

Traders in durian storm slapped with RM2,000 fine

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GEORGE TOWN: It was win some, lose some for the durian sellers in Macalister Road who were caught in a social media storm for selling three durians at almost RM1,000.

The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry, after an investigation, found that the traders had sold the durians at market prices and there was no profiteering.

But the sellers were slapped with two compounds of RM2,000 in total – for misleading pricing and not displaying prices in the national language.

The ministry's Penang enforcement chief Chin Ching Chung said the pricing of the three durian was investigated under Price Control and Anti-Profiteering (Mechanism to determine unreasonably high profit for goods) Regulations 2016.

"A notice was issued to the two individuals to disclose information to us to determine whether there was profiteering.

"We then used the pricing mechanism for our investigation.

"Factors that were taken into



This is not right: Chin showing reporters the durian sales poster during a press conference in George Town.

account included employee wages, utility bills, rent and other costs," he said during a press conference at the ministry's branch office in Downing Street yesterday.

Chin said the investigation revealed that the price of the durian was reasonable but the shop violated two offences.

"The price range for Musang King and Black Thorn durian then were in a range of between RM60 and RM95.

"This provided opportunities to manipulate the price," he said.

Secondly, the pricing signage was only in Chinese, which is an offence under Price Control Order (Price

Indication by Retailer) 1993, that makes it mandatory for retailers to display prices in Bahasa Malaysia for all goods.

"Shop owners can use other languages but it is mandatory to have one in Bahasa Malaysia," he explained.

Chin said the compounds will be issued this week to the two traders aged 52 and 58.

The thorny issue began when a woman voiced her displeasure about how her friends and her paid RM937 for two Black Thorns and a Musang King durians in a Facebook posting.

Her post went viral, with negative comments hurled by netizens against the shop.

It was reported that the woman visited the shop on May 30 with a group of friends asking for the "biggest and tastiest fruits".

When it was time to pay, the woman apparently remarked that it was expensive but was said to have paid up without kicking up a fuss.

The durian sellers later declared that they were considering taking legal action against the woman.

The woman could not be reached for comments.

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