

# Consumers 'must help by reporting price hikes'

KLANG, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said consumers should assist the Government in controlling inflation by reporting to the authorities any unjustified increase in the prices of goods or of goods sold without price tags.

The Prime Minister said consumers could determine the inflation rate with their purchasing power. He also said bargaining was one way in which the prices of goods could be reduced.

"In this way the public can help the Government improve their standard of living without causing inflation," he said in his message in the inaugural issue of the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry's consumer magazine *Ceramat*, launched by its Minister Datuk Abu Hassan Omar today.

Dr Mahathir however said the increase in prices of goods or services did not necessarily mean that there

was inflation if the increase was substantiated with improved quality or quantity of the products.

He said several measures could be adopted to bring down the inflationary rate.

"The most important is educating the people on the effects of inflation and the reasons why it happened.

"The mass media should organise a campaign so that the people can be informed of inflation and its negative effects," the Prime Minister

said.

The public also plays a major role in fighting inflation and can prevent inflation by increasing productivity and efficiency.

Consumers should be aware of the prices of goods when playing their role as consumers and the production costs when assuming the role of suppliers.

"This is because in reality, consumers and suppliers are the same persons."

For instance, Dr Mahathir

said, if a producer wished to have more income (from the sale of his goods), he should also be willing to buy other people's produce at higher prices. It will not be proper if, as a producer, he aspires to receive more but as a buyer he wants to buy as cheap as possible.

Dr Mahathir also said that in ushering in the new year, consumers should be extra careful in controlling their expenses especially when buying unnecessary items.