

26 Sept 2007

KUALA LUMPUR: It's business as usual for traders in Klang Valley markets, despite a call by Cuepacs and the MTUC for a nationwide consumer boycott over price increases of essential items.

Most traders and shoppers at the Taman Tun Dr Ismail market, Kuala Lumpur market and the Pasar Besar Jalan Othman in Old Town, Petaling Jaya, did not even know there was a boycott.

◆There's a boycott?◆ asked Anita Matthews, 43. ◆Even if the prices are high, we still need chicken, meat, fish, vegetables, oil and sugar. People will complain but they will still buy.◆

◆Chicken retailer Anuar Abdullah, 41, said his business was not affected by the call for a boycott.◆

◆It all depends on the consumers. If they feel the prices are too steep, it's up to them to boycott.◆

◆Henry Zan was doing a roaring trade. By 10am yesterday, the chicken trader had sold all but four of the 100 birds he had in stock. He also only had five kampung chickens left out of 20.◆

◆Fishmonger Yap Kit Lee, 53, said he was still getting his usual crowd.◆

◆Meat vendor Yusuf Ismail, 47, wasn't too worried about the boycott because ◆people still have to put food on the table".◆

◆In Penang, most consumers seemed to reject the idea of a blanket boycott of the traders, and traders too were unperturbed by such threats.◆

◆At the Chowrasta wet market in George Town, housewife Zaliha Marul, 58, said she had no choice but to continue buying daily essentials.◆

◆A daily shopper at the market, she had become more prudent in choosing the stalls she bought items from.◆

◆Security guard Zaipul Idris, 30, however, backs the boycott against unscrupulous traders. ◆It's about time we taught them a lesson,◆ he said.◆

◆Fishmonger Shah Jahan Hassan, 46, said the unions should not call for a blanket boycott of all traders, but identify those who hiked prices and inform the authorities.◆

◆In Kuantan, the main wet market here was crowded as usual.◆

◆Teacher Sabariah Jamil, 43, said urging the public not to patronise retailers did not make sense, with most essential items were under price control. ◆We need the goods anyway, especially with Hari Raya Aidilfitri approaching,◆ she said. ◆I feel the boycott is not a good move.◆

◆Housewife Ngan Kim Chun, 63, said the boycott might have only a small effect in Kuantan, compared with bigger towns. ◆Here, retailers sell their products at a much lower price, especially to regular customers,◆ said Ngan, who has lived in this town for 40 years.◆

◆Retailer Yusaini Arif, 37, was confident that his customers would remain loyal. ◆This boycott will probably only affect those big supermarkets, but for us, business will remain the same as our products are fresh and our prices reasonable,◆ he said.◆

◆In Kuala Terengganu, grocery stall operator Mohamad Noor Ali, 56, said the boycott had yet to take effect as business at Chabang Tiga Market could not be better with Raya fast approaching.◆

◆Prices of most items have gone up a little, but those buying half a kilo of onions or a couple of cloves of garlic certainly have better things to worry about,◆ he said

◆
