was one of their major concerns.

Workers at the Restu Agenda mini-market in Jalan Tandok said chicken eggs and polybag cooking oil have been in short supply since November.

One worker, who wished to remain anonymous, said suppliers were unable to fulfil orders and simply told them to wait when they asked about the reason for the shortage.

"The demand for polybag cooking oil is what we worry about the most. Customers take a few packets at one time.

"We have since been forced to limit them to only one packet per customer to ensure everyone has a fair chance of buying them.

"Even then, there have been days that we had none of the item to sell. Regular customers will check with us every two days and buy whatever is available."

A worker at another shop, Kedai Runcit Iltizam in Sentul,

also lamented the supply shortage.

A worker, who only wished to be known as Lazim, said the shop owner was forced to look for other suppliers to get basic items from. However, these new suppliers bring in a fresh set of problems.

"This one supplier said they can provide all the stock, including eggs and cooking oil, which we need the most. But part of the deal is that we must also purchase other goods from him, even though we already have those items in stock such as rice and sugar.

"So we are stuck. If we do not buy from a new supplier, we will lose customers, but if we agree to his terms, we have to bear the cost of the additional items we need to buy."

The Domestic Trade and Cost of Living Ministry has since launched Op Terjah to identify the cause behind the shortage of basic necessities in the market.

The ministry on Sunday said that out of 4,732 premises inspected nationwide, 1,220 had reported a shortage of essential items including eggs, sugar, polybag cooking oil and wheat flour.



A rack designated for polybag cooking oil is bare despite the item being limited to only three packets per customer at a supermarket in Kuantan. PIC BY ASROL AWANG