

**Review Decision Not To Give Prior Notice For Fuel Price Changes – FOMCA
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KUALA LUMPUR, July 1 (Bernama) -- The Federation of Malaysian Consumers Associations (FOMCA) has urged the government to review its decision not to give the public prior notice for new monthly fuel prices, to avoid causing panic among consumers.

Its Deputy President Mohd Yusof Abdul Rahman said although fuel prices were subject to changes, advance notification could help consumers to make some savings.

"We don't know why the government no longer wants to notify consumers in advance. The government may have its reasons... but if there's prior notice, then consumers can make some savings even though it may not amount to much.

"If there's no advance notice, consumers will be kept wondering whether or not there will a price increase. And, how long is the government going to stick to its decision (of not giving prior notice for fuel price changes) if petrol prices keep rising?" he told Bernama.

On Dec 1 last year, the government introduced the managed float system, similar to that used to determine the price of RON97 petrol, to determine retail prices for RON95 petrol and diesel, based on the monthly average world price of crude oil.

Yesterday, Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Minister Datuk Seri Hasan Malek said no prior notice would be given to the public for new monthly petrol and diesel rates from now on and that petrol pump operators would only be notified of any change at midnight on the last day of the month.

Mohd Yusof, however, said problems could crop up if certain operators, who may be privy to information regarding fuel price hikes, took advantage of consumers by lying to them that they had run out of petrol and diesel supplies.

"Since only they (pump operators) will know if there's going to be any price increase, some of them may claim that they don't have supplies even though they have enough," he said.

He said another possible repercussion of not giving advance notice for any fuel price change would be an abrupt rise in transportation costs, especially for essential goods. This may lead to higher prices and cause more difficulties for the people.

Previously, any changes in fuel prices were announced on the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry's website.

For the month of July, the retail price for RON95 petrol is RM2.15 per litre, an increase of 10 sen from last month. The price of RON97 has gone up by 20 sen to RM2.55 per litre, including the Goods and Services Tax (GST), while diesel and diesel Euro5 prices have been retained at RM2.05 and RM2.15 per litre respectively.

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