

Headline	15 per cent hike hurts households		
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15 per cent hike hurts households

THE general public, especially the middle and lower-income groups, are scratching their heads following the government's announcement that electricity bills will go up by 14.98 per cent, or from 4.99 sen to 38.53 sen per kWh, effective Jan 1, 2014.

Rates in Sabah and Labuan will go up by five sen per kWh or 16.9 per cent. This subsidy boils down to the government's need to strengthen the country's fiscal position.

This, despite assurances by Energy, Green Technology and Water Minister Datuk Seri Dr Maximus Ongkili that 70 per cent of consumers in the peninsula will not be affected.

Middle-income households will see a RM60 increase in their bills monthly resulting severe effects in their household budget.

The man in the street is suffering with rising costs of living, like the hike in petrol prices by 20 sen, and sugar prices going up by 34 sen with the partial removal of subsidy.

Kuala Lumpur residents would be the worst hit by the 300 per cent assessment hike but thankfully, the payment has been deferred to March next year.

Now, goods and services are likely to cost more as commercial and industrial users will pay an average 17 per cent more for power.

What more, the six per cent Goods and Services Tax to be implemented in April 2015 will cause further misery.

Subsequently, employees will demand higher wages to meet the high living costs. Is the safety net in place to minimise the impact?

People have to be prudent in their spending and cut down on electricity use at home. As a retiree, it boggles my mind how I am supposed to pay these hefty utility bills, which eat up at least 60 per cent of my monthly pension.

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