

OPPOSITION THREATENS PROTEST ACTION TO PRESS DEMAND FOR GOVERNMENT TO CAP GAS TAX & REMOVE GCT ON ELECTRICITY BILLS

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The Opposition People's National Party is stepping up its demand on the Government to immediately cap the ad valorem tax on petroleum products and to remove the General Consumption Tax (GCT) on electricity bills. The Opposition has warned that it will be forced to take appropriate protest action during the coming week, if the Government fails by Monday to heed the calls which the Opposition and several other groups have repeatedly made for the tax cap as well as the GCT rollback for light bills.

The Opposition is issuing a call to all consumers as well as all stakeholders in the transport and business sectors to be prepared to join the party in mounting appropriate protest action in the coming week, if the Government refuses to heed the call to reduce the burden and suffering being encountered by the people.

In a statement today, the Opposition repeated its call for the Government to take the specific steps to mitigate what the Opposition described as the runaway increases in petrol prices and the accompanying hardships being experienced by consumers and micro and small business owners in particular.

“The Opposition is alerting the nation to the fact that the taxes imposed on petroleum products represents approximately 30% of the price and constitute a significant component of the current drastic increases in the price of gasoline at the pump,” the Opposition statement said. It added that the continuing gas tax was fueling major knock-on increases in prices of a variety of other products including basic food items.

“With the major increases in the cost of petrol, it is clear that basic foods, and a range of other products and services, including bus and taxi fares, will soon spiral further out of control resulting in even more hardships for the Jamaican people,” the PNP noted.

The Opposition said it has also taken note of the severe financial difficulties being experienced by private motorists, haulage contractors as well as bus and taxi operators.

“If left unchecked the current fuel price increases have the potential to further drive the economy, now experiencing 14 consecutive quarters of decline, into deeper recession resulting in widespread business contraction,” the Opposition pointed out.

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