

Price control scheme for festive season

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By REMAR NORDIN



Ramakrishnan (left) and Johor Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry director Mohd Hairul Anuar Bohro checking prices of vegetables at a grocer after launching the Christmas Holiday Season Maximum Price Control scheme at Mount Austin International Convention Centre.

JOHOR BARU: The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNHEP) enforcement unit here has not received any reports of increased prices or shortage of food items during this monsoon season.

State unity, domestic trade and consumer affairs committee chairman Dr S. Ramakrishnan said continuous enforcement and monitoring were conducted by KPDNHEP long before the wet season started.

"We have officers patrolling and going to many areas, including those affected by floods. So far, we have not received any reports of price increase or shortage of supply of daily necessities even at temporary flood relief centres (PPS).

"Price checks were conducted at sundry shops and supermarkets as well as to ensure operators comply

with the ministry's regulations," he said after launching the Christmas Holiday Season Maximum Price Control Scheme at Mount Austin International Convention Centre here.

Ramakrishnan said the price control scheme will run for 10 days compared to just five days last year, until Dec 31 under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011.

"The longer period is to keep prices down, especially those celebrating Christmas, during the festive season.

"The high cost of living is burden enough to many and we do not want to make the situation worse with unscrupulous traders increasing prices of items.

Ramakrishnan said 200 KPDNHEP enforcement officials were deployed to monitor prices at the outlet, adding that the list of controlled items has been extended, from 11 items last year to 14 items this year.

He advised the public to download the Price Catcher app from Apple's App Store and Google Play Store to compare prices of items and be a smart shopper.

"We want the public to make use of technology and not depend wholly on the government.

"With this app, they can find the cheapest options and locations," he said.

Among the list of price controlled items are live chicken, standard chicken, super chicken, imported turkey, local and imported boned mutton, and Grade A, B and C chicken eggs.

The list includes tomato, green capsicum, round cabbage, potato and red chili as well.

Traders who fail to put the pink tags on items sold will be fined up to RM10,000 or a compound of up to RM5,000, while a company faces a fine of RM20,000 or compound of up to RM10,000.

Traders found violating the controlled items' prices can be fined up to RM100,000 or imprisoned not more than three years or both, or compounded up to RM50,000.

Companies that sell the controlled items above the maximum prices set can be fined up to RM500,000 or compounded up to RM250,000.

Public complaints on errant traders can be channeled to 03-8000 8000, email at e-aduan@kpdnhep.gov.my or via WhatsApp to 019-279 4317.