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Media Release

CASE: Range of hawker prices generally increased but price of most items remained the same

Hawker prices have generally increased but the price of most items remained the same, according to a survey by the Consumers Association of Singapore and Ngee Ann Polytechnic's School of Business & Accountancy conducted in December last year. CASE had commissioned its final-year Business & Accountancy students, who were taking a marketing specialisation, to conduct the study.

A total of 541 stalls in the five CDC zones were covered in the survey – North East, North West, South East, South West and Central (sub-divided into Central North and Central South for the purpose of the survey). The survey focused on five common food items: Chicken Nasi Briyani, Chicken Rice, Fishball Noodles, Roti Prata (Plain) and Mixed Vegetable Rice (consisting of two vegetables and one meat), based on the cheapest single portion available. Price auditing was completed through stall visitations.

Although there was an upward trend in the prices of the five food items, the prices in which vendors are commonly selling at for Chicken Nasi Briyani, Chicken Rice and Roti Prata (Plain)¹ remained the same. Two exceptions were the Fishball Noodles and Mixed Vegetable Rice.

The survey found that:

- Mode price of Fishball Noodles has increased by 20% to \$3.00, from \$2.50 in 2011².
- Mode price of Mixed Vegetable Rice has increased by 16% to \$2.90, from \$2.50 in 2011³.

Mode price refers to the particular price in which a large percentage of hawkers are charging for a specific type of food.

¹ Mode prices of Chicken Nasi Briyani, Chicken Rice and Roti Prata (Plain) are at \$4.50, \$2.50 and \$0.80 respectively.

² The comparison of the mode prices can be found in [Appendix Figure 1.1](#).

³ The comparison of the mode prices can be found in [Appendix Figure 1.1](#).

While the mode price for Chicken Nasi Briyani, Chicken Rice and Roti Prata (Plain) did not increase, the percentage of vendors⁴ selling at the mode price generally decreased⁵. The price range of the items seemed to be shifting to higher values:

Nasi Briyani:

- 14.81% of the vendors surveyed sold below the mode price of \$4.50 in 2012, compared to 39.07% in 2011
- 33.33% sold at \$4.50 in 2012, compared to 37.50% in 2011
- 51.85% sold at a range of prices above \$4.50, compared to 23.44% in 2011

Chicken Rice:

- 3.77% of the vendors surveyed sold below the mode price of \$2.50 in 2012, compared to 9.44% in 2011
- 46.54% sold at \$2.50 in 2012, compared to 60.00% in 2011
- 49.06% sold at a range of prices above \$2.50, compared to 30.55% in 2011

Roti Prata (Plain):

- 3.03% of the vendors surveyed sold below the mode price of \$0.80 in 2012, compared to 17.88% in 2011
- 51.40% sold at \$0.80 in 2012, compared to 68.60% in 2011
- 45.38% sold at a range of prices above \$0.80, compared to 11.94% in 2011.

CASE also came across stalls that offered competitive prices on food items and would like to highlight them⁶. We would like to encourage consumers to patronise stalls that continue to offer good value for money.

The survey also found that:

- Common take-away surcharge (if any) is 20 cents for each plastic take-away box, but most stalls do not charge extra for take-away if plastic boxes are not used.
- While more than eight in ten hawker stalls displayed their prices clearly, some were still not doing so. There were fewer stalls displaying prices clearly compared with 2011 (99.7%).

⁴ Please note that all percentages are rounded to nearest 2 decimal places.

⁵ Charts illustrating the percentage of vendors selling the 5 food items surveyed can be found in [Appendix Figure 2.1 to Figure 2.5](#).

⁶ The locations of the competitively-priced food items can be found in [Figure 3.1 to Figure 3.5](#).

- Two in three patrons said that the prices were still reasonable and affordable, although some prices had gone up.
- Common possible reasons attributed by patrons for increase in price to 'rental costs' and 'inflation'.

In conclusion, consumers still generally find the food prices in hawker centre and coffeeshops reasonable and affordable despite an increase in the mode price of Fishball Noodles and Mixed Vegetables Rice.

CASE will continue to monitor the prices of cooked food as we believe it will spur hawkers to keep their prices competitive for consumers.

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