

## Johor traders warned against price gouging

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Dr Chong (right) with Johor Domestic Trade and Consumers Affairs Ministry director Mohd Hairul Anuar Bohro inspecting the prices of eggs during a walkabout at a hypermarket in Pontian. — THOMAS YONG/The Star

**PONTIAN:** Traders in Johor have been reminded not to take advantage of the movement control order (MCO) to raise prices of goods indiscriminately, especially during the festive season.

State unity, trade and consumer affairs committee chairman Dr Chong Fat Full said traders should follow ethical business practices and adhere to the Festive Season Maximum Price Control Scheme announced by the Federal Government in conjunction with the Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Kaamatan and Gawai celebrations.

He warned that errant traders would face action from enforcement authorities and face hefty compounds.



Dr Chong stressed that the government had taken many initiatives to make sure that prices of goods remained stable and affordable, especially during the current Covid-19 pandemic.

"With this in mind, the Domestic Trade and Consumers Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) launched the price control scheme, which runs from May 20 to June 3.

"The items in the list including dressed chicken, chicken eggs, beef, imported buffalo meat, coconut and grated coconut," he said in a press conference held at a hypermarket in Pekan Nanas.

The scheme initially listed 11 items, but this was later increased to 35.

Dr Chong reminded traders that during the period, they were not allowed to increase prices of goods in the list and the ministry expected full cooperation from them.

He said that during last year's Hari Raya Aidilfitri, Johor KPDNHEP recorded a total of 199 cases with a total compound of RM19,900 issued to traders for failing to follow the price control scheme.

"The ministry's enforcement unit will not compromise on any traders found to be taking advantage of consumers by increasing their prices.

"The state KPDNHEP has about 200 enforcement personnel where before the price control scheme, they carried out an average of between 300 and 400 checks on all business premises throughout Johor," he said, adding that the enforcement personnel would be working during Hari Raya period as well.

Dr Chong said consumers were encouraged to contact the ministry and channel information about price gouging by traders.

"However, consumers who wish to forward their complaints should bring in proof such as receipts to the ministry," he said, adding that KPDNHEP would carry out investigations once a complaint had been filed.

There are various channels for the public to forward their complaints to KPDNHEP, including via the call centre at 1-800-886-800, or email at e-aduan@kpdnhep.gov.my

Consumers can also use the Ez ADU apps, call its enforcement command centre at 03-88826245/6088, the government call centre at 03-80008000, WhatsApp 019-279 4317 or visit any of its eight offices in Johor.

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