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Minister says M'sians should thank him over sugar price

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Kuala Lumpur: Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainuddin today said Malaysians should be grateful that the increase in sugar price was not more severe.

Pointing out that all of the country's raw sugar was imported, he reminded complaining consumers that the local price was still lower than in Thailand that is one of Malaysia's main sources of unrefined sugar.

"Malaysians should be thanking me instead of blaming me. We import more than 50 per cent from Thailand (and) despite that, our selling price is less than in Thailand, (where) it is RM3.20 (per kilogram).

This shows that Malaysia is a country where the government takes everything into consideration.

We do a calculation up to five decimal points. The price is fair for the traders and users," Hamzah told reporters at the Parliament lobby Tuesday.

The Ministry last week announced that coarse granulated white sugar will now retail for RM2.95 per kg, up from RM2.84 per kg.

Hamzah reiterated that Malaysians should not complain excessively over what he described as a "minimal hike".

Hamzah said the overall increase in the price of sugar by 11 sen per kg which is 3.8 per cent of the original price does not affect the price of food.

The Umno Supreme Council member also said his Ministry will take action against any traders who attempt to profit excessively from the increase in sugar prices. Hamzah added that his ministry has only received 60 complaints from consumers so far over the matter.

The Ministry previously attributed the price hike to the increase in global prices of raw sugar, but said the government is still controlling the price to keep it to the very minimum in comparison to prices in other countries.

The Ministry said the last revision of the sugar price was on October 25, 2013.

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