

Umno needs to remember who saved them, says Kadir Jasin
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Putrajaya has been reminded not to forget the rural folk whose vote returned them to power and will now have to bear the burden from the hike in fuel price.

The former group editor-in-chief of the Umno controlled New Straits Times Press (NSTP) Datuk A. Kadir Jasin said that the increase would burden the people, especially those who live in rural areas.

In the last election, BN won 133 parliamentary seats, with Umno picking up 88 parliamentary seats in rural Malaysia.

"The subsidy cut caused fuel prices to go up by 20 sen and so the people's burden will increase. The finance minister said, the latest hike would save roughly RM1.1 billion," Kadir wrote in his blog today.

"We must know what the savings would be used for. Hopefully, the focus would not be on cities alone. The government must remember who saved BN," he said, referring to the general election on May 5.

While calling for rural folk to be cared for, Kadir faulted Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak's administration for overspending, causing the people to pay the price.

"On the outset, it looks like the government overspends. Expenses for the prime minister's overseas trip have cost RM44.07 million since Najib became PM five years ago."

"How much then did it cost to repair and renovate the (prime minister's) official residence?" he questioned.

After the recent general elections, political analysts drew the conclusion that there was a massive shift of choice when urban and middle-class voters opted for the opposition, thus widening the gap in opinion between urban and rural Malaysia.

Although BN successfully retained Putrajaya with a reduced majority, the 13th general election was the tightest race ever when the Najib administration lost all the big cities likes George Town, Ipoh, Kuala Lumpur, Seremban, Malacca and Johor's cities.

BN failed to win back Selangor and Penang – the two industrial states in Malaysia – although it did manage to take back Kedah.

Putrajaya had announced last night the increase of RON95 and diesel by 20 cents per litre each to ensure that the government is on track to achieve a fiscal deficit of 3% against the gross domestic product (GDP) by 2015 and to attain a balanced budget by 2020.

Economists who characterised the subsidy cut as a way to address the rising overall government debt received the move positively. The country's debt stood at 53.5% against the GDP at the end of last year.

After yesterday evening's announcement, people flocked to gas stations to fill up their car

tanks and voiced their disapproval over the government's move.

The last time the RON95 petrol and diesel went up was in 2010 when it had a 5-sen per litre increase.

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