

**Over 50k throng anti-GST May Day rally**  
**MalaysiaKini.com**  
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As the rally disperses peacefully at 4.30pm, an estimated 50,000 is reported to have gathered around the streets of Dataran Merdeka in today's May Day rally against the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Several minor scuffles started by fringe youth groups are reported in the following hour, but on the whole the rally has ended peacefully.

**LIVE REPORT:**

DAP's Superman leads 100 in campout

11.30pm: Over 100 protestors have stayed on at Dataran Merdeka after the rally, camping overnight at the junction of Jalan Raja, Jalan Tun Perak and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

Organised by DAP member Hew Kuan Yew fondly known as Superman, the group plans to stay until May 5 to commemorate the 13th general election when BN defeated Pakatan Rakyat in a controversy-ridden election.

Hew himself has been on a hunger strike since 8am and will continue till May 5, and has shaved his hair for the struggle. While a number have joined him to camp overnight on the street only a few are joining his hunger strike.

Himpunan Hijau chairperson Wong Tack and DAP Ketari state assemblyperson Lee Chin Chen are also camping overnight with Hew.

Food and mineral water is pouring in constantly as a show of support for the group.

"I think a protest as a political and social movement should make breakthroughs, and not be done according to standard operating procedures, otherwise the premier Najib Abdul Razak would not waver," says Hew.

He adds that Pakatan should come out with more hardhitting activities to commemorate GE13, in which he says they were deprived through illegal means of their right to rule the country.

Pakatan won the popular vote in the last general election but lost out on parliamentary majority to form government, through what they argue is malapportionment and gerrymandering of constituencies. PHOTOS

10.19: Government-run Bernama caps its series of negative reports with 'Anti-GST rally ends earlier, as some violate Peaceful Assembly Act' claiming the presence of children as a violation.

The report also claims the rally was "initially scheduled to end at 5pm but was ordered to end at 4.30pm" without elaborating.

It also admits the police crowd estimate after earlier mentioning in passing just "hundreds" of rallyers.

Reporting the police placing the number at 15,000, it delights in taking a swipe at "pro-opposition" Malaysiakini's estimate.

"While a pro-opposition news portal (Malaysiakini) reported some 50,000 people took part in the rally, Dang Wangi police chief ACP Zainuddin Ahmad immediately rubbished the claim and estimated it was only about 15,000 who joined in the protest," claims Bernama.

The report continues to highlight complaints of traffic jams, foiled travel plans and shopping for the day's holiday over the tens of thousands who have protested against what is called an unfair tax in the face of unimpeded government overspending and wastage.

Suhakam commends organisers, police

10.48pm: While today's rally in KL is notable for not seeing any arrests unlike in past years, a tweet claims eight Universiti Malaysia Sabah students have been detained in Penampang, Sabah for distributing anti-GST leaflets.

The incident follows similar arrests of students conducting a flashmob in Kota Kinabalu last weekend.

9.52pm: Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) chairperson Hasmy Agam commends the "peaceful conduct" of the rally, attributing it to "good cooperation among the rally organisers, participants and the authorities".

In a statement he adds "positive engagement" between the organisers and the police was praiseworthy.

Hasmy says he is "heartened by the positive improvement in the professionalism of the police and other enforcement authorities in handling public rallies" of late.

"The commission is pleased to observe that no Federal Reserve Unit (FRU) was being deployed during the rally and that major roads and public transport stations were not closed," says Hasmy.

During the massive Bersih 3.0 rally in 2012, the peaceful rally turned chaotic at its

conclusion when water cannons and tear gas were unleashed on the dispersing crowd, worsened by the participants being unable to leave the area as train stations were closed.

Meanwhile, Hasmy hopes "continued cooperation, understanding and respect in future peaceful rallies thereby ensuring that the people's fundamental right to freedom of assembly can be fully observed at all times".

8.44pm: Bernama reports the police saying no one was injured or stabbed at the rally as alleged online.

The picture allegedly sent on Papagomo's Twitter showing a participant lying on stretcher claiming he was stabbed and died was an old photograph, said Dang Wangi district police chief ACP Zainuddin Ahmad.

