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Fomca pamphlets to educate consumers

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The current economic downturn has compelled the Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association to produce more pamphlets educating consumers to exercise their rights.

Association secretary-general N. Marimuthu, who received the 1997 Tokoh Pengguna award today, said only through education would consumers be able to know what to look for in difficult times.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad presented the award after launching the World Consumers Day celebration at Pusat Islam here.

Marimuthu, who has been active in consumer activities for the past 16 years, walked away with RM3,000, a medal and a certificate.

"Fomca has so far produced 10 pamphlets that encourage consumers, among others, to spend wisely, buy local products and reduce their expenditure to ensure a speedier economic recovery."

Marimuthu who is currently vice-chairman of the Bangkok-based South East Asia Food Security and Fair Trade Council, also said Fomca was also looking into government policies that affect consumer protection.

"For example, we are studying the Product Liability Act to find out the extent to which consumer protection is incorporated and manufacturers' liability."

Marimuthu said the award meant that he would continue with his struggle to help consumers protect their rights and improve their living standards.

Meanwhile, Sabariah Bunsu of Kuching, Sarawak, won the first place for Excellent Single Mother Award while Razali Awang of Kuala Terengganu won the Keluarga Hidup Selesa Award.

Sabariah, 56, received RM2,000, a trophy, a certificate and some products from Bernas, Cosway and Amway.

She raised seven children, aged from two-and-a-half to 13, single-handedly after her husband was killed in an accident in 1977.

Sabariah, who was then a housewife, had to start selling satay to support her children as she was determined to provide them with proper education.

She was then on a RM100-monthly budget which was earned from her small business.

"Today I am happy that five of my children have graduated from universities and have found jobs as professionals."

Razali, 56, who received RM3,000, a trophy, a certificate and products from Bernas, Cosway and Amway, is a carpenter at the Works Department in Terengganu and raised 13 children on a small income.

"I earned only RM4.40 when I first started working in 1962. But due to hardwork, I started receiving a salary of RM900 since last year. I disciplined my children to spend wisely since my salary is very low to lead a comfortable life."

Penang Consumer Affairs Council won the first place for the most active consumer affairs council in the State category and Temerloh District Consumer Affairs Council won it in the district category.

Sekolah Menengah Ibrahim Fikri, Terengganu, was chosen as the best consumer club in the school category.

The councils and school received RM3,000, a trophy and a certificate each.

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