

No increase in price of local rice, says ministry

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KOTA KINABALU: There is confusion over the increase in rice prices with Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas) announcing an across-the-board hike and the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry claiming that the increase was only for imported rice.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Shafie Apdal said yesterday that he was surprised by Bernas' announcement of a price increase.

He said the price increase only involved imported varieties and the controlled prices of local rice would not change.

Speaking to reporters here after chairing a consultative annual meeting between his ministry and Sabah's private sector here yesterday, Shafie said the ministry was only informed of the price increase by Bernas on Thursday.

However, he said he would seek further clarification from Bernas.

On Thursday, Bernas confirmed that there would be an increase in the price of rice at the wholesale level – between five sen and 10 sen per kg for white, fragrant and basmati rice.

Glutinous rice will also see an increase of 20 sen per kg.

Bernas also said it was compelled to increase the price of locally produced rice at the wholesale level because the cost of production had increased at every level of the supply chain.