

**State rep in row with cop during Penang protest**  
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DAP's Komtar state assemblyperson Ng Wei Aik had a minor spat with an auxiliary policeman inside the General Post Office in George Town, Penang, today during a protest to oppose the recent hike in postage rates.

Ng, who is state DAP Socialist Youth chief, told the policeman, identified only as Norhafizal, that he entered the building to buy stamps and therefore should not be sent out without reason.

He raised his voice at the policeman for insisting that he (Ng) was "creating a disturbance" (buat kacau) inside the post office on Downing Street.

"Please leave as you creating a disturbance here... you are protesting against the post office and making a lot of trouble," Norhafizal told Ng.

NONE"I am here just to buy stamps. This is a public place, you cannot ask me to leave," replied Ng (right).

Norhafizal then told Ng to follow him into a room inside the post office, but Ng refused. "No, I want to buy stamps, I am staying right here," he insisted.

"He was very rude. I will be making a complaint to his boss about his behaviour," Ng said.

The policemen, looking visibly distraught after the spat, disappeared behind the counter and was not seen again.

Following the episode, which drew many curious onlookers, Ng and fellow Pakatan Rakyat Youth members handed a memorandum to Pos Malaysia's Penang head Basir Ismail, calling for the hike in postal rates to be withdrawn.

'He was just doing his job'

Basir thanked the group for the memorandum and apologised for the policeman's behaviour.

"He was just doing his job, I apologise on his behalf," said Basir, who tried to restore calm to the situation.

NONEPos Malaysia courted controversy recently when it announced an increase in its domestic postage rates for the first time in 18 years.

Starting yesterday, the cost of postage for standard mail weighing up to 20gm was revised from 30sen to 60sen. For mail weighing up to 50gm, stamps worth 70sen are needed, up from 40sen before.

In justifying the postage rate hike, Pos Malaysia group managing director and chief executive officer Syed Faisal Albar said the decline in mail volume in recent years prompted Pos Malaysia to take measures to contain costs while maintaining productivity.

The rate hike has drawn criticism from several quarters, especially after the Public Accounts

Committee revealed that it would table a report on Pos Malaysia's alleged losses of RM546 million.

The public is questioning whether the postage rate hike is related to the massive amount of losses incurred by Pos Malaysia, as revealed by its former chairperson Adam Kadir.

Another burden on the common man

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Nor Mohamed Yakcop has denied any involvement in Pos Malaysia Bhd.

Meanwhile, outside the Penang Pos Malaysia headquarters, state PKR Youth secretary Syed Mikael Rizal Aidid said the sudden hike in postage rates would further burden the people, especially those from the lower income group.

"We feel it is not fair that the rakyat pay for Pos Malaysia's losses. This should be borne by the corporation, not by the people who have done nothing to cause the losses," he told reporters.

About 20 people joined the group, carrying placards in English, Chinese, Malay and Tamil that said "People first, but Pos Malaysia increases postage fees", and "BN burdens the people".

Ng said the protests would continue until the new rates were dropped.

He urged the people to support the campaign by sticking the stamps upside down to show their protest.

Ng said other than the ordinary people who frequently used Pos Malaysia services, legal offices were among those hard hit by the postage rate hike as they sent out many letters a day.

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