

GUNTINGAN BERITA

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Price of premium gasoline unchanged

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State-owned oil and gas firm Pertamina announced on Sunday the price of premium gasoline for the month of July would remain at Rp 1,750 per liter.

But the company said the price of other fuel products, except fuel oil, would be lowered.

Pertamina said in a statement that the price of automotive diesel for July would decline to Rp 1,790 per liter from Rp 1,900 in June; industrial diesel to Rp 1,760 from Rp 1,870; and kerosene to Rp 1,750 from Rp 1,900 per liter.

The price of fuel oil will increase to Rp 1,480 per liter.

Pertamina and the government set the price of fuel products each month based on price developments in Singapore.

A company official earlier said the price of most fuel products would be lowered in July due to declines in international oil prices in June and the strengthening of the rupiah against the U.S. dollar.

The company did not say why the price of premium gasoline would remain unchanged or why the price of fuel oil was being raised.

Separately, Pertamina told *The Jakarta Post* on Saturday it would look into a report by a special team set up to investigate fuel hoarding, that millions of liters of fuel products were lost during shipment.

"First we will do some calculations to see if the fuel losses were caused by criminals or natural causes," Ridwan Nyak Baik, Pertamina's spokesperson, said over the weekend.

The Fuel Hoarding Prevention Team recently revealed that 123.7 million liters of fuel went missing during shipment from October 2001 to March 2002.

Headed by Slamet Singgih, the team said as many as 119.7 million liters of fuel were lost during shipment aboard tankers, while 4.075 million liters disappeared during shipment by pipelines. Fuel shipments aboard trains had relatively insignificant losses.

The team, which investigated 10 depots, five installations and one transit station, said

the missing fuel caused the state potential losses of about Rp 199.4 billion.

Pertamina has 102 depots, five installations and six transit terminals.

Ridwan said that based on fuel supply and distribution guidelines, Pertamina expected a 2.1 percent loss of fuel during shipment.

"Fuel is a liquid that can evaporate at high temperatures," he said, adding that technical problems such as pipeline leakage could also contribute to losses.

However, he admitted that many people, including Pertamina employees, had been involved in fuel hoarding.

"If we discover such cases, we will immediately take legal action," he said.