New Straits Times - 12 September 2006 PUTRAJAYA: Two of the four sugar refineries have defied a government directive to increase their output of coarse sugar.

Their refusal to co-operate could force the government to make fine sugar a controlled item to meet consumer needs for the coming Ramadan and Hari Raya Puasa.

Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Veerasingam said yesterday that the two factories gave the excuse that producing coarse sugar raised their operating costs, whereas the cost of producing fine sugar was lower.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Mohd Shafie Apdal is scheduled to meet the refineries management.

Veerasingam also said fine sugar was also more profitable as it was not a controlled item.

It is sold between RM1.90 and RM2.50 per kg, while coarse sugar is controlled at RM1.40 per kg.

"We may have to act by making fine sugar a controlled item so that no party will take advantage of the current sugar shortage."

The Cabinet Committee on Essential Goods directed the country's four refineries Malayan Sugar Manufacturing in Prai, Central Sugar Refinery in Shah Alam, Gula Padang Terap in Kedah, and Kilang Gula Felda Perlis in Chuping to increase their output of coarse sugar by 10 to 15 per cent.