Overall the police report no major incident and that the city returned to normal at about 5.30pm.

5pm: As the rallyers disperse, tourists return to occupy Dataran Merdeka walking past nonchalantly, snapping away at the colonial buildings with the police still lined up at the side.

Several SAMM members refuse to leave the scene, but congregate at one end of the Dataran near Jalan Raja, singing songs.

Fringe groups cause late scuffle

4.55pm: As rally-goers begin to make their way home, a group of some 20 black-clad youth starts to march down Jalan Raja.

A scuffle then breaks out between the youth and media personnel trying to capture footage of their movement.

In the scuffle, one of the youth allegedly kicks a videographer from Xin Hua news agency while another youth even throws a wooden flag stick towards the cameramen.

However, the youth refuses to apologise. Eventually the 30-minute altercation is broken up when they are separated by PAS Unit Amal personnel and reporters.

It is unclear if these are the same youths involved in an earlier scuffle with Unit Amal members.

Anwar wraps rally

4:30pm - Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim takes to the stage, and true to his famed oratory skills, and works the crowd.

He shares a personal story about how his international friends urged him to stay back in London when he visited recently.

"But I told them no! I will come back to Malaysia to fight!" he says.

Anwar tells the crowd that they should not have to wait for the next general election for change but to press for reformation of the system now.

"We as the leaders, we want to listen to the voices among ourselves or the voices of the people? Definitely the voice of the people to stand up to fight against the oppressive economic system," he says.

Anwar also asks the crowd to salute Mohammad Sabu as the director of the protest and promises that assemblies like this will be repeated until the government stops its cruelty.

The rally then ends. As people begin to depart, PAS' Jabatan Amal members are seen helping to clear the rubbish, roping in children to help.

4.10pm: Dataran Merdeka - PAS central committee member Dzulkefly Ahmad takes the stage, saying: "With the GST, the government can earn RM20 billion - where is it from? From the sea? From the sky? From the trees?"

"Of course from the people."

4.05pm: Jalan Raja - A brief scuffle involving a group of black-clad youths breaks out here.

The exact reasons for the clash are unclear, but Unit Amal members move in quickly to isolate the group from the rest of the crowd.

The situation is defused five minutes later following talks between one Unit Amal member and one of the youth involved in the scuffle.

4.02pm: PAS deputy president Mohammad Sabu reappears on stage again, urging the crowd to remain until the event is over, even if it rains later.

He says the event will finish before the asar prayers for Muslims at 4.30pm.

"Don't go until the event is over ... Wait for Anwar Ibrahim to speak. This may be the last time we can hear his speech.

"The rain is just our gimmick. We feel so hot, so the rain will cool us down," he quips.

4pm: Twitterjaya - Gerakan Youth chief Tan Keng Liang tweets sarcastically that the crowd is mostly Malay and DAP is probably busy watching the movie Spiderman 2.

He claims 95percent of the rallyers are Malay. "Have you wondered why others do not

attend such rallies?"

"I am not racist. But it's sad to see Malay youth from PAS and PKR can easily be manipulated to demonstrate on the streets.

"Think why the others never attend such demonstrations," he tweets.

He later tweets, "I am sure DAP supporters are busy watching Spiderman 2 or out 'jalan jalan' at the shopping mall. No need to crawl (merangkak) on the streets and demonstrate on the roadside," he says.

3:30pm: PAS deputy president Mohamad Sabu slams the introduction of GST by the BN government and comments on the missing MAS flight MH370.

He says the reason the government wants to implement GST because it cannot tackle the issue of corruption, leakages and abuse of power.

"Don't let your failures of government cause the people to be punished. We are truly suffering. Enough of this now," he says.

"Under their administration, not only (Mongolian interpreter) Altantunya Shaariibuu went missing, the jetplane has also gone missing, even the flight is also missing.

"This shows the failure of governance in Malaysia," he says.

3:23pm: Youth activist Adam Adli gets rousing support as he goes up to speak from the lorry. The sky turns dark as grey clouds gather, threatening rain.

