

## Covid-19: KDPNHEP keeping close eye on face mask prices — Deputy director

POSTED ON MARCH 13, 2020, FRIDAY AT 12:13 AM



*Low (seated centre) and KDPNHEP Sarawak officers show photos of some of their raids during the press conference.*

**KUCHING:** The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KDPNHEP) is keeping tabs on face mask sellers in view of the Covid-19 pandemic to ensure the items are not sold above the controlled price, said its Enforcement Division deputy director (Operations) Low Swee Hon.

She said the ministry has determined there has been a four-fold increase in the demand for face masks in the country since the start of the outbreak, and is closely monitoring the situation to prevent profiteering.

"In general, the three-ply mask must not be sold above the maximum price of 80 sen per piece," she told a press conference here yesterday, adding a pharmacy in Kuching was compounded RM10,000 last month for selling face masks at RM1 over the maximum gazetted price.

She also said KDPNHEP is also working with manufacturers to increase their output to meet the demand for face masks.

Meanwhile, Low said Sarawak recorded 19 cases of smuggling of controlled items between Jan 1 and March 1 this year.

She said items seized by the ministry included sugar, diesel and liquefied petroleum gas cylinders, worth over RM2.5 million.

"The offenders in two of the cases – in Kuching and Bintulu – have been compounded a total of RM26,000 for violating the Control of Supplies Act 1961.

The remaining 17 cases are still under investigation," she added.

Low also noted the ministry's close cooperation with enforcement agencies such as the Marine Police, Customs Department and General Operations Force, which has helped combat the smuggling of controlled items in the state.

Of the 19 cases recorded this year in the state, 16 were referred to the ministry by these three agencies for further action, she said.

