

Rafizi pans Najib for blowing RM5.7b on 'vote buying'
Malaysian Insider
July 27, 2012
By Ida Lim

KUALA LUMPUR, July 27 — PKR's Rafizi Ramli today slammed the prime minister for his heavy "vote-buying" spending of RM5.77 billion, saying that the money comes from taxpayers.

Rafizi said the loss of yearly revenue from Pakatan Rakyat's (PR) proposed car tax cuts would be eclipsed by Datuk Seri Najib Razak's unplanned spending.

He had on Tuesday announced PR's electoral pledge to completely revamp the National Automotive Policy (NAP), including the slashing of hefty excise duties and reducing the triple-tax burden imposed on cars.

"(T)he total sweets simply used by the prime minister in just the first six months (of this year) to buy the people's votes is RM5.77 billion," said Rafizi (picture) at a press conference today.

He based his calculations by adding up the RM2.2 billion civil service bonus recently announced and various "one-off" spending by Najib's administration which he claimed had reached RM3.57 billion.

Under the RM3.57 billion "unplanned spending", he gave examples of the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BR1M), Bantuan Kembali Ke Sekolah 1 Malaysia and Bantuan Buku 1 Malaysia.

He said these schemes respectively cost the government RM2.6 billion, RM530 million and RM260 million.

He also referred to "various schemes to buy votes under the 1 Malaysia brand, and various announcements of "instant noodle projects" throughout the Jelajah Janji Ditepati (Promises Fulfilled Tour) estimated to reach RM180 million."

He said the people were taxed at a high rate but it seemed like they had to thank the government for the handouts.

"Since (Najib) became prime minister in 2009, the operational and development expenditure by the Prime Minister's Department also rose drastically," said Rafizi.

He compared the Prime Minister's Department's spending under Najib to that of his predecessor, Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Using the averages from both administration, Rafizi said the Prime Minister's Department operational and development expenditure had jumped by RM1.4 billion and RM 4.6 billion annually, respectively, under Najib.

He said these increases, together with the unplanned spending of RM5.77 billion, would amount to RM11.8 billion.

Rafizi had previously admitted that around RM8 billion in revenue would be lost under the PR proposal to slash car taxes.

Responding to fears of revenue loss, the PKR leader said that the spending by the PM's Department could be used to offset the mooted reduction in car taxes.

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