

**'Budget benefits must be
passed on to consumers'**

**Price warning
by Mahathir**

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs.

— The Deputy Prime Minister warned today that he would not tolerate attempts to prevent the Budget benefits from being passed on to the consumers.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad said: "In the past when taxes on goods went up sellers benefited by increasing their prices almost immediately to get the extra benefits from the Budget proposals."

"It is only fair now for the people to enjoy some of the benefits accruing from the Budget proposals."

He directed fruit-sellers to sell their fruits at the new prices immediately.

"I can't accept the excuse that old stocks have not been cleared," he said, adding that it was already a week since the Budget proposals were announced.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir, who is also the Trade and Industry Minister, said fruits were usually stocked in small quantities and he could not understand how the old stocks had still not been cleared.

He also warned TV dealers who persisted in selling their sets at the old prices that the Government would consider allowing more people to import colour TV sets to be sold at lower prices as provided by the tax cuts.

Stern action, he said, would be taken against those selling such goods as colour and black-and-white TV sets at the old prices after a short grace period.

The grace period would "certainly end within this year" and was meant to help sellers reduce — rather than altogether avoid — losses, Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir added.

He warned dealers that offenders would be charged with profiteering.

Tax cut

The tax reduction on colour TV sets was to facilitate people to buy their sets this year.

The Deputy Premier told reporters after opening a three-day conference of District Officers that enforcement officers from the Trade and Industry Ministry had been sent to shops to check on the prices.

The Ministry, he said, had enough officers to see that Government decisions were enforced for the benefit of the people.

Although it was not possible to apprehend all offenders, those caught would be made examples of, he added.

Commenting on his forthcoming visit to Japan, he said it was the usual investment promotion mission.

The visit was also at the invitation of the Japanese Government to meet and talk with the Japanese Prime Minister, Mr. Takeo Fukuda, and other Government officials.

He would also address the second meeting of the Malaysian-Japanese Economic Association and other seminars in Osaka and Tokyo.

Among his other important engagements in Japan was a meeting with members of the Japanese Overseas Economic Association who were anxious to know the Malaysian assessment of Japanese industries here, he added.

Teng's visit

At that meeting, he said, he would explain the Malaysian Government's policies and procedures.

On the treaty signed between Japan and China, the Deputy Prime Minister said Malaysia was not worried as long as it contributed to peace in the region.

Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir is scheduled to

meet the Japanese Minister of International Trade and Industry, Mr. Toshio Komoto, and Foreign Minister Sunao Sonoda on Tuesday and Mr. Fukuda on Thursday.

Asked to comment on his visit to Japan coinciding with that of China's Senior Vice-Premier, Mr. Teng Hsiao-Ping, to that country, he said so far there were no plans for him to meet the Chinese leader there.

However, he added,

**Fruits
being
sold
at
reduced
prices**

he would be back in time for Mr. Teng's visit to Malaysia.