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PETRONAS-MESRALINK

PETROL HIKE WILL NOT AFFECT OIL COMPANIES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- The hike of the petrol and diesel price each by 10 sen a litre will not have an impact on the oil companies, said chairman of Petronas Dagangan Bhd, Tan Sri Mohd Hassan Merican today.

"The hike on petrol and diesel price was to bring down the government subsidy level. It has no effect on oil companies," he said in reply to a question of whether the recent hike in petrol price would see an increase in Petronas earning in this current financial year.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in announcing this in the Budget 2002 last Friday said that the government decided to hike petrol and diesel price in order to reduce the total subsidies amounting to RM4.4 billion, more than half of which was petroleum subsidy.

Hassan said this at a media conference after the launch of Petronas Dagangan's MESRA LINK, a one-stop customer service centre for the company's customers, business partners and members of the public. It was launched by Tan Sri Muhyiddin Mohd Yassin, Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs.

Anuar Ahmad, managing director cum chief executive of Petronas Dagangan said that with the existence of MESRA LINK the company expected a lot of improvement in customer services because at any time the customers could contact the centre.

Any enquiries and complaints on Petronas Dagangan customers could be made via telephone lines 1-300-88-8181/8282, fax at 1-300-88-8383 or email to mesralink@petronas.com.my.

Asked on the expected impact of MESRA LINK to the company, Anuar said: "It is difficult to give numbers, but of course we do expect to improve service to customers which will therefore translate into savings."

On the market share of Petronas Dagangan, he said the company commanded about 35 percent of the local market share and with about 600 petrol stations nationwide putting it at number two behind Shell with about 800 to 900 station nationwide.

Despite being left behind in retails by Shell, he said Petronas Dagangan hoped to set up between 30 to 40 new stations per annum.

Asked on the impact of Exxon-Mobil merger to the company, Anuar said: "Of course we have to be concerned... they are our competitors. But so far we have seen little impact."

Petronas Dagangan has to beef up its service to customers, and watch closely what the rest of oil companies were doing in order to maintain its position in the market and to remain ahead of its competitors, he added.

On its operations in Pakistan, Hassan said the company's eight employees who were involved in the drilling work, had returned home as they had finished the Phase One project.

"Once, it is safe they will return to Pakistan to continue with the next phase," he added. -- BERNAMA

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