

## **Muhyiddin mulls a Cabinet committee to address rising food prices**

NATIONAL Recovery Council (NRC) is considering the need to form a Cabinet committee to address the issue of rising prices of goods and services.

Chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said this issue may lead to an increase in inflation over the next few months which will certainly cost consumers.

“I take seriously the issue of rising goods prices, which in my opinion will affect the recovery process of the country.

“People who were just beginning to breathe a sigh of relief after the economy reopened are now burdened with the problem of rising goods prices which certainly affect their lives,” Muhyiddin said in a statement yesterday.

He noted that the local production has increased by 12.3% in September from 9% in August, according to the **Department of Statistics Malaysia’s** data.

Therefore, NRC has looked into other factors such as short supply to meet demands which also could lead to rising prices of goods and services.

“In this case, the issue of acute manpower shortages in various sectors and liquidity problems faced by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have been given special emphasis by NRC. According to him, the committee led by the Ministry of Human Resources comprising various agencies will present a report and proposed solutions in the next NRC meeting.

At the same time, NRC has formed a Special Action Committee led by the Ministry of Entrepreneur Development and Cooperatives on the issue of cashflow and funding constraints for MSMEs to find an immediate solution to the liquidity issues faced by MSMEs during this recovery period.

“I hope the enforcement agencies will continue to redouble their enforcement efforts to ensure that producers, suppliers and traders do not take advantage of rising prices,” he added.

He stressed that strict legal action must be taken under the Control of Supply Act 1961 and the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011 against those who default.

Muhyiddin, who is also the chairman of Perikatan Nasional (PN), said that the party has decided to organise Gerai Prihatin Rakyat which sells daily necessities at lower prices across the country.

On the other hand, DAP secretary general Lim Guan Eng has called on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob’s government in exploiting the opportunity of the worst price escalation of food and basic necessities in history to appoint another “special advisor” on inflation costing RM50,000 monthly.

“With inflation at an all-time high for eggs, chickens, bread, vegetables, cooking oil and even ice cubes, as well as imported fertilisers, insecticides, and construction materials and labour, the ministers concerned have shown their ineptitude and ineffectiveness,” he said in a statement.

He views that the government has no coherent plan or concerted action to check the soaring prices other than trying to shift the blame on traders who are equally victims.

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