May 1, he says, will be henceforth remembered for today's rally as such a thing was never allowed at Dataran Merdeka before and so, is a victory for the labour and working class.

"The Malaysia people succeeded in entering Dataran Merdeka, which before this was only entered by the FRU (Federal Reserve Unit) brothers in the red hats," he says.

"We will not lose spirit, we will not concede... The Malays, Chinese and Indian are fed up with the government's actions," he says.

"We did not come here to sit down or to take some nice pictures for Facebook alone right?

"This is a show of force to the government that the rakyat still have the power.

"The rain is coming. If before it was chemical rain from FRU, this is good rain...

"We are giving a warning to the government: We are not afraid of you - we can bring you down even without waiting for an election."

Police praised for assisting rally

3.15pm: Lawyers For Liberty (LFL) commends the police for facilitating a people's assembly.

"So far so good, the police are facilitating the May Day anti-GST rally - this should be the norm rather than exception," reads one tweet.

"What a rare sight! The police stopping traffic for the rakyat! Syabas (congratulations) for facilitating the right to assembly," reads another LFL tweet.

3.15pm: There are no reports of any casualties so far, says Gengta Tan, a member of the medical team at the rally.

He says there is a team of 37 doctors and 20 nurses, paramedics and emergency responders ready to act should there be any injuries.

They also have 11 automatic external defibrillators (for reviving heart attack patients) and seven ambulances on standby.

"If anything happens here, it will be sent to the nearest hospital, which is Hospital Kuala Lumpur or Tong Shin Hospital," he told Malaysiakini.

3.10pm: A group of Chinese youths, who declare themselves as homosexuals, are also participating in the rally. The youths hold placards in Chinese reading, "We are homosexual, we are against GST" and "It doesn't matter who I sleep with, but I am against GST".

Azmin: Don't touch Anwar

3:08pm: PKR deputy president Azmin Ali rallies the crowd in front of him, mostly PAS supporters, to reject GST. He also pleads for justice for Anwar in his fiery speech.

He says the rally today in front of the former court complex is where the then deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim was sentenced to jail in 1998.

"Today, (Prime Minister) Najib Abdul Razak wants to repeat the same action and same punishment.

"We want to remind the prime minister, don't you dare to oppress the people and Anwar Ibrahim.

Please don't touch Anwar Ibrahim. The Malaysian people will not allow Anwar to get into jail, even one second," he said.

"Umno is afraid of Anwar. If the court jails him, we must go down to the streets...to warn

the judges not to be the servants of a cruel regime."

Azmin further claims that while GST will bring in a revenue of RM3.8billion, but "crony companies" will be exempted of tax amounting to RM3.1bill.

3pm: PAS vice-president Mahfuz Omar says today's assembly can be viewed as a tourism event as it is being carried out in front of the Tourism and Culture Ministry building.

"Hence, we want such assemblies to be held every year, if the government permits. We want tourism products, like this people's gathering, to bring revenue to the country," he says.

He also hopes that the gathering can impart the message to the government that the rakyat rejects GST.

"If Dewan Negara has yet to approve it, then it is not too late to reject GST, or for the government to realise the people's rejection of it, hence, it is only right they withdraw the Act."

25,000 crowd converges on Dataran

2:40pm: Dataran Merdeka - As the marchers from various points converge here the crowds totaling at least 25,000 surge around the iconic square in a sea of people pressed against one another and greeting one another.

From Masjid Negara the rallyers stretching from the mosque to the Dataran includes PAS Youth secretary Mohd Nasaie Ismail.

He shouts "Merdeka (Independence)" and motions the crowd to proceed into the Dataran.

Elsewhere a PAS leader with a loudhailer shouts, "Merdeka from who? Merdeka from the BN! We are not waiting for President Obama to come down...we are waiting for Najib to come down from power,"

The crowd is then urged to sit down.

2:30pm: KLCC - The roads along Dataran Merdeka are packed with rallyers from various directions.

The crowd at KLCC has also started marching there. PSM secretary general S Arutchelvan leads the group and chants "Rise, rise, rise people!"

Also spotted here are former Bersih chief S Ambiga and Suaram adviser Kua Kia Soong.

