

COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

SUGAR FIRMS: NO MONOPOLY HERE

Country's largest refiners say opportunistic parties are instead cashing in on low global prices of commodity

KUALA LUMPUR

MSM Malaysia, Holdings Bhd (MSM) and Central Sugar Refinery Sdn Bhd (CSR) say that there is no sugar monopoly in Malaysia despite claims by certain parties.

The two refiners, the largest in Malaysia, said as sugar was

gazetted under the Price Control and Anti-Profiteering Act 2011, the price in the country was among the lowest in the world.

Currently, the ceiling price for coarse grain sugar is set at RM2.95 per kilogramme, and fine

granulated sugar is set at RM3.05 per kilogramme.

The two refiners – MSM under FGV Holdings Bhd and CSR under Tradewinds (M) Bhd – operate five plants with a total refinery capacity of two million tonnes per year.

This is against domestic demand of 1.5 million tonnes per year.

Apart from local brands, there are importers that bring in and market a variety of sugar brands in Malaysia, including SIS, Talkoo, Waitrose, Billington and Tate & Lyle, resulting in a competitive landscape.

Industry players such as food and beverage manufacturers buy sugar through the NY#11 (a global commodity trading platform for raw sugar).

Local refiners will execute the buying on behalf of these companies, import the sugar that has been procured and refine it for a fee.

The companies said as part of the local refiners' duty to provide sufficient sugar supply for Malaysia, a certain amount of sugar was stockpiled to ensure adequate supply even during high global raw sugar prices.

"Due to the relatively low world

raw sugar prices, many opportunistic parties that operate without the overheads and responsibilities that local refiners have are trying to import sugar and profit from it.

"These companies may not have the necessary certifications, such as a halal certification, and will cease operations once the world raw sugar prices go higher than the ceiling price.

"It will then be left to local sugar refiners to fill the void left behind by these opportunistic players," they said.

MSM and CSR said local refiners were operating within a chal-

lenging business environment to ensure a steady sugar supply to consumers, while maintaining a decent sugar stockpile for the nation.

"While the cost of doing business has increased, the ceiling price of refined sugar has remained at RM2.95 per kilogramme.

"In addition, the industry is adversely affected by illegal activities, such as sugar smuggling and infiltration of illicit sugar, which threaten halal certification, quality control and other mandatory certification requirements."

WORK MATTERS



SHANKAR R. SANTHIRAM

PERSONAL EMPOWERMENT

Find out what drives you and nurture it

TODAY marks the 100th time that I have been privileged to write my weekly column in NST Business.

It is a privilege because I grew up reading this newspaper, and I had always admired the newsmen and women who churned out great stories and wrote insightful opinions.

My view of the world today is certainly shaped, to some extent, by what I read in that broadsheet.

The New Straits Times also holds a very special place in my heart for another reason.

When I was 13, I scored myself a Shimano racing bicycle. It was a reward from my folks for getting into the Penang Free School. At that time, it was the choice secondary school for any discerning Penangite.

The bicycle brought me independence.

For a few years, until he passed away, nearly every morning en route to school, I would stop by and hang out with my grandfather at his house for a bit. He was a real character and I truly loved him.

The highlight of my visits with him was that he would read out various articles from the NST to me. I never quite understood why. Perhaps it was his way of expressing his affection for me. As I thought about what I would

write in this column to commemorate this personal milestone, the most memorable piece of advice my grandfather gave me came to mind.

Almost every morning after he read something out to me, he would remind me to study hard. He kept saying that education was the only way I was going to be successful and happy in life. In his charming way, he'd add: "If you have money, every day is Deep-avail".

I remember asking him one day if money was the only thing that would make me happy.

That's when he explained to me that he was actually only asking me to concentrate on my learning, so that I become valuable. Money would come when I offered value to others. He wanted me to understand that if people needed me, they would pay me handsomely for my services.

His life experience taught him that knowledge was the greatest asset anyone could possess.

Are you valuable? Do people need you?

In my leadership coaching sessions, I often start by asking this question. Most coaches get quite flummoxed by this. Going to work is just a thing we all need to do to survive, they answer.

Many people I meet seem to be disengaged from their jobs. But

when I probe them deeper, they all have dreams of a better life and for bigger outcomes from their careers.

At various times in my professional life, I, too, had felt disconnected with what I do. But at these moments, I was able to recall what my grandfather drilled into me. His words always helped re-energise myself when things went wrong.

I know now that it was his coaching that helped me create my strong drive.

This week, I was asked to train a group of entrepreneurs as part of Alliance Bank's SME Innovation Challenge 2018. I was invited to coach them on how to manage talent in their businesses. It was empowering to work with so many dynamic and motivated business owners.

In the workshop, even before we got into a discussion about how to nurture and develop talent in their businesses, I focused on getting them to align themselves with a solid drive for what they want from their teams.

I had to make them understand that if there was no compelling purpose, they would never be able to develop their staff.

Your attitude towards everything is directly related to your purpose and intention.

If your purpose is ambiguous or

uncertain, it will show in your attitude and work. We've all had personal experiences with colleagues who are like this. They forget to do things; they don't take some important matters seriously, or their attitude is frivolous, at best.

When someone is branded as having a bad attitude at work, I reckon it is simply a reflection of their lack of purpose. They may not be bad people. It is just that they have no direction.

Remember that your sense of purpose is shaped by the things you believe in and value.

When you have a strong sense of purpose, you tend to develop a personal code of behaviour. And, your connection to your purpose will help you live by these beliefs and values.

A strong sense of purpose has a positive impact on your day-to-day living.

I am grateful to my paternal grandfather, Raman Nair, for indoctrinating a strong sense of purpose in me from an early age. I have spent my entire career focusing on becoming valuable.

Do you know what drives you?

The writer is managing consultant and executive leadership coach at EQTD Consulting. He is also the author of the national bestseller "So, You Want To Get Promoted?"

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