

**PM: Global experts to debunk 'twisted' GST facts**  
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Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak has slammed "irresponsible" quarters for allegedly "twisting" facts about the goods and services tax (GST).

Presenting the 2013 National Transformation Plan report, Najib said that the government will now counter this by inviting international experts to Malaysia to set the record straight.

"What is important is that we are endeavouring to give briefings because the GST had been manipulated and the facts had been turned around by irresponsible groups.

"In response, I have directed the Finance Ministry to spread the actual facts to the grassroots by having more seminars, by calling the various groups, especially from the countries that had been successful in the GST, so that the people received the correct understanding," he said.

While he did not explicitly mention this, Najib's remark could be in reference to the May 1 mammoth rally against the GST which attracted 50,000 people in Kuala Lumpur.

The rally was spearheaded by opposition parties and NGOs.

Najib also reassured Malaysians that the GST will not unnecessarily burden them as basic essentials are exempted.

He reiterated that the GST, which broadens Malaysia's tax base, is crucial to strengthen the Malaysian economy in the long run.

"Nonetheless, have no fear, I always listen to the woes and feedback as well as complaints on the decision to implement the GST," he said.

"Nevermind what the opposition says, they will find 1000 ways to malign us.

"(We) will continue to thread a million paths to ensure prosperity for all."

He added that the government will not take populist measures or make promises it cannot keep.

The government cares

The PM also assured the rakyat that the subsidy rationalisation programme is meant to

ensure a more targeted and equitable policy, and add to the rakyat's woes.

As proof that the government cares, he said 40 Kedai Rakyat 1Malaysia (Kr1m) discount stores were opened last year under the transformation programme.

To date there are 125 Kr1m shops nationwide.

"I am certain that this will reduce the burden of individuals and traders," he said.

Besides that, he said, programmes like 1Azam, which provides financial aid to struggling small traders has improved the livelihoods of the lower income.

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