Public buses are seen trapped behind the procession.

Gathered rallyers being march

2.20pm: Jalan Tun Perak - The crowd that had set off from Dataran Maybank are now slowly entering Jalan Raja.

Along the way, some intersections have been closed to traffic by the police to allow the crowd to pass, while others were closed by Unit Amal personnel.

The atmosphere is carnival-like with trumpets blowing in every direction while crowds chant slogans such as "Stop GST" and "Reformasi".

The presence of large crowds at intersections have also triggered an automated warning systems built there.

"You are obstructing traffic. Please remove your vehicle from the yellow box," an artificial voice announces, but there are only people there, who completely ignore it.

About 10 minutes later, PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim arrives at the intersection of Jalan Tun Perak and Jalan Raja, prompting crowds to swarm around him.

2.25pm: The crowds gathered in the city at the various points are now estimated at 10,000 in total.

2.16pm: Masjid Negara - PAS vice president Datuk Mahfuz Omar and Pakatan heads lead over 5,000 to march from towards Dataran while Unit Amal controls the crowd.

Along the way they chant, "Down with BN, down with GST".

2.16pm: Dataran Merdeka - Police hold the crowds at both ends of Dataran Merdeka, keeping the 6-lane street across Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad empty.

Thousands have assembled at both ends, eager to occupy the space, shouting and cheering. A helicopter is seen circling above.

Although the participants have pass through the blockade, they are stopped by PAS Unit Amal at the junction between Jalan Raja and Jalan Mahkamah Persekutuan.

"Let's do it in stages," a Unit Amal personnel tells Malaysiakini referring to how the participants will eventually occupy the whole Jalan Raja.

They are waiting for participants from other gathering points to reach this final destination of the rally.

There are over one hundred police personnel present but they have done nothing to stop the crowd.

Meanwhile, Suhakam commissioner James Nayagam is happy that the rally is peaceful so far.

"This is what we encourage, this is freedom of assembly," he says when interviewed by reporters at the sidelines of Dataran Merdeka.

2pm: Dataran Merdeka - A Penangite in a wheelchair, Mohd Hafiz, 35, rolls in with the crowd to fight GST and support hudud.

"The rising cost of living is killing me," he tells Malaysiakini.

Hafiz, paralysed since he was two years old, has come down from Penang with the help of two good friends. He is resting under a tree.

2pm: KLCC Jalan Ampang entrance - The crowd listens to speeches from several NGO representatives such as student leader Mohd Bukhairy Sufian and anti-Lynas activist Wong Tack.

KLCC security guard the mall entrance and watch the proceedings and are seen preventing anyone with anti-GST headbands or flags from entering.

'GST rammed through Parliament'

1.45pm: Masjid Negara - After zohor prayers thousands listen to speeches by Pakatan Rakyat leaders like Hatta Ramli, Saifuddin Nasution, Khalid Samad, Suhaizan Kaiat, Anuar Tahir.

They are speaking from a lorry prepared by PAS. The crowd here estimates 5,000.

PAS Youth election director Mohd Sani Hamzan warns if the government implements GST and signs the TPPA, the country will finish off BN.

"Wait for the moment of BN's demise in GE14," he says, to chants of "Down with BN, reject BN!"

Hatta in his speech says Pakatan has continuously argued against GST but it is still being implemented.

"The (parliamentary) debates of PAS presidant Hadi Awang, PKR chief Anwar Ibrahim and DAP parliamentary leder Lim Kit Siang, all these have completely been ignored and they still passed the GST without considering the hardships of the people," he says.

"Rubber prices are down, and the government doesn't take notice. The people are facing hardship, and we are asking them not to implement GST," he adds.

He calls on the people to continue to pressure the government so it knows it is unpopular

and would hopefully put off the tax.

"This is a crucial rally, it's not a waste of time," he stresses, to chants of "Reject GST" and "Down with Najib".

He reminds the people how the government has used the Internal Security Act against the people but it was eventually abolished after repeated rallies from the people to push for change.

"It was eventually eliminated by the power of the people, the power of hope," he says.

