

Pakatan Rakyat solution for fuel prices 'simplistic'
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The opposition's election pledge to use profits from state-owned oil firm Petronas to keep fuel prices low is a rather "simplistic solution", the Dewan Rakyat was told today.
MCPX

shahrir samad interview 250907 serve "It is a simplistic solution to use Petronas (profits of) RM10 billion to lower the petrol and diesel prices," Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Shahrir Abdul Samad said.

"If we have RM10 billion, it is better we use it for (subsidising) food than for oil and diesel because it would at least ensure the lower income groups are benefitted from it," he added in a supplementary question from Khairy Jamaluddin (BN-Rembau) this morning.

The minister added that according to a random survey he carried out, people preferred food subsidies than petrol and oil subsidies.

'Not realistic'

In his supplementary question, first-time MP Khairy pointed out the country's oil reserve was decreasing and questioned whether it was viable to carry out the opposition's proposal.

"Is the government ready to adopt the (opposition's) suggestion - which is also their election promise - to lower the petrol prices with Petronas profits or that was just a populist measure which is not realistic?" he asked during the 90-minute question session.

In the run-up to the March 8 polls, the opposition parties have campaigned to prevent the Barisan Nasional from getting two-thirds majority in Parliament by offering voters fuel cuts through the Petronas profits.

The government has previously shot down the suggestion on the basis that the country's oil and gas reserves will run out in three years.

burmese umno demo 011007 khairy jamaluddin Meanwhile, in answering the Rembau MP's original question - his very first in the Parliament, Shahrir said the government will, among others, introduce a measure to uniform the price of essential goods between the Peninsula and Sabah and Sarawak.

Khairy had asked the ministry if it would introduce a new measure in tackling the issue of price hikes for goods in line with the increase of world's oil and food prices to ensure that assistance to the lower-income group can be made effectively.

'Not discriminating Pakatan states'

In another development, International Trade and Industry Minister Muhyiddin Yassin said the government will continue to provide incentives to foreign investors in the five states ruled by the Pakatan Rakyat coalition government.

"Foreign investment is an important factor to contribute to the country's development. The federal government will not discriminate against any state government," he said in a reply to Teresa Kok (DAP-Seputeh).

"The five (Pakatan's) state governments are encouraged to continue with the existing 'pro-business' policies to continue its outstanding performance in attracting foreign investment.

"It is my hope as well that these state government's won't introduce new policies at the state level which are not pro-active to attract foreign investment or against what is being implemented at the federal level," the minister told the House.

In her supplementary question, Kok - who is also the Selangor state senior executive councillor holding the investment, industry and trade portfolio - complained that she has failed to secure an appointment with the ministry's officials thus far.

"This is a new thing for them to deal with state governments not led by the Barisan Nasional, they haven't adjust themselves to this but I have told them whenever it's necessary, they can provide the information especially to excos overseeing the industry portfolio," replied the minister.

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