

Price hike?...what price hike?
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The usual term "price hike" been mysteriously omitted in stories on the "upward price adjustments" for fuel, natural gas and sugar announced by the Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

The phrase appeared to be missing from the newspapers.

A special briefing to the editors of mainstream media by yesterday by the PM's Office seemed to have done the trick.

azlanAlmost all the newspapers from all four languages replaced the word "hike" with either "subsidy rationalisation" or "subsidy cut" when reporting about the announcement.

English dailies New Straits Times and Star downplayed the effect of the price hike, stating that the cut in subsidies for sugar, petrol, diesel and liquified petroleum gas (LPG) would have a minimal impact on individuals and families.

'Bold' move

Star regarded the move by the government as "bold", stating that it will allow investment in the nation's future in education, community development and job creation; while New Straits Times quoted the PM as saying: "The government has made a difficult but bold decision".

All the Malay newspapers - Utusan Malaysia, Berita Harian and Sinar Harian - used phrases such as "subsidy rationalisation" (penyelarasan subsidi) and "gradual subsidy cut "(subsidi dikurangkan secara berperingkat-peringkat).

NONThe dailies also stressed that the prices of fuel and sugar in Malaysia will still be among the lowest in the region, and that the price hike would save the government RM750 million in subsidies this year.

Berita Harian, in particular, allocated five pages to discuss the fuel and sugar price hike, mainly reporting on its positive effects.

Tamil newspaper Malaysia Nanban took a different approach by headlining the article, "Petrol, sugar, LPG and diesel-price hike".

However, the article focused on the positive effects of the reduction in the subsidy.

Two other Tamil dailies - Tamil Nesan and Makkal Osai - did not carry any reports on the price hike.

Chinese dailies - Nanyang Siang Pau, Sin Chiew Jit Poh and Oriental Daily - also reported the news with phrases such as "price adjustments" and "subsidy cut" while China Press stressed the rise in prices with regard to fuel prices and sugar.

No subsidy for RON97

Earlier, Najib announced that the move to cut subsidies will enhance the country's financial stability whilst demonstrating fiscal responsibility.

He also added that public feedback was sought before a decision was made on the issue.

Both RON95 grade petrol and diesel prices will be raised by RM0.05 per litre, while liquified petroleum gas (LPG) will be raised by RM0.10 per kilogramme.

In a major departure from current policy, RON97 will now be based on market price.

Sugar prices have been raised by RM0.25 per kg to RM1.90 per kilogramme. (previously RM1.65 per kilogramme).

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