

Muhyiddin urges ministry to take proactive measures to protect consumers

PUTRAJAYA: The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry must work closely with other agencies and introduce proactive measures in addressing matters that involve errant traders, who hike up prices of goods during festive seasons.

Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said he also wanted frequent monitoring and continuous enforcement so that price hike issues could be resolved in a comprehensive and effective manner, subsequently protecting consumers.

Muhyiddin also called on the people to play an active role in assisting the government to address the issue by providing information about traders suspected of hiking prices of goods to the authorities.

"The government is aware of the actions taken by certain wholesalers or traders, who take advantage of the festive season to

hike the prices of goods sold on their premises.

"Of late, on many occasions, we heard complaints from the people about (traders) hiking up prices of necessities during Ramadan and when the festive season arrives.

"The increase in prices of goods (if left unchecked) will burden the consumers, especially the low-income group, as well as small traders and hawkers," he said in his message during a visit to the ministry's headquarters here yesterday.

Present were Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Alexander Nanta Linggi and his deputy, Datuk Rosol Wahid.

Muhyiddin also visited the ministry's Enforcement Command Centre in the same building.

He stressed that the Perikatan Nasional government was con-

cerned about the issues affecting the people. This, he said, was reflected in the measures introduced by the government through the ministry to address issues involving traders raising the prices of goods, including the Festive Season Maximum Price Control Scheme, which is being enforced from April 21 until May 20.

Muhyiddin, who had once served as the domestic trade and consumer affairs minister from 1994 to 2004, acknowledged that the ministry played a significant role to ensure that distributive trade activities were not affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, especially during the preliminary stages of the implementation of the Movement Control Order in March last year.

"The ministry has successfully resolved issues involving panic buying and ensured that there was sufficient supply of neces-

sary goods, face masks and hand sanitisers.

"I also appreciate the efforts by the ministry to continue providing assistance to the business community. I am told that the ministry is improving the processes and requirements in relation to 'Ease of Doing Business'. Such measures will produce positive outcomes in the short and long term."

Muhyiddin also welcomed all programmes implemented by the ministry in stimulating economic growth.

The Buy Malaysia Products Campaign and the Malaysia (Mega) Sales Programme held to boost spending and local economic activity, he said, had yielded great outcomes with the distributive trade sector registering sales value of RM1.248 trillion last year.

"This clearly proves that the implementation of the targeted

approach by the government can help in the recovery of the economy to the level before the pandemic hit the country."

As the custodian of the domestic trade and consumer affairs in the country, Muhyiddin said, the ministry must continue to play an important role, not only to regulate the sector but also to ensure the smooth implementation of programmes and activities to boost the economy.

"Bank Negara Malaysia recently projected that the economy is expected to expand between six and 7.5 per cent this year.

"This will depend on a number of fundamental factors such as the recovery of domestic activity, coupled with increased external demand.

"To achieve the economic growth target, cooperation from all parties is important to ensure our economy continues on the right track."