

**Fuel Prices Rise Necessary To Save National Economy, Says Muhyiddin
Bernama
5 Sept, 2013**

JOHOR BAHRU, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- The government's raising of fuel prices this week was not meant to inconvenience the people but was necessary to save the national economy, Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin said Thursday.

The deputy prime minister said the measure could have come as a surprise but it was appropriate as world economic analysts said it was necessary to ensure that Malaysia remained progressive.

Muhyiddin said the Barisan Nasional (BN) government was a responsible government and did not seek popularity merely to garner the people's support.

"If nothing was done to reduce the (government) subsidy for the fuel prices, the country would have to put up with an acute economic situation," he said at the 'Semarak Kasih' programme in Kampung Maju Jaya, Kempas, in Johor Baharu.

Also present was Muhyiddin's wife, Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, Tiram state assemblyman Datuk Maulizan Bujang as well other state government leaders and more than 3,000 people from the vicinity.

Muhyiddin said he realised that the government's move to raise the price of RON95 petrol and diesel by 20 sen a litre was not well accepted by the people and he had also received text messages from BN supporters expressing disappointment.

Raising the fuel prices was something that could not be averted due to the uncertain economy and the market price of fuel following the turmoil in West Asia which had adversely affected Malaysia's exports, Muhyiddin said.

"As an elected government, we must be responsible. The prime minister cannot reject the fuel prices rise just to be popular. Even the deputy prime minister cannot reject just to be popular. Of course, giving away fuel for free can make the government even more popular.

"The fundamental question is not to become popular. We want to do things right. We want to be a responsible government. We heard the advice of many economists before adopting the measure (of raising the fuel prices)," he said.

He said economists attending the meeting on the National Fiscal Policy chaired by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak also said that if the government did not reduce its fuel subsidy, economic growth would be adversely affected.

This would directly have an impact on the BN government's policy of implementing pro-people policies, including allocating RM24 billion annually to subsidise various essential goods, he said.

Muhyiddin said the fuel subsidy provided by the government was enjoyed by not only the needy but also everyone, including foreigners working in the country, and this was different from the situation in other countries which only gave fuel subsidy for the poor.

"Therefore, we reduced the subsidy and helped the country save RM3.3 billion annually, and

the money can be spent by the government in the form of the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M)," he said.

At the same time, he said, the government did not marginalise the middle class, and was taking the appropriate measures to reduce the burden they had to bear.

Earlier, Muhyiddin showed his prowess at cooking the 'sambal goreng', which is a necessary dish for 'nasi ambeng', a traditional food of the people of Johor.

--BERNAMA

Copyright © 2013 BERNAMA

Source: <http://www.bernama.com/bernama/v7/newsindex.php?id=975526>