

Cuba allows people to own private businesses

10th August, 2021



The government in Cuba is legalising the ownership of small and medium-sized businesses. This represents a monumental shift in policy from the communist-ruled

country. State-owned companies have traditionally been the norm in Cuba, following the revolution in 1959 that brought Fidel Castro to power. He nationalised Cuba's industries to put them into state hands. The new policy allows entrepreneurs to operate businesses that have up to 100 employees. The change of heart from the government came after a month of street protests. Thousands of Cubans demonstrated against dire economic conditions. People also protested about a lack of food and the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Cuban President Miguel Diaz-Canel said he would introduce new initiatives to revitalise his country's economy. Cuba relies on tourism for much of its foreign currency reserves. Global restrictions on travel during the pandemic have severely impacted this sector. Another key industry in Cuba is the production of sugar. Bad weather has resulted in poor harvests and reduced revenues. These events have depleted the government's reserves of foreign currency, which means it has become difficult for the country to import food and medicine. Cuba expert O'Neill Diaz said "many entrepreneurs from the private sector have spent years striving, working and trying to contribute" to Cuba's economic well-being.

Sources: bbc.com / france24.com / thedailyguardian.net

Writing

Everyone should be able to own a business. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

government / ownership / businesses / policy / the norm / revolution / heart / food / initiative / economy / tourism / pandemic / sugar / revenue / medicine / well-being

True / False

- 1) Entrepreneurs can now start any size of company in Cuba. T / F
- 2) There was a revolution in Cuba in 1959. T / F
- 3) Street protests prompted a change of heart from the government. T / F
- 4) People protested in the streets about food shortages. T / F
- 5) Cuba's president said there would be no further initiatives after this one. T / F
- 6) Cuba had a bumper sugar harvest this year. T / F
- 7) Bad weather has helped to reduce Cuba's foreign currency reserves. T / F
- 8) Entrepreneurs have worked to help Cuba's economic well-being. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. monumental | a. plans |
| 2. norm | b. managing |
| 3. operate | c. play a part |
| 4. protested | d. used up |
| 5. handling | e. gigantic |
| 6. initiatives | f. run |
| 7. severely | g. business person |
| 8. depleted | h. demonstrated |
| 9. entrepreneur | i. seriously |
| 10. contribute | j. standard |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you know about Cuba?
- b) Would you like to own a business?
- c) What do you think of state-owned companies?
- d) What do you think of communism?
- e) Should any industries be nationalised?
- f) How good an entrepreneur would you be?
- g) What things would make you protest in the streets?
- h) How has your government handled the pandemic?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|------------------------------|
| 1. This represents a monumental shift | a. been the norm |
| 2. State-owned companies have traditionally | b. the private sector |
| 3. The change of | c. economic conditions |
| 4. of Cubans demonstrated against dire | d. his country's economy |
| 5. People also protested about a | e. in policy |
| 6. introduce new initiatives to revitalise | f. of foreign currency |
| 7. severely impacted this | g. food and medicine |
| 8. depleted the government's reserves | h. lack of food |
| 9. difficult for the country to import | i. sector |
| 10. many entrepreneurs from | j. heart from the government |

Discussion – Student B

- Did you like reading this article? Why/not?
- What do you think of when you hear the word 'business'?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Would you like to visit Cuba?
- What advice do you have for Cuba's president?
- What can revitalise economies?
- What do you know about Cuba's tourism industry?
- What are your country's key industries?

Spelling

- This represents a nmntaomuel shift
- policy from the miumncsot-ruled country
- following the vonoleritu in 1959
- He ietalndaions Cuba's industries
- allows etrpureeensnr to operate businesses
- eird economic conditions
- he would introduce new nvitsiiaiet
- rvlsetiiae his country's economy
- elresyev impacted this sector
- poor ahrtvses and reduced revenues
- eplteded the government's reserves
- spent years riivtsgn

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. j	3. f	4. h	5. b
6. a	7. i	8. d	9. g	10. c

Role Play

Role A – Increasing Taxes

You think increasing taxes is the worthiest thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): corruption, nuclear war or rising prices.

Role B – Corruption

You think corruption is the worthiest thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): increasing taxes, nuclear war or rising prices.

Role C – Nuclear War

You think nuclear war is the worthiest thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): corruption, increasing taxes or rising prices.

Role D – Rising Prices

You think rising prices is the worthiest thing to protest about. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their things. Also, tell the others which is the least worthy of these (and why): corruption, nuclear war or increasing taxes.

Speaking – Protests

Rank these with your partner. Put the things you would protest in the streets about at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- | | |
|--------------------|------------------|
| • increasing taxes | • climate change |
| • corruption | • nuclear war |
| • inequality | • rising prices |
| • austerity | • coronavirus |

Answers – True False

1 F	2 T	3 T	4 T	5 F	6 F	7 T	8 T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.