

Putrajaya promises relief for middle-class after pump price hike
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Putrajaya promised today that Malaysia's growing middle-class would get some cushion to face the pump price rise announced yesterday that has led to wide outrage.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak bit the bullet on populist measures when he announced yesterday that RON 95 petrol would be increased by 20 sen to RM2.10 per litre as part of the subsidy rationalisation programme of the government.

"The prime minister will announce certain measures to minimise the impact of the rise in petrol prices for the middle-class in the upcoming Budget," Finance Ministry secretary-general Tan Sri Irwan Siregar Abdullah said in Kuala Lumpur today.

Middle-class consumers had voiced their displeasure at the petrol hike as the government would compensate the lower-income households (earning below RM3,000) with higher cash handouts under the Bantuan Rakyat 1 Malaysia (BRIM) but the middle-income group would feel the full brunt of the petrol increase.

"Even with the revised price, RON 95 subsidy provided by the government amounted to 63 sen per litre," Irwan said.

To another question on the announcement of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the upcoming Budget, Irwan said his ministry would launch an aggressive campaign to educate the public on GST if it was going to be implemented.

The Budget 2014 is due to be tabled on October 25, 2013. - September 3, 2013.

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