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Panel 1 Text: Rice is a staple food in Malaysia

Panel 1 Image: A red bowl of rice

Panel 2 text: ...yet most Malaysians would be surprised to discover that the country's rice supply is wholly under the purview of a commercial entity.

Panel 2 image: A young girl and man sit eating rice dishes against a backdrop of a rice paddy. In response to the panel text the man asks 'It is?' while in mid-bite.

Panel 3 Text: The Malaysian National Rice Agency (Padi Beras Nasional Berhad, BERNAS) was originally established as the National Paddy and Rice Board (Lembaga Padi dan Beras Negara, LPN) in 1971. Its aim was to protect farmers' and consumers' interests with regards to the price and supply of rice, before being rebranded and privatized in 1996. With its privatization, BERNAS assumed complete control of the import and distribution of rice within the country. The word 'import' is particularly relevant.

Panel 3 Image: A pair of cupped hands with a mound of rice and rice bags, with the BERNAS building perched atop it. It is surrounded by transporting rice into Malaysia, made obvious by cranes coming in from off panel areas lifting bags of rice from the ships. One ship is called 'Rice Rice Baby' while the other is 'S.S. BERAS'.

Panel 4 Text: For despite its best efforts, Malaysia's rice production has remained stagnant since the 90s compared to its neighbours...

Panel Image: Background displaying a chart for rice production that shows Malaysia's Rice Production has remained relatively constant compared to other countries which have shown an increase of rice production. The curves of the graph are shown as the outline of a mountain range with the Philippines as the lowest peakline and each increasing peak like represents rice production corresponding to Thailand, Vietnam and Indonesia respectively. In the foreground, a Malaysian farmer farms along the flat line depicting Malaysia's rice production. More information on the graph can be found here:

http://www.krinstitute.org/assets/contentMS/img/template/editor/20190409_RiceReport_Full%20Report_Final.pdf

Panel 5 Text:...Continuing to rely on rice imports to meet local demand

Panel 5 Image: Off-panel hands holding bags of rice labeled with the flags of Vietnam and Thailand to indicate that they are the major importers of rice to Malaysia

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Panel 2.1 Text: Malaysia's failure in self-sufficiency in rice supply is often blamed on its farmers when in fact there are many systemic factors working against them.

Panel 2.1 Image: A farmer toiling in the middle of the panel, being hurled accusatory remarks by a crowd on the left side of the panel, while being stabbed from the back by parangs (a kind of machete) with the words 'subsidy monopoly' and 'limited distribution systems' written on them.

Panel 2.2 Text: Many of them turn to seed saving which helps to keep costs low but this too is currently under threat.

Panel 2.2 Image: A closeup of a farmer's hand holding a single grain of rice

Panel 2.3 Text: Plans by the Malaysian government to ratify the Swiss-based International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) 1991 Convention by 2021 will rob farmers of their right to store, share, and sell their own seeds.

Panel 2.3 Image: A cartoon personification of the UPOV-91 convention as a scroll, snatching the grain of rice out of the farmer's hands, going 'Tsk tsk, you can't do that!'

Panel 2.4 Text: While there have been grassroot efforts to aid farmers and public education...

- Petani Bukan Pemalas Documentary (2020)
- Langit Collective
- Plates magazine

Panel 2.4 Image: Film and magazine covers corresponding to the media listed above.

Panel 2.5 Text:...there needs to be more proactive interest in Malaysian food security...

Panel 2.5 Image: People holding plates and bag of rice with ways they can help: Fair Prices, Fair Subsidy Distribution, Food Safety, #BuyLocalRice, #NoUPOV91

Panel 2.6 Text: ...before it's too late.

Panel 2.6 Image: Newspaper displaying the following headline: 'November 3, 2020 - BERNAS gets extension for 10 more years'

THE END.