

Najib More Concerned With Profits Than Quality

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I read with both amusement and consternation the Prime Minister's statement on Bernama yesterday that "the ridicule and criticism hurled by the opposition at the 1Malaysia Shops (KR1M) has helped to raise sales at the outlets."

Najib Razak even goaded the opposition to make more criticisms, "I would like to encourage them (the opposition) to carry on with their criticism" when visiting his own constituency of Pekan where KR1M has been opened for a month.

It is hence clear that the Prime Minister is not the least bothered about the health and welfare of ordinary Malaysians, not even that of his own constituents.

The criticisms coming from Pakatan Rakyat on KR1M is regardless of whether the store sales go up or down. The criticisms are made on the issue of whether the Government's subsidies are being used to profit particular businessmen, whether consumers are being fleeced or their health compromised.

The Minister of Health, Liow Tiong Lai has confirmed that the 1Malaysia Fresh Milk, which was sold significantly cheaper by KR1M compared to other retail stores, was contaminated with the Escherichia coli (E.coli) bacteria which is the cause of food poisoning and occasional deaths.

The Ministry of Health has also confirmed that the 1Malaysia Growing Up Milk Powder for children 1 year old and above contained excessive amount of Vitamin A, more than double the limit set by Institute of Medicine (IOM) for children 3 years old and below. Excessive doses of vitamin A may cause Hypervitaminosis A, resulting in damaged liver, asthma, skin discoloration, hair loss and other effects.

In addition, at least 2 products – oyster sauce and sweetened creamer - were confirmed to have breached health and safety regulations per the Food Regulations Act 1985. What is more, no less than 5 products were labelled wrongly, including inferior products being sold as superior goods.

Selected comparison of prices of 1Malaysia products against their counterparts in other supermarkets has also shown that there's little difference in prices, and certainly a far cry from the 30% to 50% cheaper claim by KR1M. This is despite a RM40 million subsidy given by the Government to Mydin to open these shops.

Yet, despite all of the above, Najib Razak has chosen not only to waive any punitive actions against KR1M for breaking so many laws, but instead decided cosy up to KR1M and its private owners. He did not even attempt to admonish KR1M owners for the above transgressions.

There can be no other conclusion from the above but to say that the Prime Minister isn't interested in whether it is the rakyat or the businessman who is profiting from the RM40 million subsidy; that he doesn't care if KR1M sold products which were unhealthy or of inferior quality; and that Najib Razak is only interested in KR1M making lots of sales and profits for its private shareholders.

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