

Sarawak DAP urges end to rice subsidy
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Sarawak DAP today urged the abolishment of the subsidy on rice, arguing that it contributes to a high level corruption, all in the name of the people.

“The subsidy enriches some Umno divisional chiefs, who may have earned as much as RM40,000 a month by selling one kilogramme of rice at 40 sen to a vendor,” state DAP chief Chong Chieng Jen said.

“If an Umno leader is given 100 tonnes a month, he can easily earn RM40,000 a month,” he said. “The subsidy does not benefit consumers at all.”

Chong (left) who is the MP for Bandar Kuching, was commenting on an answer he received from the Ministry of Finance to his question in Parliament on the rice subsidy.

He wanted to know how much the government paid to Bernas for the rice subsidy programme in the years 2012, 2013 and 2014.

The ministry reply said that for the years 2012 and 2013, the government paid RM488 million for 650,666 tonnes and RM528 million for 704,000 tonnes respectively.

Cheapest rice costs RM1.80 per kilo

“If the subsidy of RM750 per tonne truly goes to benefit consumers, we should have bought rice at RM1.25 per kg in 2012, RM1.10 per kg in 2013 and RM0.85 per kg for the first five months of this year.

“But we still get the cheapest rice at RM1.80 per kg or RM1,800 per tonne and this means the subsidy does not go to benefit consumers in general,” Chong said.

He said the government subsidy only went to enrich Bernas and Umno leaders.

He called on the federal government to immediately abolish the rice subsidy, pointing out that the government must have the political will to do it.

The general consumers were suffering due to the high level of corruption in the government, he said at a media conference in Kuching.

For the year 2013, Malaysians consumed about 2,583,517.17 tonnes of rice, which works out to an average of 82.3kg consumed by a Malaysian citizen in that year.

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