

Sabah, S'wak keeping mask prices in check

By SHARON LING
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KUCHING: Authorities in Sarawak have received 10 complaints of overpriced face masks.

Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Chong Chieng Jen said inspections, however, revealed that the masks were sold within the permissible price range.

"The traders have not exceeded the maximum retail price," he said here yesterday.

Five types of face masks are price-controlled items. They are one-, two- and three-layer surgical masks with a maximum retail price of RM7 and RM10 a box or 20 sen and 80 sen each respectively.

The retail price for tie-on three-layer surgical masks and N95 masks are 80 sen and RM6 each respectively.

Chong said members of the pub-



lic who found any shop selling any of the five types of masks above the respective maximum price should lodge a report with the ministry.

He said while other types of masks were not price-controlled, action could still be taken under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act for hiking prices unreasonably.

In stock:
Sarawak domestic trade and consumer affairs enforcement officer Qartinee Mohamad Esa showing the face masks listed as price control items.

Chong added that the ministry had also met face mask suppliers to find ways to meet the demand for the items.

"There are three local manufacturers, two mainly for export and one supplying government hospitals.

"Because of the sudden surge in

demand and panic buying, there is a shortage of face masks.

"We are in discussion on how to allocate stock for the local market," he said.

Over in Sabah, face masks are still available in the city and there was no need for panic buying, says Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry.

Its Sabah director Georgie Abas said those who need to worry were the traders who took the opportunity to hike prices of the masks.

His warning came following raids on three premises, each in Kota Kinabalu, Penampang and Sandakan, where traders were found to have doubled the prices of the masks.

"We checked 130 premises on Sunday and found three that had hiked the prices.

"Some 3,250 face masks of various types with a value of RM2,935 were seized from the three premises," he said yesterday.

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