KEMENTERIAN PERDAGANGAN DALAM NEGERI
DAN KOS SARA HIDUP

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Tarikh: **12 Mei 2026**

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT

KEMENTERIAN PERDAGANGAN DALAM NEGERI
DAN KOS SARA HIDUP

KERATAN AKHBAR

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UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT

NEW STRAITS TIMES
HARI: SELASA
TARIKH: 12/5/2026
M/SURAT: 4

DOMESTIC CONSUMER SENTIMENT

TAX DEBATE TESTS FAIRNESS AND SUSTAINABILITY

Questions raised on who pays most and whether system remains balanced and fair

SHAREN KAUR AND
S. BIRRUNTHA
KUALA LUMPUR
bt@nst.com.my

A RENEWED debate on Malaysia's tax framework has raised questions about sustainability, fairness and long-term fiscal strategy.

The discussion centres on reliance on high-income earners and the broader structure of taxation.

At the centre of the discussion is whether it is economically sustainable for a relatively small high-income group, particularly the T20 segment, to continue contributing a disproportionately large share of income tax revenue.

This raises questions about fairness and long-term fiscal balance.

There are also concerns that higher taxation on top earners may risk dampening investment appetite, entrepreneurship and long-term talent retention.

This is particularly so if the tax burden is seen as unbalanced or uncompetitive relative to regional peers.

Experts note that the issue is far from straightforward, as each tax structure involves trade-offs between revenue stability, economic incentives, administrative efficiency and social equity.

Tax reform is therefore a continuous balancing act rather than a clear-cut policy choice.

Economist Dr Geoffrey Williams, who defines T20 as households earning above RM11,820 a month, said the wealthiest segment accounts for the bulk of tax contributions.

"It is always attractive for politicians to target the rich for higher taxes because it seems socially fair and people envy the rich, so they like to see them pay.

"Nonetheless, the rich already pay the largest share of tax.

"The richest 15 per cent of people pay 80 per cent of total individual income tax, while those earning below RM100,000 per year contribute only 14 per cent," he told 'Business Times'.

He said higher-income groups also pay more in consumption, wealth, dividend and investment taxes.

"The basic economics of taxing the rich tell us that the more you tax them, the less you get in revenue because they find ways to avoid the taxes or high taxes act as a disincentive to work.

An economist suggested alternative taxation models, such as an electronic payments tax. NSTP FILE PIC

"They may also leave for low-tax countries, so you lose entrepreneurs and highly qualified talent."

Williams called for a broader rethink of taxation beyond recurring debates on wealth tax, income tax and SST versus the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

He suggested alternative models such as an electronic payments tax.

He said more than 80 per cent of transactions are conducted digitally.

A one per cent tax on e-payments could raise RM28 billion. It would remain difficult to avoid and have minimal impact on behaviour.

"This tiny tax works because it has a huge tax base of all transactions. It's easy to collect through point-of-sale technologies.

"It is difficult to avoid or cheat, and because it is so small, people hardly notice it, and so it does not distort buying behaviour as much as other taxes."

On GST, he said that while it may generate higher revenue, it does so by widening the tax base, including lower-income groups.

He said it is ultimately less favourable for consumers compared with SST.

"We must stop the repeated demand for GST.

"People must understand that GST only raises more revenue because more people, especially the poor, pay it and it covers more products than SST.

"People must also understand that businesses prefer GST because they do not pay it.

"They reclaim it. Ultimately, consumers are worse off under GST, especially those on low income."

He said tax policy involves complex trade-offs and called for a more comprehensive, expert-driven national discussion on reform options.

Meanwhile, economist Dr Oh Ei Sun said the wider tax debate often obscures two deeper structural challenges.

He said these have significant socioeconomic and sociopolitical implications if left unaddressed.

"The first is the widening wealth gap that pits the haves against the have-nots in not just taxation but also other socioeconomic concerns, such as crime and public health."

He added that bridging this gap requires higher incomes across the board.

This depends on improved productivity driven by stronger education and vocational training, as well as changes in workplace attitudes.

He cited more competitive regional peers, such as Vietnam, as an example.

The second issue, he said, is fiscal prudence in government spending.

He said the state does not need so much revenue to sustain its spending.

Oh suggested this could be achieved through a gradual shift away from subsidy dependency towards a more efficient, business and people-friendly regulatory framework, alongside stronger enforcement to reduce corruption and fiscal leakages.

In short, improve training and education, adjust working attitudes, reduce unnecessary subsidies and regulations, and strengthen the fight against corruption," he said.

T20 DEFINITION SEEN OUTDATED

IPPFA Sdn Bhd director of investment strategy and country economist Mohd Sedek Jantan said the definition of the T20 income group may not accurately reflect the actual cost of living, particularly in major urban centres such as Kuala Lumpur.

He said any subsidy rationalisation exercise would inevitably trigger social sensitivities and perceptions of inequality, especially at a time when living costs remain elevated in key cities.

"This matter requires deeper scrutiny because any form of subsidy rationalisation will usually trigger social sensitivities and perceptions of inequality, particularly when the cost of living remains high in major urban areas.

