

Price hike: 'What measures to help the people?'

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Pakatan Rakyat coalition partners DAP and PKR appear to have different perspectives regarding the MCPX sharp increase in fuel prices announced by the BN government on June 4.

PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim has gone on record as promising to reduce oil prices if he becomes prime minister. However, DAP seems to be of the opinion that the price rise is unavoidable.

Penang chief minister and DAP Secretary-General Lim Guan Eng today said the party would accept the rise in oil prices provided the government furnishes a mechanism to cushion its impact on the people.

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Asked about a blog entry on June 6 by Petaling Jaya Utara parliamentarian and DAP Economic Advisor Tony Pua which stated that the 'increase in prices is expected and [...] unavoidable', Lim said this was consistent with DAP's stand on the issue.

"The position of the party is this – the government should provide a mechanism to ease the financial burden of the people caused by the rise in fuel prices," he said.

He was speaking to reporters in Kuala Lumpur after presenting a cash donation (above) worth RM156,608.82 to China's ambassador Cheng Yonghua in aid of the Sichuan earthquake victims.

"They (the government) should distribute Petronas' profits to the public because with the hike in oil prices, everyone is suffering except Petronas.

"Petronas is enjoying windfall profits. It's only fair that they share their profits," he said.

'At least Penang boleh'

Lim also said households earning less than RM6,000 a month should be given an additional RM6,000 annually adding this amount was 'nothing' compared to the profits Petronas made from exporting crude oil.

The Penang chief minister also elaborated on DAP's pledge to provide low-income families in Penang with a RM100 rebate every month, calling it a 'proactive' step.

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He said the move was to be seen as a 'stand of solidarity' with the people's plight and that the cash rebate would establish faith in the new state government.

Lim rapped critics in Gerakan and Umno who claimed the cash rebates were only for 'cheap publicity' countering that DAP's aim was to bring about social justice.

He said the spike in fuel prices was not in the spirit of the 'Malaysia Boleh' attitude that the DAP- led government in Penang would like to prove that 'at least Penang boleh'.

Lim challenged his critics to follow suit in helping to ease the burden of the people.

"When I say it, I mean it. I want to create prosperity and this prosperity must be shared amongst the people.

"I'm willing to put my political career at stake," he said..

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