



## Overwhelming call for removal of sugar import monopoly

**KUCHING:** Elected representatives from both divides agree that since sugar subsidy has been lifted, steps should be taken to remove monopoly of sugar import.

They argued that as a natural and rational development, sugar approved permits (AP) should be removed following the lifting of sugar subsidy the day after the announcement of Budget 2014.

Kapit MP Datuk Alexander Nanta Linggi told The Borneo Post that it was no longer necessary to allow only those with permits to import sugar as it was now not a subsidised and controlled item.

"Now as sugar subsidy has been lifted, it is like any other food items. Its importation should be open to all to be subjected to free market mechanism," said the newly-elected Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) vice

president.

He agreed that importation of sugar through the appointed few should not continue because removal of sugar monopoly would benefit all and such a step would be fair to all.

"It is just the rational development of things. Sugar APs should be removed and open sugar importation to all.

"Before this, sugar was a controlled item. It was understandable that the government took the step to give permits to a limited number of companies. Since it is no longer subsidised, then the item should be open to market forces," said Nanta, who is also Rural and

Regional Development Deputy Minister.

State Assistant Health Minister Datuk Dr Jerip Susil shared the same view as Nanta, reasoning

that as a natural course, import of sugar should be open to all since subsidy on the item had been lifted.

"It does not mean that I agree with the opposition. It is just the rationale of things to be done. Sugar importation limited to a few should be removed and leave the market to determine the price,"

said Dr Jerip of Sarawak United People's Party (SUPP).

Land Development Minister Tan Sri Datuk Amar Dr James Masing when contacted said after the lifting of sugar subsidy, sugar monopoly should be reviewed.

"Authorities should give AP only to those who are capable. Don't give AP to those who 'sell' it to others because that encourages lazy and incompetent so-called 'entrepreneurs'.

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## 'Federal govt should liberate sugar supply industry'

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"They can share management but make sure that it is a genuine sharing of responsibility," said Masing.

Meanwhile, PKR state secretary See Chee How held the view that the federal government should liberate the sugar supply industry to ensure that sugar price would be reduced due to free market competition, so that the consumers will not be over burdened by the removal of sugar subsidy.

"As it stands now, the two companies, Central Sugar Refinery owned by Tradewinds and the Malaysian Sugar Manufacturing owned by Felda Global Venture are having the monopoly of sugar production and trade and as prices are determined by them, the general consumers are at the losing end while these two companies will enjoy a profit of RM1 billion a year. By removing the subsidy, it will only strengthen the monopoly of these two corporate giants in the industry.

"Sugar is a necessity to all ordinary Malaysian families. Without liberalisation of the supply to bring down the price, the federal government's decision to withdraw the sugar subsidy will only add financial burden to all Malaysians.

"Liberalisation of the industry will also ensure that the monopoly in production and supply of sugar in the country will be broken and that the sugar price will not be continuously going up," said the Batu Lintang assemblyman.

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**CONGRATULATIONS:** Simoi (second left) presenting an award to one of the winners of a competition during the programme.