

**DPM: People must help shoulder subsidy burden**

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The people must be prepared to shoulder part of the cost of subsidies if it increases to a level beyond the capability of the government, said Deputy Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin.

He said there was a limit as to how much the government could provide subsidies and that if world oil prices continue to rise, there was a possibility that the people would have to help the government shoulder the burden.

"Thankfully, I have received much feedback praising the government for not transferring the burden to the people, but this has cost the government RM18 billion instead of the RM10 billion allocated for subsidies and this figure might rise to RM20 billion," he said when opening Gerik Umno's annual convention today.

He said the step taken by the government to maintain existing prices of diesel, cooking gas and RON95 petrol caused the government to foot a higher bill in providing subsidies for the items.

Muhyiddin, who is also chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Supply of Goods and Prices, said the issue of rising oil prices and prices of goods was a major concern of Malaysians who find it hard to accept that the same phenomenon is being experienced by countries in Europe, Japan, China and Singapore among others.

However, he said the government would do its best to mitigate the situation and asked for the cooperation of BN component leaders at all levels to tackle the issue.

On May 25, the government announced that subsidies for RON95 petrol, diesel and cooking gas would not be slashed for the time being.

On other matters, Muhyiddin urged Umno and BN leaders at all levels to give attention to problems faced by the people no matter how small they may be.

He said this needed to be done to win the confidence of voters come elections.

He also reminded Umno members that it was no longer business as usual and that the next election would be unlike any other as the political landscape had changed.

Umno members and those of the other component parties would have to work doubly hard to ensure a big victory for the BN this time around, he added.

- Bernama