

**PM: We'll do everything to ease rakyat's burden**  
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today reiterated his stand that he would introduce measures to ease the pain felt by the people as a result of the recent fuel price hike.  
MCPX

"I would like to assure all Malaysians that the government is fully aware of the increased hardship that they now face and that we will do everything within our power to alleviate the people's burden.

abdullah ahmad badawi oil and gas conference 090608 01"Plans are being put into motion to help share the burden of rising prices and the government is committed towards protecting the people's welfare," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur.

Earlier he had delivered his keynote address at the three-day 13th Annual Asia Oil and Gas Conference organised by national oil company Petronas. The conference started yesterday.

He said that it was not an easy decision to introduce the fuel price hikes, describing it as a painful but necessary move.

"After much deliberation and careful consideration, it was clear to us that maintaining fuel subsidies at prevailing levels was no longer tenable. The decision was indeed very painful but necessary.

"In all honesty, it was a difficult and agonising decision to make. Many times we have been tempted to walk away from such a difficult decision," he said.

According to Bernama, the prime minister also added that the fuel subsidy restructuring was for the long-term viability of the economy but the government would never forget its responsibility to the people.

"We will do everything within our power to ensure a satisfactory quality of life for all Malaysians," he added.

Last Wednesday Abdullah announced a dramatic increase in the petrol price - jumping 40.6 percent, from RM1.92 per litre to RM2.70.

At the same time the price of diesel was increased by a whopping 63.3 percent - from RM1.58 per litre to RM2.58.

The price hike looks set to pave the way for the increase of prices in everything else, causing much anxiety among the public.

### **Two-pronged challenge**

Abdullah also called on the oil and gas industry to begin charting a new strategic roadmap to tackle the global energy crisis.

He said new solutions may include breakthrough technologies and processes, advanced

research and development, new forms of alliances and partnerships, to name a few.

abdullah ahmad badawi oil and gas conference 090608 01"As we continue to grapple with the intractable issues facing us, we must recognise that the solution lies not in piecemeal tweaks and changes.

"This can bring about secure, safe and efficient supply of energy that will improve our lives in ways that are environment-friendly," he said.

He said the new reality in energy industry posed two-pronged challenge in how to minimise emissions using fossil fuel and accelerating the introduction of new technologies that could reduce dependencies on fossil fuels.

"We must go far beyond rhetoric that we have become accustomed to, towards actual movement and execution of urgent action plans to save environment which the oil and gas industry must become a comprehensive part of that solution," he said.

In addressing this matter, Abdullah said it would require parties involved to tackle long-standing issues which are to seek mutually-beneficial solutions to problems in the world's hotspot regions such as in the Middle East.

"We cannot allow unilateral power plays and the pursuit of narrow interests to overwhelm the need for peace and security," he said.

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