

## THREE SABAH TRADERS IN HOT WATER FOR HIKING PRICE OF FACE MASKS

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**KOTA KINABALU:** Three business owners in the state were found to have violated the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act 2011 by hiking the price of face masks indiscriminately, in the wake of the 2019 novel coronavirus infection in the country.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) Sabah director Georgie Abas said the three business premises were among the 130 outlets inspected state-wide from January 26 until yesterday.

"The first two premises were found doubling the price of face masks by selling the heavy duty N95 mask at RM12 per unit instead of RM6, and a three-layer surgical mask at RM1 per unit instead of the maximum price of 80 sen.

"Meanwhile the third premises failed to display the price tags," he told reporters here today, adding that face mask is an item under the price control list, where the maximum ceiling price has been fixed on five types of face masks.

He said some 3,250 face masks of various types with a total value of RM2,935 were seized from these three premises.

In a related development, he added face masks are still available for sale at other shops and there is no need for panic or worry.

Meanwhile, in Kuching, Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Chong Chieng Jen said thus far, a total of 3,101 business premises selling face masks had been inspected and the ministry had received 10 complaints from the public on the price hike.

Speaking to reporters at a press conference here, he also warned that the ministry to take stern action against traders taking advantage of the coronavirus infection by hiking the prices of face masks indiscriminately.

He said errant traders found violating the law could face a maximum fine of RM100,000, or imprisonment for up to three years, or both, if found guilty, while companies could be fined up to RM500,000 or compound up to RM250,000 if found guilty.

