

ALOR STAR, MAY 27 (BERNAMA) — SOME MALAY RICE MILL OWNERS ARE RENTING OUT THEIR MILLS TO NON-MALAYS, KEDAH MENTRI BESAR DATO' SRI SYED AHMAD SHAHABUDDIN SAID TODAY.

HE WARNED THAT THEIR LICENCE TO OPERATE WOULD BE WITHDRAWN IF THEY CONTINUED THE PRACTICE.

OPENING THE GENERAL MEETING OF THE KEDAH MALAY RICE MILLERS ASSOCIATION HERE, DATO' SRI SYED AHMAD SAID HIS WARNING ALSO APPLIED TO MALAY CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, SEVERAL OF WHICH HAD LEASED OUT THEIR RICE MILLS TO NON-MALAYS.

HE SAID GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO INCREASE MALAY PARTICIPATION IN THE RICE INDUSTRY WOULD FAIL IF MALAY RICE MILL OWNERS DID NOT OPERATE THEIR MILLS AND INSTEAD RENT THEM OUT TO NON-MALAYS.

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EARLIER, SENATOR DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED EXPRESSED REGRET THAT THE NUMBER OF MALAY RICE DEALERS, INCLUDING MILLERS, WERE SMALL.

THE NUMBER SHOULD BE CONSIDERABLY LARGER IN VIEW OF THE FACT THAT MOST OF THE PADI PLANTERS IN THE COUNTRY WERE MALAYS, HE SAID.

THE MANAGING DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL PADI AND RICE AUTHORITY, ENCIX ISMAIL SHAMSUDDIN, SAID THE NUMBER OF RICE RETAILING LICENCES ISSUED TO MALAYS HAD INCREASED FROM 1,500 IN 1971, WHEN THE LPN WAS ESTABLISHED, TO 3,681.

PADI PURCHASING LICENCES ISSUED TO MALAYS HAD INCREASED FROM 744 TO 820.

ENCIX ISMAIL SAID RICE WHOLESALING LICENCES HAD INCREASED BY BETWEEN 40 AND 50 PER CENT. — BERNAMA 1939/YF