

Anwar: Hike 'wanton in size, callous in effect'
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PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim described the 78-sen rise in petrol pump prices as "wanton in size and callous in effect".
MCPX

He added the increase - the largest in four rounds of price hikes in the last 18 months - was the "compounded legacy of the now unsustainable secrecy in the way the profits of Petronas are disbursed and was also the cumulative effect of wanton waste in government expenditure".

In remarks made to Malaysiakini today, Anwar said, "Those chickens are now coming home to roost to the detriment of the ordinary citizen who has been scrimping and scraping for several years now.

"The steepness of the price increase this time is simply unconscionable," he asserted.

anwar ibrahim pc 120508 03He described the "meager" annual cash rebates to small vehicle owners and motorcyclists as "pointless palliatives to assuage the pain of the sharp increase in the pump price."

To offset the hefty price hikes, the government said vehicles below 2000cc will receive an annual rebate of RM625, which is to compensate for 800 litres of fuel used under the new price.

Meanwhile, owners of private motorcycles of engine capacity of up to 250cc will be paid a cash rebate of RM150 per year.

"We have been predicting this increase from before last March's general election," said the putative leader of the Pakatan Rakyat - the coalition of PKR, DAP and PAS that controls the legislature in five states following the recent polls.

"We felt that after the ruling coalition's poor performance in the elections, they would moderate the size of the increase from anxiety about its effects on the rakyat who were already reeling from the impact of the earlier rounds of increases which influenced the way they voted.

"Now the dreaded increase has occurred and it is steeper than had been anticipated. This is surely the compounded legacy of a policy of furtiveness in all aspects of the country's financial management."

Pakatan's 'humane economics'

Anwar reiterated that a Pakatan government at the federal level would overhaul the financial management of the country by implementing an agenda of "humane economics".

"Our economic agenda would promote the robust growth of the Malaysian economy to achieve the twin goals of equity and poverty eradication.

"By practising transparency and accountability through combating corruption, waste and mismanagement, we will create a more equitable and dynamic society," he said.

Meanwhile writing on the price hike in his blog, Anwar reiterated his personal as well as Pakatan's stand that the oil price will be reduced when they come to power.

The promise to reduce oil prices was one which Pakatan capitalised during the general election.

Anwar also said that while the people were suffering from the price hikes, national oil company Petronas was still making profits which were being utilised elsewhere.

"Even the Parliament is not told of their financial status. Only the prime minister knows. And the results are various mega projects and economic corridors," he wrote.

"We strongly object the Umno-BN government's irresponsible policies which has failed the people... they should stand down," he wrote.

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