The Star : 13 October 2006&#65533; 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.&#65533; 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.&#65533; &#65533;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,&#65533; he said.&#65533; Palani added that the retail prices of items like thovaram parpu (yellow dhal) at his shop had increased 89% &#65533; from RM2.80 a kg to RM5.30, and Australian dhal 28%, from RM1.25 a kg to RM1.60.&#65533; 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.&#65533; &#65533;Our customers are still buying the items but in smaller quantities. These are essential in the preparation of their daily food,&#65533; he said.&#65533; 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. &#65533;