2.05pm Dataran Maybank - In a sea of red, some 3,000 protestors begin their march towards Dataran Merdeka.

In the lead are several lines of Unit Amal personnel locking arms to form a human wall, while others divert traffic.

2.00pm Dataran Merdeka - It's time for the actual event to start, and around 3,000 people, mostly dressed in red, start entering Jalan Raja.

Earlier, the crowd gathers and listen to Uncle Saw from Pandan, reciting Malay pantun fluently. Videos of the elderly Chinese man had previously gone viral on Facebook. He is here rapping about a corrupt government that doesn't care about the people's woes.

1.35 pm: KLCC Jalan Ampang entrance - Participants are sitting around the entrance and Chegubard and PSM central committee member Choo Choon Kai lead them in several songs while they wait to march.

1.30pm Dataran Maybank - The crowd here has grown to about 1,000, cramming on the narrow sidewalks and staircases to Maybank's office.

Some of the crowd has also spilled over to the curb across the road, but that too quickly becomes crowded.

Among the leaders sighted here are PKR vice president Tian Chua and former DAP election publicity chief Hew Kuan Yau.

Hew, sometimes known by his moniker 'Superman' is planning to stay at Dataran Merdeka overnight in protest of the tax.

Meanwhile, protesters are displaying anti-GST placards at passing motorists and some of them honk back in support, including an LRT train traveling on the nearby flyover. Chants of Reformasi can be heard at a distance.

Unit Amal personnel are regulating the traffic to ensure that it flows smoothly and that protestors don't stray too far onto the road.

1:20pm: Dataran Merdeka - The marching comes to a halt after a brief 10 minute walk from Sogo as they arrive. To avoid the scorching sun, they crowd around sheltered areas, under big trees and traffic dividers under the LRT tracks waiting for more to arrive, watching traffic go by.

Only Unit Amal members dressed in vermilion long-sleeved shirts and dark pants take advantage of the break to perform their afternoon prayers, prostrating and standing in orderly lines.

They also form a blockade to prevent people from entering Jalan Raja ahead of the event starting at 2pm.

1.17pm Dataran Merdeka - The 500-strong crowd has occupied the junction of Jalan Parlimen and Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

They are chanting slogans such as, "Long live the people", "Reject GST" and "Reformasi".

The traffic police are helping with the traffic. Jalan Raja, the rally's final destination remains closed.

1.15 pm: KLCC Jalan Ampang entrance - The businessman embroiled in the National Feedlot Corporation issue Shamsubahrin Ismail is seen controlling traffic at his rented cars business.

He says he is there to ensure his operations are smooth.

"The objective of this rally is good, and I see so far that it is peaceful," he tells Malaysiakini when met.

PAS: Fake hudud stickers 'provocation'

1.15 pm: Masjid Negara - A Unit Amal member from PAS Hulu Langat tells the crowd not to believe fake stickers that say 'Hudud for all, Muslim and non-Muslim' calling it provocation.

He says it is an act by irresponsible parties and not the organisers.

"It is not by us. This is to provoke our peaceful gathering," he says, adding PAS officials have found "many" of such fake stickers.

He shows the sticker to the media.

A participant from Penang meanwhile has found a sticker earlier at Kota Raya that says 'Hudud is barbaric' illustrated with a caricature of three hooded men whipping a character bearing the DAP logo.

"This is terrible, because today we are protesting GST. This is provocation.

"They just want to make us quarrel amongst ourselves," says the participant who didn't want to be named.

1.12pm: Dataran Merdeka - A government servant tells Malaysiakini he is determined to participate in the rally.

The father of three, who only wants to be known as Hisham, is here with his entire family all dressed in red.

They came down from Perlis yesterday.

"This is not a matter of being a government servant. Government servants are also affected by GST.

"If only my wife and I participate in this event, then in the future our kids will suspect us of supporting GST.

"If we only tell them about this in future, they would not be able to witness this. So we want to give them a chance to remember this," he tells Malaysiakini.

1:05 pm: Sogo - About 2,000 gathered start marching into the street, heading south towards Dataran Merdeka along Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

They occupy the street in both directions.

