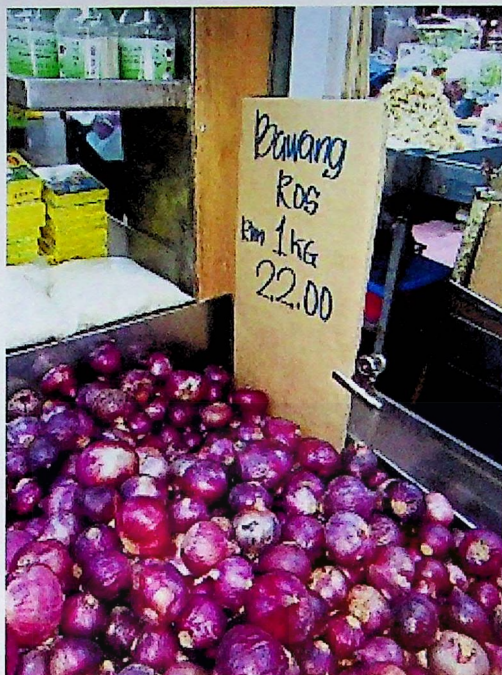


## Spike in price of Indian red onions in Johor

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By ZAZALI MUSA



Indian shallots selling for RM22 per kg now from RM12 previously.

**JOHOR BARU:** Consumers have had to fork out more for red onions in the last four months as there is a disruption in the supply of Indian red onions in the market.

Rice stall operator Rozita Ramli at Taman Pelangi hawker centre lamented she had to spend more on Australian red onions.

She said previously, it cost about RM17 for 5kg of Indian red onions but now, she had to pay between RM33 and RM38 for a 5kg bag of Australian red onions.

"I have stopped using Indian and Indonesian shallots in my cooking as their prices have sky-rocketed in recent months," said Rozita.

Johor Indian Muslim Entrepreneurs Association (Perusim) secretary Hussein Ibrahim said operators of 24-hour Indian Muslim restaurants in Johor had stopped using Indian red onions in their cooking.

"We have switched to using red onions from Australia and China as they are readily available," he said.

Hussein said the 24-hour Indian Muslim restaurant operators would only use Indian shallots for special orders such as weddings or kenduri (thanksgiving) even though prices had doubled in recent months.

Housewife R. Vijayathamani from Taman Bukit Indian said prices of red onions from Australia, China and Pakistan were much higher between RM8 and RM9 per kg compared with RM5 for the Indian red onions.



“I use a lot of red onions in my curries but the red onions from other countries are not as tasty as Indian red onions,” she said.

A check by The Star revealed that Australian red onions were being sold at RM9 per kg while Indian shallots were RM22 per kg from RM12 previously and Indonesian shallots were selling for RM26 per kg compared with RM14 previously.

Johor Consumers Movement Association chairman Md Salleh Sadijo has urged the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry (KPDNKK) to come down hard on traders suspected of profiteering.

“Onions are non price-controlled items but the authorities should monitor the prices as Malaysians are using a lot of onions in their cooking,” he said.

When contacted, state unity, domestic trade and consumer affairs committee chairman Dr S. Ramakrishan said the hike in prices of Indian red onions was because of severe flooding in India.

“India has banned exporting red onions and the country even has to import onions from China to cater for demand there,” he said.

Ramakrishnan said he would issue a directive to the Johor KPDNKK enforcement officers to inspect prices of red onions imported from Australia, China and Pakistan at wet markets and supermarkets.

Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority chairman Ishak Ismail expects disruption in the supply of Indian red onions to end by next month.

