

**Guan Eng: PM cares more about IPPs than rakyat**  
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Deflecting Premier Najib Abdul Razak's barbs that only DAP was the winner over PAS' welfare state stance, the DAP in turn accused him of being more concerned about the welfare of independent power producers (IPPs) than the rakyat's.

"The PM will not succeed in his new role as provocateur or batu api to goad PAS to fight with the DAP," said party secretary-general Lim Guan Eng in a statement today.

Instead he saw Najib's lambasting of his ally as a sign of concern over PAS' popularity with the moderates, especially with the party's stand on helping the poor who are affected by the subsidy cuts which may cost Umno and BN votes in the next general election.

This, he said, is because the ruling coalition understood that elections are won by winning over the middle group of fence sitters.

He argued that the prime minister's sudden concern for the welfare of the rakyat is not apparent in government policies as despite subsidy cuts for essential goods and electricity tariffs affecting 27 million ordinary Malaysians, gas subsidies for the IPPs were never touched.

"BN appears to be more interested in helping IPPs," accused Lim (right).

Up to 2010, he related how national oil producer Petronas extended a total of RM131.3 billion in gas subsidy to companies, including IPPs who also benefit from the compulsory Power Purchase Agreements signed with Tenaga Nasional Bhd.

He posited that BN's failure to remove gas subsidies for IPPs does not lend credibility to Najib's assertion that BN's subsidy policy is to provide reasonable amounts of subsidy to the needy target groups.

"Are IPPs amongst the eligible and needy target groups when they earn billions of ringgit in extraordinary profits from enjoying RM131.3 billion in gas mega-subsidies?" asked Lim.

Lim stressed that this shows how the rich benefit from BN at the expense of the poor.

While he agreed that in theory subsidy reduction can improve competitiveness, efficiency and the living standards of the people, it must be coupled with measures such as minimum wage, increasing real wages and removing gas mega-subsidies for IPPs.

**'The poor can't main their standard of living'**

Lim argued that the poor cannot maintain their standard of living with such rising costs when subsidies are removed but wages have not kept up with inflation.

He said that between 2000 and 2010, wages increased by only 2.6 percent, and the 10-year wage stagnation was not able to match the rising cost of living.

He also hit out at Najib's claims that subsidies are akin to 'opium', urging the PM to remove the 'Big Opium' like corruption that costs RM 28 billion yearly or gas mega-subsidies to IPPs that will cost RM25 billion this year, rather than the 'Small Opium' of essential subsidies for the 10 million Malaysians who do not even earn enough to pay taxes.

Lim believed that BN's failure to care for the rakyat's welfare has forced Pakatan Rakyat states like Penang to use their limited resources to implement measures for the poor that have won their hearts and caused BN's knee-jerk reaction to their people-centric policies.

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