

**Muhyiddin's AFTA remarks hints BN won't cut car prices, says Rafizi**  
**Malaysian Insider**  
**April 10, 2013**  
**By Debra Chong**

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 — PKR's Rafizi Ramli questioned today the Barisan Nasional's (BN) sincerity in vowing to cut car prices should the coalition win Election 2013, pointing to political foe Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's apparent confusion over the workings of the national automotive tax policy.

The opposition party's strategy chief latched onto the BN deputy chairman's dismissal yesterday of the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) bloc's proposed policies, singling out Muhyiddin's remarks on car-price cuts, a hot issue in Malaysia where imported vehicles can cost as much as a house and often more.

"That is why, when Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin himself does not understand the factor that doubles the prices of cars, this creates a doubt as to whether the Barisan Nasional is truly sincere in its promise to reduce car prices," Rafizi said in a statement.

"Even more worrisome, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin's statement to link the drop in car prices with the implementation of AFTA foreshadows that the promise is only a political gimmick that will never be carried out by the Barisan Nasional should it win," he added.

Muhyiddin was reported saying yesterday that the opposition pact lacked experience and in-depth knowledge to know that most of its proposed policies on welfare and plans to cut car prices have already been implemented.

"We were already doing it... the difference is that we would do it gradually whereas they want it now without taking into consideration its impact on the auto industry," the senior Umno politician told reporters after an awards ceremony for SPM top scorers in the city yesterday.

The ASEAN Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) was put in place to abolish trade barriers in the form of import tariffs so that goods can move freely without price discrimination within the region, Rafizi said.

He noted that, currently, cars made in any ASEAN member country were exempt from import tax, adding that 90 per cent of the cars currently on Malaysian roads were manufactured regionally.

He reiterated PR's proposal that Malaysians will only see cheaper cars here if the government dismantled the excise duty and sales tax, rather than the non-existent import tax for ASEAN-made cars.

Malaysia will go to polls on May 5, the Election Commission announced earlier today, setting the date for the BN's toughest test to keep its 56-year hold on Southeast Asia's third biggest economy.

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