1pm: KLCC - About 300 are gathered near the Coach boutique on the Jln Ampang side, dressed in red.

Spotted in black Solidariti Anak Muda Malaysia (Samm) gear is their leader Chegubard along with former Kota Damansara assemblyperson Nasir Hashim.

1pm: Sogo - There is little space left. Almost every square metre of the entire 100 metre pavement outside the shopping centre is now taken over by standing protestors.

Many spill onto the other side of the street.

The crowd is chanting and cheering, "Reformasi," and "Tolak GST," in unison and vuvuzelas are blasting away.

12:45 pm: Sogo - Three busloads of young PAS supporters from Kuala Terengganu have come to protest the GST.

About 20 of them are here, holding out flags and banners and wearing green headbands. Some wear white songkoks. They are all from one kampung, Batu Enam in Kuala

Terengganu. The protestors say they want to ask PM Najib Razak's government, "Why are you burdening us?"

12:30pm: The crowd is swelling outside Sogo, vuvuzelas consistently blasting away. From across the street, it looks like it is bleeding red on the pavements.

Traffic is slow but moving, mostly because cars are slowing down to look at the activity.

A group of friends from Setiawan don hard hats to celebrate Labour Day and protest. They are cheerful.

"We hate GST. If you owe money, pay your own debts - why burden the rakyat?" one of the Perakians ask the government.

12.37pm: Dataran Merdeka - Two Chinese tourist when met say they are not worried at the sight of over one hundred police personnel surrounding Dataran Merdeka.

The first time visitors remain relaxed, and one who wants to remain anonymous tells Malaysiakini the rally shows the government is willing to listen to the people.

"We are not really shocked or worried, the atmosphere is somehow very relaxed.

"This is a very rare sight in China," she says.

Although the iconic square is sealed off, police still allow the tourists to pass through the blockade and they proceed to take photos at the tourist spot.

Unit Amal gets ready

12.30pm: Dataran Maybank - A group of about 50 Unit Amal personnel listen intently as their officers give a briefing on the route and on crowd management.

"Do not do anything unless ordered otherwise, clear? Takbir!" the officer says before the group disperses into smaller groups.

12pm: Penang - The event comes to a close after a few speakers address workers' issues on stage and the organisers express their warm gratitude to those present and to the police for their cooperation. The crowd of about 300 disperses peacefully

12pm: Dataran Maybank - Over 200 gather here, some with banners 'GST burdens the rakyat', 'How are the rakyat expected to live?' and 'Suffer Suffer Suffer'.

About 50 PAS' Unit Amal are here but not political leaders are seen yet. About 20 police personnel are present.

KLCC - Some participants are hanging out at the fountain at the park, and five metres away

several uniformed police officers without badges are spotted.

11.30am: Dataran DBKL near Dataran Merdeka - The area is cordoned off by plastic dividers and uniformed DBKL personnel are guarding the perimeter.

12pm: Dataran Merdeka - As the start of the event approaches the situation remains calm. Over a one hundred gather around Jalan Parlimen around the independent square.

However, those present are still resting and have not started chanting or raising placards. The field of Dataran Merdeka is completely sealed off.

Meanwhile, there are over a hundred people gathered at Masjid Jamek LRT station and some hawkers are there selling food and beverages and red T-shirts.

Traders do roaring business

11:50am: Sogo - Numbers grow as about 500 flood the Sogo shopping centre's entrance.

PAS leaders Hatta Ramli and Kamaruddin Jaafar are spotted and many go up to take photos with them.

As people crowd around the duo Sog's security asks participants not to obstruct the entrance and place a barrier.

About 10 uniformed police officers are seen here.

Meanwhile The Loaf, an upscale bakery at Sogo's entrance is doing brisk business as protestors wearing protest T-shirts sip on designer coffee while watching the crowd swell on the curb outside.

Many patrons are spotted snapping photographs with their smartphones and tablets as protestors outside unfurl banners and start chanting slogans on the roadside.

11.30am Masjid Negara - PAS Kedah information chief Sanusi Mohd Noor says that the government must take note of the people's protest.

"The government must not be deaf. There will be more protests if the government refuses to listen," he warns.

