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Mahathir-Flour

GOVT CANNOT STOP PRICE RISE FOR WHEAT FLOUR, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, June 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the government cannot prevent a price rise for wheat flour but it will take measures to ensure the increase will be fair.

Speaking to reporters after launching World Consumer Day 1996 and the Family Comfortable Living Competition at Pusat Islam, he said: "An increase in the price of wheat flour is unavoidable because the commodity is imported. Its (wheat) price has risen 100 per cent. We will try to control it at a fair level."

The Prime Minister said he was surprised that roti canai sellers have raised their price even though flour constitutes a small percentage of the cost of making roti canai.

"The price of other ingredients such as oil, egg and sugar and the wages of workers have not increased. Why then raise the price of roti canai up to 10 per cent?"

Dr Mahathir criticised the attitude of bakeries who took advantage of the higher cost of wheat flour to hike their prices although they also make cakes and other products besides bread.

He said the action of the bakeries was irresponsible as it contributed to inflation when they could have subsidised the higher cost of flour.

"I wish to remind that anyone who raises prices should bear the consequences. Justify-lah, don't be like (the traders) in Langkawi where they increase prices when the demand goes up," he said.

Dr Mahathir said traders must not be greedy.

According to him, the prices of imported goods sometimes go up and such a situation is very difficult to control.

Consumers should play their role by exercising thrift and reducing the consumption of such products, he said.

"Where possible, we should use local substitutes. Similarly with imported luxury goods, consumers should reduce their purchases which will force the prices to come down and the quality to improve," he added. --

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