

NGO mulls protest against price hikes
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The Coalition Against Inflation (Protes) is prepared to take to the streets to protest the government's move to increase the prices of petrol, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and sugar.

"We do not dismiss the possibility of taking (the issue) to the streets to protest this increase in prices," said coalition coordinator Dr Mohd Hatta Ramli, who is also PAS treasurer.

He said the coalition is scheduled to meet in Kuala Lumpur on Sunday morning to deliberate the issue and decide on its actions.

pas muktamar 130610 hatta ramli 2 "We will consider protesting very soon, as our previous experience shows that the government realises the people's problems only when they express their objections," said Hatta (left), who is Kuala Krai MP.

Protes comprises political parties and non-governmental organisations such as the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC), Jamaah Islah Malaysia (JIM) and the National Human Rights Society (Hakam).

Yesterday, Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced an increase in the prices of fuel, LPG and sugar, effective today, in an effort to save the government more than RM750 million this year alone.

Both RON 95 grade petrol and diesel prices were increased by RM0.05 per litre, liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) by RM0.10 per kilogramme and sugar by RM0.25 per kg. RON 97 grade petrol also went up by RM0.05 a litre and its future price will be based on the market price.

CAP: Eradicate corruption and wastage

Responding to the price hikes, the Consumers Association of Penang (CAP) called on the government to eradicate wastage and corruption in the country.

CAP president, SM Mohamed Idris said the government was going the right way in reducing subsidies for fuel and sugar, as this should be the comprehensive plan for a more steady management of the country's finances.

"A reduction of fuel subsidies leads to a high market price of the product, which will eventually encourage members of the public and industries to reduce their usage of fuel.

"This is important because fuel is not a renewable source of energy and if its usage is not reduced, we will eventually become a fuel-importing country," he said.

Idris added that the government also needed to ensure that food suppliers and retailers do not take advantage of consumers by increasing prices excessively.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports the Muslim Consumers Association of Malaysia (PPIM) as calling on the people to view positively the subsidy reduction for sugar and fuel.

Cut sugar intake drive to continue

PPIM executive secretary Nadzim Johan said it was high time consumers learnt to manage their expenditures and not depend so much on government subsidies.

"Consumers should be wise enough to adapt to the price hikes. For example, what they can do is to reduce their daily sugar intake from 15 per cent to just 10 per cent.

"Besides, the people should also look on the bright side of the issue because, from the reduction of the subsidy, the government can help other sectors," he said.

As such, Nadzim added, PPIM would continue with its sugar reduction campaign this year, not just to encourage the people to consume less sugar, but also to promote a healthy lifestyle, especially with the coming Hari Raya Aidilfitri.

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