

Defer GST, Ku Li tells 'uncaring' leaders

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Expressing fear over the country's economic outlook, Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has urged the government to postpone the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Gua Musang MP said he was "afraid" for the economy and warned that the government is not "listening" to the concerns of the people.

"There is so much criticism in Parliament and also from the public through social media, but government leaders are completely deaf to the cracks in our economy with an attitude of not caring.

"The budget every year seems to belittle a problem that needs urgent attention," he said.

The former finance minister, affectionately known as Ku Li, expressed his views in a six-page letter on Budget 2015, which was distributed to all lawmakers in Parliament.

He explained that he chose to write his views in a letter to stress how critical is the problem they are facing.

He said apart from curbing corruption, the government must also be aware of other elements that could betray the country's economy, and this included a slew of legislation such as the Official Secrets Act and the Universities and University Colleges Act.

"We have to repair the good name of the courts and enforcement agencies, including the independence of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC)," he added.

He further pointed out how the country's economic perspective showed how the country is heading towards the "wrong way".

"If this is not curbed, we will be stuck in a crisis that will be hard to handle. This will only burden the rakyat and will thus affect the country's safety and harmony," he said.

Signals ignored

As reported in the 2015 economic report where there are downside risks to the gross domestic product (GDP) growth, he said it seemed as if the government had ignored signals of the world's changing economy after the subprime crisis in 2008.

Razaleigh also believes that the government's deficit and total national debt were, in part, due to the dishing out of the 1Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), salaries for the public sector, as well as subsidies and pensions.

“Such spending does not help in strengthening the growth of the future economy.

“I think it is better that such allocation is used to expand the agriculture sector to ensure food security as well as to curb the outflow of foreign exchange through food imports,” he said.

Commenting on the rising cost of living, he said efforts to “liberalise” the economy should be continued.

Razaleigh also opined that inequality in the distribution of political benefits was also a problem which affects the country’s economy.

“It causes dissatisfaction within the community and destroys the unity we have been building for years,” he explained.

In order to solve the country’s economic problems, bold ideas are needed and they must be implemented within the next 10 years, said the 10-term MP.

“The rakyat need a bold transformation brought about by reliable leaders who are sensitive to the needs of the rakyat,” he said.