

Muhyiddin Says Govt Wants To Increase People's Income
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JASIN -- The government is considering how to raise the income of the people in view of the increase in the prices of goods due partly to the global food crisis, Muhyiddin Yassin said yesterday.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that increasing the income of people was one option to reduce the burden of high-cost goods, and one way of doing this is through agro-based and small industries.

"Right now the prices of rubber and palm oil are good, so farmers and smallholders won't feel the effect of a five or ten per cent increase in the cost of goods because of their improved income," he said at a luncheon meeting with members of farmers and fishermen organisations here.

However, the food crisis was expected to become increasingly critical, Muhyiddin said, citing United Nations reports.

He noted that disasters resulting from climate change, decreasing production and increasing consumption had all contributed to the crisis.

Muhyiddin said that developments in the Middle East had pushed up the prices of not only oil but other goods as well.

He said that all countries were experiencing the increase in the prices of goods.

"The increase in the prices of main food items in the country is not due to policies of the Barisan Nasional government. Advanced countries face the same problem. Supply and demand determine prices," Muhyiddin said.

He said the government was considering increasing Malaysia's floating stockpile of rice because the present amount might not be adequate in future.

Muhyiddin alluded to Indonesia which was reported to have increased its rice stockpile with imports.

Although Malaysia was producing a large amount of foodstuffs, it had to increase its output of vegetable, meat and milk, Muhyiddin said.

He suggested that government-linked companies and the private sector go into large scale food cultivation and livestock farming.

"These companies should undertake food production, now involving mainly small companies," Muhyiddin said.

(Bernama)

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