

# Govt warns against profiteering

SIAR 21 OCT 2001

GENTING HIGHLANDS: The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry will carry out regular inspections to ensure that unscrupulous traders do not raise the prices of goods because of the rise in petrol prices, salary increases and bonuses for civil servants and the reduction of income tax on individuals.

Its minister, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, said that Budget 2002 tabled by Finance Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Friday posed a big challenge as his ministry had been entrusted

with the responsibility to keep inflation under control and stabilise prices.

"My ministry will look at ways to ensure the increase in petrol prices and salary adjustments for civil servants do not spark further inflation. We have been successful in the past with our price control exercise and we will continue doing it," he added.

Muhyiddin said that price control imposed on essential consumer goods ensured that the basic needs of the man-in-the-street were met as well as to check profiteering.

Various facets of the people-oriented Budget will also result in consumers having more money in hand, said Muhyiddin who was speaking to reporters after launching the Petronas Petrol Stations Association's 16th General Meeting yesterday.

"The Budget is based on consumption-driven growth so that we can continue to stimulate our economy despite the region's sluggish economy. Merchants will also be allowed more flexibility to hold sales throughout the year."

Muhyiddin said consumers

should spend wisely and should not tighten their purse strings too much.

The minister said he hoped traders would take immediate steps to lower the prices of consumer goods which have become cheaper because of the abolition of certain levies, adding that his ministry would monitor the situation regularly to check profiteering.

Speaking on another matter, Muhyiddin said oil companies should consider setting up a programme to help petrol kiosk operators modernise their facilities.