

KERATAN AKHBAR

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➤ Index rises to 132.2 points from 129.9 points in the same month of 2023: Statistics Dept

PETALING JAYA: Malaysia's inflation remained at 1.8% in March 2024 with the index recorded at 132.2 points as against 129.9 points in the same month of the previous year, according to the Department of Statistics Malaysia.

Inflation last month was driven by housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels (3%); restaurant & accommodation services (3%); personal care, social protection & miscellaneous goods & services (2.6%) and transport (1.3%).

However, this was offset by other main groups which recorded slower increases, health (2.1%); food & beverages (1.7%) and recreation, sport

& culture (1.5%).

Chief Statistician Malaysia Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Uzir Mahidin said the increase of 3% compared to 2.7% in February 2024 for housing, water, electricity, gas & other fuels was contributed by the expenditure class of water supply which increased to 31.4% in March 2024 (February 2024: 28.8%).

Kedah increased the water tariff rates for domestic category users starting in March 2024 compared to other states that have implemented the new tariff rates in February 2024.

The food & beverages group which contributes 29.8% of the total Consumer Price Index weight

recorded a slower increase of 1.7% in March 2024 (February 2024: 1.9%). The main subgroup of food at home increased to 0.3% in March 2024 (February 2024: 0.5%). Meanwhile, the main subgroup of food away from home increased 3.5%, the same rate as registered in February 2024.

The expenditure class of cereals & cereal products increased by 2% in March 2024 (February 2024: 2.5%). This was contributed by Basmati rice, which increased slower at 0.4% compared to 1% in February 2024.

Meanwhile, rice flour inclined to 9.6% (February 2024: 8.8%).

The inflation for the expenditure class of milk, other dairy products & eggs registered a slower increase of 1.4% in March 2024 (February 2024: 2.3%).

The slower increase was recorded by expenditure item of fresh milk

2.4% (February 2024: 2.5%). Meanwhile, the inflation for the expenditure class of oil & fats remained in the negative range at negative 0.1% in March 2024 (February 2024: -0.2%).

The inflation for the expenditure class of meat increased slower to 0.2% in March 2024 (February 2024: 0.5%). Chicken as the largest component comprised of 32.6% in the expenditure class of meat recorded a decline of negative 1.1% (February 2024: -0.7%). The average price of standard chicken at Malaysia and in March 2024 was RM10.28 per kilogramme as compared to RM10.40 per kilogramme in March 2023 (February 2024: RM10.29).

The increase in inflation for restaurant & accommodation services to 3.0% (February 2024: 2.9%) due to the increase in beverage

preparation services, 3.7% (February 2024: 3.4%).

Other than that, inflation for transport increased by 1.3% in March 2024 compared to 1.2% in February 2024. The increase was due to the main subgroup of operation of personal transport equipment which increased to 1.4% in March 2024 (February 2024: 1.3%). The average price of Unleaded petrol RON97 in March 2024 was RM3.47 per litre as against RM3.35 per litre in March 2023 (February 2024: RM3.47).

With regard to inflation at the state level, Mohd Uzir said most of the states recorded increases below the national inflation level of 1.8%. However, five states recorded increases above the national inflation level namely Penang (3%), Sarawak (2.9%), Pahang (2.1%), Selangor (2.1%) and Perlis (1.9%).