

Najib's austerity move only 'crocodile tears', says MP

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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak's new austerity measures are merely "crocodile tears" - the government should stop squandering public funds and eliminate corruption if it is truly concerned about the people, said Sandakan MP Stephen Wong.

In addition, he said the government should open the market to fair competition, and prevent monopolies on essential goods.

"The (savings from the) 10 percent deduction of entertainment allowance of ministers and deputy ministers merely comes up to RM50,000 a month or RM604,238 per year.

"What is this amount compared to the misuse of public funds by the BN government?

"The BN government simply does not take into account the plight of the people, they also have not made proper arrangements and control of price of essential goods that people really need," he said in a statement today.

The reduction in entertainment allowance is one of 11 austerity measures Najib announced on Dec 30 last year when faced with a massive price hike rally on New Year's Eve.

The measures however have been criticised as cosmetic and unlikely to help keep living costs down in the face of a deluge of price hikes.

Wong also pointed out that the price of essential goods are monopolised by "cronies" thus preventing fair competition.

"Why should Bernas, as a privately owned entity, monopolise the entire country's local and imported rice distribution?

"Other than that, why are only two companies allowed to import, manufacture and sell sugar, when all the subsidies for sugar have been removed by the government?

"Last but not least, even our petrol is monopolised. Even worse is that they have allowed TNB to increase the electricity tariff, when up to 31st August 2013 TNB has

already gained RM5.9 billion before tax profit!

"This is certainly not an act of taking care of the people!" Wong said.

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