

Malay Mail : Ministry cites legal bar to blacklist

Written by Administrator

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DEPUTY Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Veerasingam said the ministry will not blacklist and post on its website or publish in newspapers the names of traders who raise the price of flour, a price-controlled item. There are legal constraints that do not allow the ministry to publish their names, he said.

He added that the names of the companies and individuals can only be made public if they were charged.

It's a good suggestion but at the moment, it can't be implemented.

If we want to do it, we will have to study it thoroughly, especially the legal aspects.

Veerasingam was responding to Federation of Malaysian Consumers Association's suggestion that the ministry publish the names of errant traders fined for increasing the price of flour.

Fomca president Datuk N. Marimuthu was quoted yesterday saying that the government should also impose the maximum fine on errant traders to deter others.

Posting the names on the website will enable consumers to boycott the errant traders, he said.

He said that a RM200 to RM300 fine does not hurt the traders and they may even increase the price further.

Some traders had increased the price of flour despite the government's decision to retain the price at RM1.35 per kg.

The price Control Act provides for a maximum fine of RM15,000 or two year's jail, or a compound fine of RM7,500 for individual offenders, and RM25,000 for companies.

The increase in flour price was reported to have caused a sharp rise in the price of burger buns to RM7, a packet of 40, causing for the price of burgers to go up.

Veerasingam said the ministry has yet to identify the traders involved in raising the prices of enriched flour.

We will take stern action against the traders and consumers have to play their part by reporting to the ministry if they are aware of any illegal price hike, he said.

National Consumers Complaints Centre director Darshan Singh supports Fomca's proposal.

He said that it is one way for consumers to know traders who are taking advantage of consumers.

This is one way to educate the consumers on the companies or individuals that are not complying with regulations, he said.

If we want the consumers to empower their rights, the authorities should provide more information so that they can utilise their rights.

Persatuan Pengguna Islam Malaysia's project director Noor Nirwandy Mat Nor called for stern actions against the culprits.

On Fomca's suggestion, he said that it will face many obstacles, especially legal ones.