"In this context, effective policy communication becomes a critical element

"It ensures the public understands that the main goals are not merely short-term fiscal savings, but to strengthen the efficiency of the country's economic resource allocation in a more sustainable manner," he said

Sedek said the main challenge lies in the definition of the T20 group.

He said the use of gross household income as the sole benchmark is simplistic and does not necessarily reflect the true financial position of households.

"Even disposable income, which is often used as an alternative measure, still does not account for the heterogeneity in living costs across geographical locations.

"This is particularly evident in cities such as Kuala Lumpur where housing, education and transportation costs are higher than other areas."

He proposed that the government consider introducing subcategories in the T20 group.

This would avoid policy leakages affecting households that are technically classified as T20 but still face significant financial pressures.

"As an example, the government could consider excluding subsidies only for individuals earning above RM25,000 per month.

"Such an approach would not only be more targeted, but could also reduce the risk of a shock to domestic consumption, given that very high-income groups generally have a greater capacity to absorb higher fuel costs," he said.

He added that preserving domestic consumer sentiment is important as household spending remains one of the key pillars of Malaysia's economic growth amid global uncertainties.

Pulau Perhentian resorts struggle to keep lights on

BY **T.C. KHOR**
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

PETALING JAYA: Resorts on Pulau Perhentian are burning about 10,000 litres of diesel a month per operator just to keep the lights on, and with no grid connection or fuel subsidy, operators say the rising costs are becoming unsustainable, particularly for smaller family-run businesses.

Perhentian Island Tourism Operators Association chairman Rafizah Munir said diesel costs have surged by about 80%, pushing monthly operating expenses up by between RM22,800 and RM30,000 for an average resort operator.

"A typical mid-sized resort consumes between 2,000 and 2,500 litres a week, with generators running around the clock as the islands have no connection to the national power grid," she told *theSun*.

Operators are currently paying commercial rates of RM5.12 per litre for diesel and RM3.87 per litre for petrol, compared with earlier prices of between RM2.84 and RM2.92 for diesel and around RM2.52 for petrol.

"Currently, we are caught in a subsidy vacuum where we have no choice but to procure fuel at full unsubsidised commercial rates."

She said the association is seeking inclusion in the government's targeted fuel subsidy mechanisms, including the *Sistem Kawalan Diesel Bersubsidi*, a regulated system that controls the distribution of subsidised diesel to eligible sectors.

She added that access to the scheme could reduce operating costs by nearly RM30,000 a month for some operators.

Rafizah said the request by the association is for operational survival rather than profit, warning that many smaller family-run resorts are struggling to absorb the increases.

She said logistics costs have further compounded the pressure, with boat operators raising rates by more than 42%.

"Our entire supply chain – everything from the fresh fish we serve to the clean linens in our rooms – relies on third-party boat operators. When the cost of moving a single barrel of supplies jumps from RM7 to RM10, it creates a ripple effect that touches every corner of the island's economy."

She said despite the sharp increase in costs, most resorts have raised room rates by only 10% to 15%, absorbing the bulk of the burden themselves.

"A 15% increase in room rates cannot possibly cover an 80% jump in energy costs. At the moment, operators are personally absorbing about three-quarters of the blow. We are acting as a shield for our guests, but that shield is getting heavier by the day. We cannot hold it up forever without help."

A permanent national grid connection is only expected by 2030, leaving operators exposed to escalating fuel costs for years without meaningful relief.

She said if direct fuel subsidies are not feasible, the government could consider zero-interest financing, grants or renewable energy initiatives to reduce long-term dependence on diesel.

"The resorts are not isolated businesses. They are the economic backbone of the islands, supporting boat operators, local traders, workers and hundreds of families.

"Protecting the sustainability of island tourism means protecting livelihoods and preserving one of Malaysia's most iconic tourism destinations for future generations."

Rafizah said the Perhentian Island Tourism Operators Association is seeking inclusion in the government's targeted fuel subsidy mechanisms for the operational survival of resorts on the island.

ASIA TIMES EST 1995
HARI: SELASA
TARIKH: 12/5/2026
M/SURAT: 3

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மக்கள் ஓசை
TAMIL MAKKAL OSAI

HARI: SELASA
TARIKH: 12/5/2026
M/SURAT: 2

1,000 லிட்டர் ரோன் 95 பெட்ரோலைக் கடத்த முயன்ற

அண்டை நாட்டு ஆடவர்கள் இருவர் கைது

புக்கிட் காயூ ஈத்தாம், மே 12-
மலேசியாவிலிருந்து 1,000 லிட்டர் ரோன்95 பெட்ரோலைக் கடத்திச் செல்ல முயன்ற அண்டை நாட்டுக்காரர்கள் இருவர் பொது நடவடிக்கை பிரிவு (பிஜிஏ) அதிகாரிகளால் கைது செய்யப் பட்டனர்.

