

09 MAY 2003

SARS-Bean

GREEN BEAN SOLD OUT IN MOST TOWNS IN S'WAK

SIBU, May 9 (Bernama) -- The humble green bean was sold out in most retail shops and mini markets throughout the state by last night.

The buying frenzy was sparked by a rumour that it could give good protection against SARS.

According to the rumour, a woman delivered a baby but before the infant died he spoke to his mother asking her to eat green bean to protect her against SARS.

However, if there was one catch, the infant had several birthplaces, ranging from hospitals in Johor Baharu, Kuching and Sarikei.

No thanks to mobile phones and SMS, the rumour spread throughout the length and breath of the state, even in places like Long Bedian in Miri where Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad launched the e-Bedian rural ICT and Internet community centre in the afternoon.

Long Bedian is about six hours' drive from Miri through plantations and logging roads.

Meanwhile here, by nightfall a throng of housewives has emptied their nearest markets and retail shops of the bean supply.

A report in the Borneo Post this morning claimed that a grocery store in Pearl Garden here sold 6,000kg and another in Hua Kiew Road, 600kg within a few hours.

Those who failed to buy any were said to have waited patiently to join their neighbours for a late night snack of the stuff.

A bus passenger on a Miri-Sibu bus this morning was heard to have told his friend that the "infant" spoke "the word of God trying to save mankind."

But he unfortunately failed to buy any as all the stock in shops in his neighbourhood had been sold out but he did enjoy the generosity of a neighbour before going on his Gawai trip home to Sri Aman.

-- BERNAMA

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