

## The Star : Lentil prices go up after India bans exports

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**PENANG:** The prices of lentil commonly used for making Indian food like dhal curry, *thosai*, *idli* and *vadai* have increased by between 18% and 100% following a recent ban by India on their export.

R. Palani, manager of a spices and sundry goods shop here, said India imposed a temporary ban on the export of the items following insufficient supply for its local needs.

The prices increased about three weeks ago while items like Australian dhal and dried chilli prices went up about a week ago. We were told that prices could increase further, he said.

Palani added that the retail prices of items like *thovaram parpu* (yellow dhal) at his shop had increased 89% from RM2.80 a kg to RM5.30, and Australian dhal 28%, from RM1.25 a kg to RM1.60.

He said the price of dried chilli shot up 53%, from RM6.50 to RM10 a kg, while a packet of *jintan manis* (white pepper) had increased 75%, from 40 sen to 70 sen.

Our customers are still buying the items but in smaller quantities. These are essential in the preparation of their daily food, he said.

Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) president S.M. Mohamed Idris called on the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry to take immediate steps to bring down the prices.