

Putrajaya 'lying' about GST, say groups

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The federal government has been branded as a "liar" over claims that it has been making about the impending goods and services tax (GST).

A coalition of NGOs against the new tax system said the federal government has been misinforming the people about the actual impact of GST.

Parti Sosialis Malaysia (PSM) exco member and Sungai Siput MP Dr Michael Jeyakumar said the government must show the calculations on which it is basing the claims.

"The government is saying that GST is a progressive tax, but we want to see the module (of the calculation) it's based on, to say that it will only be RM46.94 of tax for a household spending RM2,000 a month," said Jeyakumar (right).

"If you're claiming that as though it's true, you are lying to the public," he added.

He was speaking at a gathering on the new tax, held near the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) today, in conjunction with a three day government expo on GST at the KLCC.

Jeyakumar was referring to a report published in The Star, in which Finance Ministry under-secretary in the tax division, Siti Halimah Ismail, claimed that the GST will benefit the poor.

Jeyakumar also said that the module should have been published in the ministry's website.

Also part of the anti-GST coalition are Jaringan Rakyat Tertindas (Jerit), PSM, the National Union for Bank Employees (Nube). There were also representatives from Solidariti Mahasiswa Malaysia (SMM).

Open debate

Jeyakumar, who had been actively campaigning against the GST, also challenged the government to an open debate over the issue and said that the NGOs are prepared to bring their own expert to counter the government's claims.

NUBE representative A Karuna (left) told reporters that the ministry has not educated the general public on how GST would affect them.

"They have not provided an "education module" for the ordinary man on the streets," she said.

She stressed that the implementation of GST should be done in stages.

“There has to be a transition period, a clear interpretation of the taxes for the people to understand the impact of GST,” she stressed.

Even though authorities blocked doors leading into the convention centre, about 30 representatives from the anti-GST coalition today gave out leaflets around KLCC that outlined the five reasons for people to oppose GST.

GST will be implemented in April next year.

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