

**Pua: New price increases debunk PM's claims**  
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The proposed 20sen increase in beverage prices announced by the Kuala Lumpur and Selangor Coffee Shop Association from Jan 1 totally debunks Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's claim that price increases will have a "minimal impact" on Malaysian households.

DAP national publicity secretary Tony Pua said Chinese newspapers in reporting the statement of the association yesterday said the prices of "kopi susu" (milk coffee) and "teh susu" (milk tea) would go up from RM1.20 to RM1.40 a glass.

"This translates to a massive 16.7 percent increase in prices," the Petaling Jaya Utara MP (left) said.

"In fact, the white sugar price, inclusive of a 20sen hike in January, on top of the 25sen and 20sen a kilo increases in July and December, means that sugar price alone has increased by more than 55% this year."

Since July, he added, the government had launched a surprise "Five-in-One" price hike, raising the prices of RON95 and RON97 petrol, diesel, white sugar and liquified petroleum gas (LPG, including cooking gas) by between 2.8 percent and 15.2 percent.

On Dec 3, or less than five months later, the government announced another series of price increases for RON95 by 5sen a litre to RM1.90, diesel by 5sen a litre to RM1.80, LPG by 5sen to RM1.90 a kilo, with sugar now tagged at RM2.10 a kilo.

Pua said even the price of herbal tea was not spared, for it would increase from RM1.10 to RM1.30 a glass, or a hike of more than 18 percent, despite Pemandu's claim earlier that it would increase by only 1.2 percent.

He pointed out that the Star had on Dec 20 reported that evaporated milk and sweetened creamer were expected to increase by 30sen a can next year, after a 5sen and 10sen increase respectively in April and October this year.

"This marks an overall increase of up to 20 percent within a year," he said.

**PM, Pemandu claim minimal impact**

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced in July that price increases would have "minimal impact" on Malaysian households and this was reiterated by minister in the Prime Minister's Department Idris Jala who pledged "little effect", quoting the Pemandu Subsidy Rationalisation Factsheet.

Pua said Pemandu "demonstrated" in full page advertisements in the major mainstream newspapers that the new price of teh tarik, after taking into consideration the price increases of fuel and other goods, would be around RM1.0155, or an increase of less than 2sen.

Some people in Pemandu, he said, had failed in their mathematics, for its factsheet states a mere 0.6 percent increase in the teh tarik price and 0.5 percent price hike for milk coffee, putting to disgrace Pemandu's calculations that a glass of teh tarik and milk coffee would cost only between RM1.20 and RM1.28.

In fact, Pua said, Pemandu claimed that out of the 70 daily food and drink items listed on its Subsidy Rationalisation Factsheet, no item was expected to see a price increase of more than 1.9 percent, even after the most recent rounds of price hikes.

pemandu subsidies subsidy presentation"There is a clear contradiction in the teh tarik prices between the factsheet issued in July, where the price was RM1.00, as compared with the new base price of RM1.20 in the December factsheet. The mysterious 20 percent increase in the base price between July and December remains unexplained.

"Secondly, and more importantly, BN and Pemandu live in a parallel imaginary universe where price hikes would only be increases of 1sen or 1.55sen," he said.

Pua said the people were disappointed the BN government was prioritising its "subsidy rationalisation" efforts on items that were worsening the living conditions of the man-on-the-street, but didn't lift a finger to "rationalise" the huge RM8 to RM10 billion subsidies given to independent power producers (IPPs)

"These IPPs are making billions of ringgit in profits annually, despite repeated promises not to do so. This is a complete mockery of the prime minister's slogan of "people first", for it demonstrates that the people's interests don't come first under the BN government."

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