

YOURSAY | No more monopoly on our rice

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Yoursay

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magnanimous46: One Malay businessperson, Syed Mokhtar Al-Bukhary owns 92 percent of privatised rice monopoly company Padiberas Nasional Bhd (Bernas).

Is this the standard operating procedure of the New Economic Policy (NEP) under the affirmative action plan? What is the reason for the government to allow such manipulations under its privatisation plan? How many other staple consumer products are owned by a single company?

Year after year, when the budget is presented with the bulk of the expenditure allocated for bumiputera development, we are told the Malays have only achieved 17 percent of the economic pie. Non-Malays are thrown pittance with the excuse bumiputera quotas have not been fulfilled.

Isn't this a manipulation of special rights? How would bumiputera quotas be ever

realised if politicians control the consumer market through their cronies? How sure are we that Syed Mokhtar is not the frontman for some politicians because this company Bernas is said to have been previously owned by an Umno/BN politician?

Max Fury: Syed Mokhtar is wrong to monopolise our rice production industry, leaving our padi farmers struggling to earn a living. It is time for him to give back to the farmers and help them instead. Give them the advantage to earn a decent income by providing them with the necessary help. Together, they can grow the industry, so we don't need to import as much rice and be self-sufficient.

Guglu: It is not Syed Mokhtar's fault that he has almost a monopoly on the rice trade. Nor is it the "Sugar King" Robert Kuok's fault for monopolising the sugar trade. Tenaga Nasional Berhad, Ranhill in Johor are both monopolies. They were given the opportunities legitimately to do business because they have unique knowledge and capital that others do not have.

To hound Syed Mokhtar alone because he is Malay and Muslim is unfair. For the few weeks in power, Anwar has brought back the toxic political slander, revenge, bigotry, and punishing businesses. We have seen all of these during Dr Mahathir Mohamad's rule.

Mazilamani: Reach out to the poor, who are clueless about who they can call out to help them. There are countless voiceless people spread throughout our country, including those working in remote plantations who are being ignored.

It appears that government departments, agencies, and those who have been sitting on their laurels for far too long must start moving into action now.

There are many more businesspersons involved in remorseless exploitation who are protected by godfathers who are powerful politicians.

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, get your ministers to start working on winning the hearts of the rakyat to create an all-inclusive society.

WhitePony9855: You must tread cautiously. Syed Mokhtar is a businessperson and has most likely paid a big premium to the two sellers who were politically powerful and or well-connected. They have taken their money and left Syed Mokhtar to recoup his "investments". Syed Mokhtar as a businessperson has to be prepared to cut losses.

Our poor farmers and Malaysians should not be made to suffer from their profiteering. There are just too many of these unfair deals made by politicians and elitists with many well-connected businesspersons at the expense of the

rakyat.

It will take time to clear up all this nonsense but please do tread carefully as there are many of these unscrupulous people from within the unity government too.

BOBBYO: RM10 million a year and up to RM50 million next year is peanuts when he paid RM400 million in 2014 (eight years ago).

Rice is consumed daily, worth millions each day. Imagine each person consuming RM2 worth of rice a day, which amounts to RM60 a month x 12 x 20 over million Malaysians whose staple food is rice. That easily works to billions over a year.

This is just rice. What about bread and sugar? Imagine eggs that were available in the market by the hundreds of thousands daily, suddenly disappearing.

All these are monopolised by the politicians and their cronies. It is time to dismantle these cartels and cronies.

Over the years they have made hundreds of billions from just these four items. What about the many other necessities that these selfish self-centred businesspersons profited from?

Don't know why they are considered industrialists or pioneers. They should be called opportunists who have abused the nation and its people by using these monopolies to enrich themselves and those concerned. Mahathir is their godfather

Harvey Norman: Some years ago there was a sharp sudden increase in the price of rice. I can now only assume it relates to the takeover of Bernas by Syed Mokhtar. The price increase was used to pay Arau MP Shahidan Kassim and businessperson Tan Boon Seng. We are the victims of some people's greed. The BN government allowed this. Such a caring government!

The Pakatan Harapan government should take control of the rice business as it is our staple food. All the privatisations are probably only enriching a select group!

BrownCheetah9736: Syed Mokhtar is living off people's livelihood. He has a rice monopoly, sugar monopoly, tolls and highway (Gamuda), power generation (Malakoff), and even ports (Tanjung Pelepas, Northport Port Klang, and Penang port), just to name just a few. The concentration of wealth in one single bumiputera is staggering.

He represents a single person's risk in legal terms if something happens to him. Sorry, there is no other way around it. His wealth needs to be redistributed to

many more bumiputeras for affirmative action to be fairer.

Siva1967: This is the first step. The funds should go to assist the farmers since rice is a staple food. However, the saying “don't give fish but teach them to fish” should be applied here. Meaning, the funds channelled to these farmers should go towards improving their profession which in turn improves their lives.

Padi cultivation should focus on mechanising and improving planting techniques and harvesting processes. The objective should be not only to meet the country's demand but also to be able to export in the long run.

Youth, especially graduates, should see that taking up paddy farming can be a lucrative profession for them also and not only white-collar jobs. A total rethink has to be undertaken. And the same should be done for other food sources and reduce our dependence on food imports.

Mosquitobrain: The New Economic Policy is lopsided. The rich get richer and the poor get poorer.

The best way is to allow healthy and open competition. Why must rice or other daily essentials imports be monopolised by individuals? Open up the import market and prices will come down.

The government can save resources and create more job opportunities.

IndigoKancil5615: Mahathir once said that there is a need to create millionaire bumiputera businesspersons so that the wealth they acquired can trickle down to their community.

Instead of sharing their wealth, these crony capitalists monopolise essential businesses and hoard all the wealth for themselves, leaving the majority of bumiputeras poor.

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