

## 'Find ways to keep fuel prices competitively healthy'



Petrol dealers are urged to come up with ideas on how best to keep fuel prices at competitive levels. - NSTP/Azhar Ramli

By Azura Abas  
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**PUTRAJAYA:** Petrol dealers are urged to come up with ideas and innovation on how best to keep fuel prices at competitive levels, which will not burden the people.

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail made the call today, asking them to come forward as soon as possible before the ministry reached out to them.

"How long do they have before we start engaging them, it depends on the response," the minister told reporters after a symposium on competitiveness and cost of living, which was closed by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Should the six key petrol dealers play their part and adopt good competitive principles via innovation and improved efficiency, Saifuddin believed it could keep retail prices of petrol low, without the government having to use the Automatic Pricing Mechanism (APM) and cap it at RM2.08 for RON95.

The government, he said, had played its part by giving petrol subsidies to reduce the people's burden.

Saifuddin added there were about 3,500 petrol stations in the country so far with six key players, instead of being monopolised by a single entity.

On how much would be the best percentage for petrol dealers to keep fuel prices low, he replied: "The players can compete after taking into account the cost and service quality."



**Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail accompanied by Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution Ismail during the closing ceremony of the symposium on competitiveness and cost of living in Putrajaya. -NSTP/Luqman Hakim Zubir**

"As I have said (in my speech), petrol retail business involves volume and not so much about margin.

"Several years ago, petrol dealers asked the government to raise the margin (rate) and we did so last year, from 12 sen to 15 sen for RON95 and RON97 and 7 sen to 10 sen for diesel."

It was reported the government had agreed that petrol station operator margin rates be adjusted by an additional 2.81 sen to 15 sen per litre for petrol products and an additional three sen to 10 sen per litre for diesel products over the current rates. The last time the margin was revised was in 2008.

Competitive petrol prices, Saifuddin said, could be a reality should dealers raise the aspect of innovation and efficiency.

Earlier, Dr Wan Azizah called on the country's intellectuals to come up with ways to address the cost of living.

"Theories can be learned, but (keep in mind) the impact of cost of living on the people.

"You as the brain here (at the symposium should)... find ways to address the cost of living and how the shared prosperity policy can be achieved and understood."