

## **Fruit price war** comes to an end; At two Ang Mo Kio shops, customers have been queueing to buy **fruits** which were going for as little as \$1 for 30 apples

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A FIVE-DAY **price war** between two Ang Mo Kio **fruit** sellers ended last night when the last batch of bargain-hungry shoppers snapped up 30 apples for \$1 and 20 oranges for the same meagre price.

At 10 pm, an exhausted Ho Chew Kwang, 40, owner of Chew Kwang Mini Mart, declared that the battle was over - at least for him.

His opponent, who wanted to be known only as Ah Ho, 47, owns Heng Sin Leong Trading, two doors down. He was less definite about the possibility of a ceasefire.

'It depends,' Ah Ho said, casting a sideways glance towards his opponent's shop, then surveying the stacks of empty **fruit** cartons surrounding his own store.

The scene at Block 408, Ang Mo Kio Avenue 10, was chaotic from the moment the stores opened for business early yesterday morning.

At lunchtime, there were about 100 people queued up outside each stall, putting up with the midday sun for up to an hour so that they could get their hands on the super-cheap **fruits**.

Inside, perspiring customers were packed in tightly against the **fruit** counters, scrambling over each other to grab bags of Chinese apples, Australian oranges, Vietnamese dragonfruits, pineapples and fragrant pears.

While the oranges and apples were a steal at just a few cents each, price-conscious Singaporeans were also snapping up the dragonfruits at three for \$1 - well below the market price of three for \$8.

Simei housewife Tan Hong Eng, 50, bought 40 apples and three dragon **fruits** from Chew Kwang Mini Mart for a total of \$5.

Two hours later, she was spotted at Heng Sin Leong Trading buying a bag of oranges and 3 kg of buah duku.

'I have to buy more because I've come so far. I don't really care about the war between them. Wherever is cheaper, I'll go,' she said.

Retiree Steven Khoo, 63, who lives a few blocks away from the battlefield, said: 'The more they fight, the happier we are, because we get to see the show and buy lots of cheap **fruits**.'

The **price war** started last Sunday when the two **fruit** vendors began selling their Chinese apples at 10 for \$1.

But the bitterness between the two men began three months earlier when Heng Sin Leong Trading, moved onto Chew Kwang Mini Mart's turf.

Both men admit that the **price war** has cost them dearly. Mr Ho, the incumbent, estimates that, although at its height he was selling about 1,000 cartons of **fruit** a day, he had lost about \$50,000 since the **price war** began.

Ah Ho, the newcomer, said he sold 6,000 cartons of **fruit** yesterday. One of his partners said they had lost about \$30,000 in all.