

## **Poor rice farmers to get RM60m as PM shakes down Bernas, Syed Mokhtar**

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Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim is making good on his proposal six months ago that Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas) share its profits with poor rice farmers.

He said he had already “reprimanded” Bernas owner - tycoon Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary (above) - over the company's monopoly on rice imports, and that some payouts will be made soon.

"We can't burden Syed Mokhtar until we review whether his profits and returns are appropriate.

"But I have asked him to do something immediately, and he will allocate RM10 million to be paid this month to poor rice farmers.

"(This will go up to) RM50 million starting next year. (The payouts) are from Bernas," he said.

Syed Mokhtar controls 92 percent of Bernas' shares, which he acquired in 2014 from Shahidan Kassim and businessperson Tan Boon Seng.

Anwar said he understood that Syed Mokhtar may still have some residual payments to make, but vowed that his government would not allow wealth to be hogged by politicians and their associates, to "suck the blood" of poor rice farmers.

"This is what we call governance. Not just shouting slogans of 'Malay' and 'Islam', but implementing policies," he said.

Meanwhile, on the egg supply shortage, the prime minister said that Agriculture and Food Security Minister Mohamad Sabu will announce measures tomorrow to ensure sufficient supply and lower prices.

He said this is done by decreasing reliance on "cartels".

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