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MTUC: Reconsider price hike on petrol and diesel

KUCHING, Sun. - The Malaysian Trades Union Congress has appealed to the Government to reconsider its decision to increase petrol and diesel prices by 10 sen per litre effective yesterday.

MTUC president Senator Zainal Rampak said he was concerned that the price hike would further burden consumers, as many businesses would also raise the prices of their goods.

"I appeal to the Government to reconsider its decision on this matter (price hike).

"An increment of 10 sen is very steep. A more reasonable figure would be two to three sen," he said.

Zainal was speaking after opening Sarawak MTUC's first triennial delegates' conference at the Grand Continental Hotel here today.

On the Sarawak Labour Ordinance 1959, Zainal described the long delay in amending the ordinance as "puzzling".

Unions in the State, especially MTUC, have been urging the Government to amend the outdated ordinance or extend the Employment Act used in Peninsular Malaysia to the State.

Among other things, the ordinance does not provide maternity protection to female workers or sick leave to sick workers. It also does not provide retrenchment benefits.

Zainal said the MTUC had been treated like a "ping-pong ball" by the Federal and State Governments on the ordinance issue.

"If all else fails, I will bring this issue to the attention of the Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) himself because it has dragged on for too many years."

Zainal again urged the Government to implement what he called the "special relief assistance" scheme to further encourage domestic spending.

Under the proposed scheme, employers from both the public and private sectors would give each of their employees an assistance allowance of RM50 per month.

"There are more than six million workers in the country today. If each is given RM50 per month, this will encourage domestic spending," Zainal said.

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