புக்கிட் காயூ ஈத்தாமில் உள்ள குடிநுழைவு இலாகா சுங்க பாது காப்புச் சாவடியில் நடத்தப்பட்ட சோதனையின் போது அவர்கள் இருவரும் கைது செய்யப்பட்டனர்.

தாய்லாந்து நாட்டைச் சேர்ந்த அந்த இரண்டு ஆடவர்களும் நேற்று முன்தினம் விடியற்காலை சி பெட்டாலியன் 1 பிஜிஏ சாவடியில் அதிகாரிகளிடம் சிக்கினர் என்று குபாங் பாசு கிளைக்கான உள்நாட்டு வர்த்தகம் வாழ்க்கைச் செலவின அமைச்சு பிரிவு தெரிவித்தது.

பெட்ரோலைக் கடத்த அவர்கள் பயன்படுத்திய இரண்டு பிக்ஆப் வாகனங்களும் பறிமுதல் செய்யப்பட்டதாக அறிக்கை வழி தெரிவிக்கப்பட்டது.

தாய்லாந்து எண் பட்டை பொருத்தப்பட்ட டொயோட்டா ஹைலக்ஸ் வாகனங்கள் இரண்டில் ஒவ்வொன்றிலும் தலா 500 லிட்டர் பெட்ரோல் ஏற்றப்பட்ட நிலையில் பிடிபட்டது. பெட்ரோலை கடத்துவதற்காக அந்த வாகனம் மாற்றி அமைக்கப்பட்டு உள்ளே பெட்ரோல் நிரப்பப்பட்ட கொள்கலன்களும் பதுக்கப்பட்டிருந்தது சோதனையில் கண்டுபிடிக்கப்பட்டதாக அதிகாரிகள் தெரிவித்தனர்.

அவர்களிடம் பறிமுதல் செய்யப்பட்ட அந்த பெட்ரோலின் சந்தை மதிப்பு 104, 200 ரிங்கிட் பெறுமானத்திலானது என்பதும் விசாரணையில் கண்டறியப்பட்டது.

பெட்ரோலைக் கடத்திய அந்த இரண்டு தாய்லாந்து ஆடவர்களும் பின்னர் குபாங் பாசு உள்நாட்டு வர்த்தகம் வாழ்க்கைச் செலவின அமைச்சின் கிளை அலுவலகத்திற்குக் கொண்டுச் செல்லப்பட்டனர்.

குற்றம் நிரூபிக்கப்பட்டால் முதலாவது குற்றச்செயலாக இருப்பின் 2 மில்லியன் ரிங்கிட் அபராதமும் இரண்டாவது அல்லது அதற்கும் கூடுதலான குற்றச் செயலாக இருப்பின் 5 மில்லியன் ரிங்கிட் அபராதமும் விதிக்கப்படக் கூடிய சட்டவிதியின் கீழ் அவ்விருவரும் குற்றஞ்சாட்டப்படுவர் என்று அந்த அறிக்கை தெரிவித்தது.

KEMENTERIAN PERDAGANGAN DALAM NEGERI
DAN KOS SARA HIDUP

BERITA ONLINE

KPDN

UNIT KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT

BERITA ONLINE BERTARIKH 12 MEI 2026			
TARIKH	**TAJUK**	**PAUTAN**	**MEDIA**
12-May	KPDN Kedah tahan dua lelaki rampas petrol disyaki diseludup bernilai RM26,824	https://berita.rtm.gov.my/kes/senarai-berita-kes/senarai-artikel/kpdn-kedah-tahan-dua-lelaki-rampas-petrol-disyaki-diseludup-bernilai-rm26824/	RTM
12-May	Penganggur mengaku salah miliki 3,455 liter diesel tanpa lesen	https://www.utusan.com.my/nasional/2026/05/penganggur-mengaku-salah-miliki-3455-liter-diesel	UTUSAN
12-May	Penganggur mengaku seleweng 3,455 liter diesel	https://www.kosmo.com.my/2026/05/11/penganggur-mengaku-seleweng-3455-	KOSMO
12-May	KPDN Semporna pantau premis stesen minyak di Kunak	https://sabahmedia.com/2026/05/11/kpdn-semporna-pantau-premis-	SABAH MEDIA
12-May	Jualan Rahmah MADANI bantu rakyat jimat kos sara hidup	https://malaysiaaktif.my/2026/05/jualan-rahmah-madani-bantu-rakyat-jimat-kos-sara	MALAYSIA AKTIF
12-May	2 lelaki ditahan cuba seludup RON95	https://www.bharian.com.my/berita/kes/2026/05/1549672/2-lelaki-ditahan-cuba-seludup	BERITA HARIAN
12-May	2 lelaki ditahan cuba seludup RON95 guna tangki ubah suai	https://www.buletintv3.my/jenayah/2-lelaki-ditahan-cuba-seludup-ron95-guna-tangki-ubah-suai/	TV3
12-May	Dua lelaki kantoi seludup 230 liter petrol ke Thailand	https://www.kosmo.com.my/2026/05/11/dua-lelaki-kantoi-seludup-230-liter-petrol-ke-thailand/	KOSMO

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