

Thorn in durian seller's side

Trader ready to meet client unhappy with near RM1,000 bill

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GEORGE TOWN: It's a case of much ado over three durians, so much so that enforcement officers have to step in to investigate.

The thorny issue began when a woman voiced her displeasure about paying almost RM1,000 for the durians - two Black Thorn and one Musang King.

Her post about the shop, located along Macalister Road, went viral.

The shop owner, Chin Ah Chian, 52, was equally unhappy as the online post led to negative comments hurled at him.

He said the woman had come to his shop, asking for "the biggest fruits and the tastiest ones".

(Apparently, she was there with a group of people and they consumed the durians at the shop.)

"The Black Thorn that day cost RM95 per kg, but we charged her RM90 per kg, while the Musang King was RM60 then."

"My staff had told her how much the durians would cost per kg," said Ah Chian, who was not present when the woman came to his shop last Thursday.

When it was time to pay, Ah Chian said the woman apparently remarked that it was expensive but did not make a fuss about it and paid RM937.

"If she did have a problem, she could have asked to speak to me or called my number, which is on a banner above our rack of durians."

Ah Chian said he was giving the woman a week's time to see him and talk it over.

Otherwise, he said he would lodge a police report against her.

"Her post has given my shop



Nothing to hide: Ah Chian (right) and one of his workers at his stall in Macalister Road, George Town. Ah Chian says he will fully cooperate with the authorities in their investigation.

some extra attention but it is hurrful to read the comments."

He said that he was not charging any much more than other sellers.

"There is a daily price for the durians; it differs each day. The season is just starting, so the fruits are pricier."

On the investigation by the Penang branch of the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry, Ah Chian said he would fully cooperate with them as he wanted to prove that he was not in the wrong.

"I have nothing to hide and will provide them with all the required information to clear my shop's name," he added.

As for the woman, she said she was not worried if the shop owner went ahead with the police report.

"I am not the one at fault," she said yesterday.

She said the workers did not tell

her from the start about the weight of the durians until it was time to pay up.

The woman also said she was now overseas and had asked her friends who were with her during the incident to meet the shop owner.

Penang branch of the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry enforcement chief Chin Ching Chung said an investigation was being carried out under the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act.

"So far, the owner of the durian shop has been cooperating with us," he added.

He said the officers also advised him to put up better signs to indicate the price per kilo.

Going by regulations, Chung said they would usually require three years of data from the seller to compare the pricing, but this shop has only been operating for the past six months.

they respond, we will calculate to see their profit margin and whether it is above what is stipulated under the regulations," he said.

"It should take us about a month to find out if he is overcharging."

"If we do find that there is profiteering, we will either issue him a compound, which could go up to RM100,000, or he could be charged in court under Section 14(1) of the Price Control and Anti-Profitteering Act.

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