11.25am KLCC - About a dozen or so people in red shirts have gathered at the KLCC park while some 100 police personnel are stationed nearby.

11.15am: Penang - Representatives from Suaram Penang branch and university students stage a series of performances to bring home the anti GST message and illustrate the hardship felt by workers.

They start with a poem "Apa Guna" composed by Wiji Thukul, follow by a peasant song "Buruh Tani".

Lastly, a mini play is staged to explain how GST is a tool to benefit the richest 1 percent in the country.

11:15am: Sogo Shopping Centre - Peddlers line the streets, hawking to those walking past and to about 200 protestors gathered.

Among various red-themed items on sale are vuvuzelas, printed head and arm bands, Bersih yellow T-shirts, 'anonymous' masks, and making a debut at this rally is the skeletal mask.

The mask goes for RM10 each and RM15 for two. Vendors say it's useful for those who wish to stay anonymous.

When asked if there is any deeper meaning to the skeletal design, they remarked that they are just trying to make a quick buck.

11.19am: Dataran Merdeka - Although the organisers had reached a consensus after several rounds of meetings with the police for permission to gather at Jalan Raja, the authorities have nevertheless sealed the particular road.

Vehicles are not allowed to pass through the road, which is between Dataran Merdeka field and Sultan Abdul Samad building.

However, civilians are still allowed to pass through the blockade where more than one hundred people are present, resting at several spots while waiting for the actual event to begin.

Heavy police presence is spotted at the road but there is no sign of the FRU.

11am: The entrance to Masjid Negara has been closed to traffic. There are three traffic policemen at the entrance. Rally participants are beginning to gather outside the mosque.

Low Penang turnout, bad press blamed

10.40am: Penang - MTUC Penang division chairman S Ravindran blames the current low turnout so far on the several news dailies casting a negative image on the rally by claiming it is illegal.

Penang police initially deemed the May 1 rally illegal several days ago but eventually gave the green light to the organisers yesterday.

10:40am: Since 9am, participants, clad in red, have been gathering at the Sogo shopping complex. There are four Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) enforcement officers in the vicinity

whereas Sogo has stationed six security personnel at the main entrance of the mall.

10.25am: In Penang, some 300 people have gathered at the junction of Jalan Siram and Jalan Telaga Air, Butterworth. Carrying placards and MTUC flags, they are chanting 'Long Live Workers'.

10.20am: Penang - Pakatan lawmakers including Penang Deputy CM II P Ramasamy, exco member Lim Hock Seng, Machang Bubuk Adun Lee Khai Loon and Kedah Kota Darulaman Adun Teoh Boon Kok are present to show their support and solidarity.

10.20am: There is a festive air near Masjid Negara as scores of rally participants gather. Participants have been arriving since 5am and there are also shops selling anti-GST merchandise, including red t-shirts.

9.30am: All Road Transport Department (RTD) staff are warned not to participate in the rally.

"If any staff member is found involved in the illegal rally, stern action will be taken ...," the RTD said in its official Facebook posting at 8.10pm last night.

It also cites the civil service code of conduct.

Despite the RTD's assertions, the rally is not illegal as it is allowed by police under the Peaceful Assembly Act 2012.

The hundreds of comments on the post mostly comprise of those lambasting RTD for being an apple polisher.

"The more you issue those warnings, the more RTD staff will join the rally," one Facebook user said.

10.40am: Kuala Lumpur - More than 10,000 are expected to gather for the first major protest of 2014 as a coalition of 89 NGOs organise the May Day rally to campaign against the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak announced in his 2014 budget speech last October that GST will take effect in April 2015. It has sparked concerns that prices of goods will soar and add to the burden of the average Malaysian household.

The rally, coinciding with Labour Day celebrations worldwide, is themed "Anti GST- Until it is dropped" and is expected to be attended by opposition leaders including Anwar Ibrahim.

Participants will gather at four points- KLCC, Sogo, Dataran Maybank, Jalan Raja Laut before marching to Jalan Raja, the road adjacent to Dataran Merdeka for the rally, scheduled between 2pm to 5pm.

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