

<div align="justify">Monday, May 25th, 2009 14:27:00
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</div><div align="justify">OUR team had a tough time ♦ hunting ♦ for the SST15 grade last week.

Prompted by calls from Malay Mail readers, our team checked retail outlets, sundry shops and hypermarkets in the Klang Valley and found that the rice, sold at the fixed price of RM17.50 for a 10kg pack, was practically non-existent.

</div> A retiree, who wanted to be identified only as Nair, told Malay Mail that he has been facing problems getting this cheaper rice over the last few months.

♦ This is the only type of rice I can afford. The other brands cost more, with the next cheapest being sold at RM24.50 for 10kg, ♦ he said.

Nair said he had been wondering why there has been no announcement on the shortage.

♦ I have been checking with some supermarkets and hypermarkets, and was told that they have not been getting much supply. I called up a rice distributor to ask if the shortage was due to the government no longer subsidising the grade but was told that the government had allocated a budget to subsidise the grade until September.

♦ We are a long way from September and yet, there is already a shortage. Why are the authorities not doing anything? ♦ he asked.

A consumer, Pushpa Devi, 51, said the shortage of SST15 rice may not be an issue for those who can afford to pay more as they can always opt for other rice brands. Another consumer, Sundai Sipang, claimed that the shelves at a particular hypermarket where the SST15 rice was sold would always be empty.

♦ We are feeling the pinch of the recession, and yet, we are finding it hard to feed ourselves properly. We have to compete with the likes of restaurants and even stall operators who snap up this grade for their business. ♦

Sheetal Khorana, a student from Selayang, said many students who cook prefer the grade due to its price. ♦ We are suffering. We cannot be living on instant noodles and bread. ♦

Source: <http://www.mmail.com.my/content/surviving-noodles>