

BUDGET: Sugar Subsidy Reduced For People's Own Good
Bernama
October 02, 2012

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- The reduction of 20 sen per kilogramme in sugar subsidy is not to burden the people but done for their own good, says Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Deputy Minister, Datuk Tan Lian Hoe.

"When the subsidy is reduced and the price goes up, people will consume less sugar and practise a healthy lifestyle including eating a healthy diet," she told reporters at the parliament lobby, here, Tuesday.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak when tabling the 2013 Budget in the Dewan Rakyat on Sept 28, announced the sugar subsidy reduction which took into consideration that 2.6 million Malaysians are diabetic.

Tan, however, said the sugar subsidy reduction should be no excuse for traders and operators of eateries to increase prices of goods.

She said errant traders could face legal action under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2010 for indiscriminately raising prices.

Under the Act, errant companies can be fined up to RM500,000 or ordered to pay a compound fine not exceeding RM250,000, while individuals can be fined up to RM100,000 or face a jail term of up to three years or both, or face a compound fine of up to RM50,000.

Tan said the public could act as the "eyes and ears" of the government by monitoring prices of goods following reduced sugar subsidy and reporting to the ministry on irrelevant price increase for appropriate action to be taken.

According to the records, sugar as a controlled item had before this, undergone price increase four times since Jan 1, 2010 - by 20 sen per kg, 25 sen since July 18, 2010, 20 sen (Dec 4, 2010) and 20 sen (May 10, 2011), bringing the retail price to RM2.30 per kg until now.

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