

# KERATAN AKHBAR

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## Rafizi: Subsidy savings channelled to needy

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**NIBONG TEBAL:** The government has never done away with fuel subsidies, including diesel, which amounted to RM60 billion annually.

Economy Minister Rafizi Ramli said, instead, the money was being channelled directly to the people now.

Explaining the rationale for the diesel subsidy rationalisation that took effect yesterday, he said subsidies were paid to oil companies before this.

However, now, they were distributed directly to families to enjoy between RM200 and RM500 monthly.

"At the time when the petrol price was RM1.90 per litre, did you know how much the crude oil was then?"

"Do you have any idea how much in subsidies the government spent? Only about RM3 billion from the RM200 billion budget.

"Now, the subsidy is RM60 billion, with crude oil reaching US\$80 a barrel. I said previously that oil prices will go down if crude prices are low.

"Now, when the subsidies have reached RM80 billion, we can't even build schools and raise civil servants' salaries, but they have resulted in lower fuel prices that benefit only the rich.

"So, it is better for us to redirect the subsidies, not do away entirely with it.

"By redirecting the subsidies, we give them directly to those really in need... diesel for public

transport, small lorries, pick-ups trucks and petty traders.

"All of them may still enjoy the subsidy. Even those earning RM100,000 and below annually," he said at the launch of the unity pact election machinery for the Sungai Bakap by-election here yesterday.



Rafizi Ramli

The PKR deputy president said this when a man, who claimed to be an Umno supporter, asked why petrol prices had not gone down.

Rafizi then invited him on stage to explain the matter, but the man refused to come forward.

The situation became tense after the audience jeered at him. The man later left the event.

Rafizi said the people needed to choose whether they wanted subsidies to be given to oil companies or directly to the people.

"I am certain that the people will see that it is better for the subsidies go to those who are deserving," he added.

Later, Rafizi said that the country was well on track to becoming developed by 2027 or 2028. He said the country's economic growth had surpassed projections by economic observers.

In the first five months of this year, he said 12 local companies were among the list of 15 companies in Southeast Asia, whose shares had risen significantly.

He said the ringgit was also among the best performers in terms of strengthening.