

**Sabah politicians warn PM over fuel hike**  
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Barisan Nasional component party Sabah Progressive Party (Sapp) leaders did not mince their words in lambasting the federal government for the drastic fuel hike which was announced on Wednesday.  
MCPX

While Sapp president Yong Teck Lee warned Abdullah Ahmad Badawi of a serious political fallout for the BN, the party's Youth wing went a step further by calling for the resignation of the prime minister and his cabinet.

yong teck lee oldYong, also a former chief minister in the state, said that Abdullah's decision to drastically increase petrol prices could lead to severe problems for BN.

He also questioned the premier whether he has carefully considered the overall consequences of the fuel hike.

"If the government losses the faith of the people, then it will find it even more difficult to govern," he said.

Abdullah announced on Wednesday that the pump price for petrol would increase by 78 sen - from RM1.92 per litre to RM2.70. The price of diesel increased by a whopping 63.3 percent - from RM1.58 per litre to RM2.58.

The price hikes were among government measures to drastically cut the spiralling bill for oil subsidies, which is expected to amount to RM56 billion this year.

Yong also said political parties, elected representatives and civil servants were likely to feel more pressure from the people to "do something" to ease their economic woes.

He added that the fuel price increases came almost immediately after rice price hikes as well as certain types of the staple food.

"For those who have just been earning enough to make ends meet every month, the fuel price increases will be a serious blow as they will have to now pay more at the petrol pump and when they buy groceries," Yong elaborated.

He said even middle-income earners with salaries of between RM4,000 and RM5,000 would be reeling from the inflationary effect resulting from the fuel price hike.

In this regard, Yong doubted the impact of the one-off RM625 rebate for vehicle owners and RM125 for motorcyclists as there was a time lapse between when money was spent on fuel and when they could receive rebates.

Yong further added that many people continue to question why Malaysia as a net petroleum exporting nation till 2014 was experiencing a negative impact from a spike in global oil prices.

"The man on the street is puzzled as to why Petronas is making so much money while the ordinary folks are losing out," he pointed out.

## **Losing trust and confidence**

While Yong was merely sounding a warning bell, Sapp Youth chief was more straightforward in calling for leaders who "failed to safeguard people's interest" to step down.

Au Kam Wah, in a statement issued from Kota Kinabalu, said these leaders should allow others who are more capable to take over.

The Elopura state assemblyperson also said the federal government has reneged on its election pledge that it won't hike the price of fuel within this year.

Such assurance was later reiterated by the Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Shahrir Samad.

This, he said, had inevitably caused the people to lose their trust and confidence in the government.

He also argued that the latest move to increase the fuel price has completely contradicted BN's proclamation of providing "security, peace and prosperity" as contained in its last election manifesto.

"This inevitably gave the people a bad impression that the government always preached one thing but did another," he said.

He also feared that the steep increase of fuel price would trigger what he termed as "economic tsunami" that would inflict devastating suffering to the people.

"The people just can't accept the reason given by the government that the latest increase in the fuel price was to subsidise food and other items.

"The increase in fuel price will only cause prices of goods to go up and the rebates given by the government are just too insignificant compare to the additional cost incurred to the people, as a result of the fuel price increase," he pointed out.

He further noted that the increase in fuel price would not only burden the people but, also lead to more social issues including the smuggling of subsidised goods and illegal money lending activities which would only become more rampant.

## **Cabinet should step down**

A similar call was also made by the DAP MP for Kota Kinabalu Dr Hiew King Cheu who said that the entire federal cabinet should step down for failing to manage the nation's wealth and resources prudently.

"The latest abrupt announcement of fuel price increase by the prime minister again reflected the poor management of the nation's wealth and resources by the BN-led government.

"It is better for them (the entire federal cabinet) to step down now and let the Pakatan Rakyat take over in order to save this country from being ruined," he said.

In a statement issued in Kota Kinabalu yesterday, he also described the latest fuel price increase of 40 percent for petrol and 60 percent for diesel as unreasonable and unacceptable, citing the fact that Malaysia is a oil-producing and exporting country.

He also questioned if there was something that the government was not telling the people concerning the nation's crude oil sale.

"Is it true that our crude oil is being sold at a 'fixed price' without any fluctuation allowed in the selling price for a set number of years?" he questioned.

He added that if that was true it would then be even more unfair to the people of Sabah since the state was also a major contributor for the nation's crude oil export.

Apart from this, he also described the proposed rebate of RM625 for motorists in the country as a joke.

"There are at least 10 millions of vehicles in Malaysia that are entitled to this fuel rebate. That means the government will have to pay out at least RM6 billion a year. Why not use this amount to subsidise our fuel? The whole scheme seems impractical and not logical," he pointed out.

### **An insult to Sabahans**

Sapp veteran Tham Nyip Shen in a separate statement also said that the oil hike was an insult to the people of Sabah who had given almost 100 percent support to the BN in the last general election.

"The people of Sabah would not have imagined that this is what they would be getting for supporting the BN in the last election," he said.

Tham added that the announcement of the latest and steepest fuel price increase a "major mistake" by the BN government.

He believed that the said move was made hastily without fully exploring other measures to mitigate the impact of the global fuel price increase.

He pointed out that as compared to Hong Kong and Singapore, Malaysia was still very much lagging when comes to effort made to improve the public transportation.

The former Sabah deputy chief minister said the the federal government must not simply resort to increase the fuel price while failing to improve public transportation in the country.