

Najib's ratings fall to 48% over fuel subsidy cut
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Datuk Seri Najib Razak's approval rating slipped six percentage points to 48% this month from the last survey done in August, Merdeka Center reported today, citing dissatisfaction over fuel subsidy cuts.

Najib scored a 54% approval rating in August, after he took charge of operations to recover the flight MH17 wreckage, its black boxes and victims, when the Malaysia Airlines plane was shot down over Ukraine in July.

"In our view, the reduction in the approval rating figures was likely tied to the fuel subsidy reduction measure on October 2, 2014," the pollster said in a statement today.

The survey was carried out between October 11 and 26.

It polled 1,005 registered voters who were interviewed by telephone. The latest approval ratings are the lowest ever recorded for the prime minister.

As part of its fuel rationalisation plan, Putrajaya slashed subsidies for fuel earlier this month, which saw motorists paying 20 sen more a litre for RON 95 petrol and diesel.

RON 95 now costs RM2.30 a litre, up from RM2.10, while diesel is at RM2.20, an increase from RM2 previously.

The survey found that approval ratings for Putrajaya saw a three-point decrease, with 38% respondents saying they were happy with the government as opposed to 41% recorded last August.

"Again, we attribute this to public dissatisfaction as likely arising from concerns over likely cost of living increases due to fuel price increases as well as depressed commodity prices in rural areas of the country."

It also found that nearly half of the respondents felt the country was "headed in the wrong direction" as opposed to 41% who felt Malaysia was on the right track.

The negative sentiments were largely driven by various concerns such as the increasing cost of living, the general condition of the economy, and racial and religious tensions.

"Those who felt the country was on positive track based their views on the prevailing sense of peace and security, visible economic and continued welfare assistance from the government," the pollster said.

Economy remained the top-most concern among respondents, rising to 71% as

compared to 54% two months ago.

"We note these sentiments also take into account the mitigating measures announced during the prime minister's national budget speech on October 10, 2014." – October 30, 2014.

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