

KERATAN AKHBAR

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KUALA LUMPUR: The unity government is committed to carrying out initiatives and programmes for the welfare and well-being of the people despite being burdened by high expenditure and debts.

Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli said the government has limited reserves and its annual revenue of about RM300 billion is needed to cover the huge subsidies, administrative costs and interest

on debts.

"The government allocates RM80 billion for subsidies, interest paid on debts amounts to about RM30 billion, and when we add remuneration for civil servants and rental of buildings, the amount runs into another few hundred billions.

"At the end of the day, there is no money in the coffers to do more," he said when speaking at a Madani Tour held in Sungai Tua on Sunday.

Rafizi said due to this, the government is unable to provide additional subsidies to lower fuel prices because other programmes and initiatives need to be carried out to benefit the people.

"If we want to reduce fuel prices, we need to look at a price that is lower than the current price of RM2.05 per litre. In the current situation, the crude oil price in the market is US\$80 (RM360) a barrel.

"The government provides a

subsidy of RM1 per litre to maintain the price at RM2.05 per litre."

Rafizi said the government does not want to take a populist approach but rather remain focused on the people's welfare, provide better facilities and infrastructure, as well as offer better salaries for civil servants.

"To win the state elections would not be difficult. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and I can entice the people by reducing fuel

prices by another 20 sen so that everyone will vote for us.

"However, that would mean the salary of teachers will be reduced, housing projects for the poor will not take off, issues of water supply like in Kelantan would not be solved and the government might not be able to assist our children who enter universities to further their studies," said Rafizi, who is also PKR deputy president.
- Bernama