

Malay Mail : "Display list of cut-price items on website"

Written by Administrator

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CONSUMER groups have urged hypermarkets to come up with a list of items where prices have been reduced and post them on their websites. This is for the benefit of its consumers who will be able to check the authenticity of a price reduction.

"We want to see the list of the items, the original price and the reduced price, so that consumers will be able to make comparisons," said Federation of Malaysia Consumer Associations secretary general Muhammad Shaani Abdullah yesterday.

He said until the hypermarkets, which claimed that they have slashed the prices of 16,700 consumer items, show the proof, the association will not trust the claim.

"It can be anything from tissue to toilet paper but we need proof," said Muhammad Shaani.

He added that the Government should issue more licences to different distributors and wholesalers.

"The ministry blames the small shopowners but it is not their fault because they have to increase prices too," he said.

He added that importers of controlled items should seek countries that offer better and cheaper prices.

"There should not be a monopoly. We need competition so that distributors and importers do not keep increasing prices due to market monopoly," said Muhammad Shaani, adding that planning should be as a whole and it does not end at changing the prices on the price tags.

National Consumers Complaints Centre director Darshan Singh said the price slash by hypermarkets is healthy.

"By keeping prices down, it can help curb profiteering," said Darshan.

He said this can only happen in big cities.

"Most rural areas do not have hypermarkets. The Government should put in more effort to help consumers in these areas because sundry shops sell at higher prices," said Darshan.

Darshan suggested the Government set up distribution centres for sundry shop owners to obtain goods at a cheaper price, hence enabling them to sell to consumers at a fair price.

"The ministry should also step up efforts to distribute enough information to consumers on how and where to lodge complaints.

"This will help them get feedback from consumers and it will be easier to overcome the root cause of the problem," said Darshan, adding that consumers should always use their rights as consumers.

President of Consumers Association of Subang and Shah Alam, Jacob George hopes hypermarkets are more sincere in their effort and not cut prices of some items while raising prices of other products.

"The Government can help keep prices down by giving special benefits or tax incentives," said Jacob. He advised consumers to be smart consumers.

"Do not allow salary increment to cloud your judgement. Buy items that are necessary and do not buy on impulse," said Jacob.

He suggested consumers have a checklist before shopping.

On Tuesday, six hypermarkets were lauded for slashing prices of 16,700 consumer items.

The six are Carrefour, Giant, Tesco, Jusco, Mydin and The Store, which agreed to reduce the prices by between five and 35 per cent until the end of the year.

The hypermarkets would be absorbing about RM119 million from the discounts given.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said strict enforcement had also managed to curb profiteering and there were now fewer price hikes.

He said the Government was serious in ensuring stable prices for goods and services and that there was no shortage of goods.