

Malaysia's inflation rises 1.7 per cent in March

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia's inflation increased modestly to 1.7 per cent in March 2026, with the consumer price index (CPI) climbing to 136.4 from 134.1 a year earlier, the Department of Statistics Malaysia (DOSM) said.

In a statement on Friday, chief statistician Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said Malaysia's inflation in March 2026 was mainly driven by an increase in the transport group to 1.6 per cent from -0.7 per cent in February 2026.

Inflation was also driven by increases in the personal care, social protection and miscellaneous goods and services group, which rose by seven per cent (February 2026: 6.9 per cent).

According to DOSM, the insurance and financial services group recorded 4.9 per cent (February 2026: 4.7 per cent); alcoholic beverages and tobacco, 2.7 per cent (February 2026: 2.6 per cent); restaurant and accommodation services, 2.6 per cent (February 2026: 2.5 per cent); health, 1.4 per cent (February 2026: 1.2 per cent); information and communication, 1.4 per cent (February 2026: 0.5 per cent); housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels, 1.2 per cent (February 2026: 1.1 per cent); and recreation, sport and culture, 1.0 per cent, (February 2026: 0.8 per

cent).

"About 62.5 per cent of items (358 out of 573) recorded price increases. Nonetheless, of this total, 348 items (97.2 per cent) registered increases of 10 per cent or less, while only 10 items recorded increases of more than 10 per cent in March 2026.

"The remaining 171 items (29.8 per cent) showed a decline, while 44 items remained unchanged," it added.

The food and beverages group, which contributes 29.8 per cent of the total CPI weight, registered inflation of 1.1 per cent in March 2026 (February 2026: 1.3 per cent).

This was driven by subgroups of food away from home, 2.3 per cent (February 2026: 2.4 per cent), and food at home, 0.1 per cent (February 2026: 0.3 per cent).

Inflation for the housing, water, electricity, gas and other fuels group increased to 1.2 per cent in March 2026 compared with 1.1 per cent in February 2026. This was driven by inflation in the subgroup of maintenance, repair and security of dwelling, 3.3 per cent (February 2026: 3.2 per cent).

DOSM said the average price of unleaded petrol RON97 in March 2026 was RM4.03 per litre compared with RM3.11 per litre in February 2026. — Bernama