

GST revenue not to pay debts, says minister

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Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan has denied that proceeds from the Goods and Services Tax (GST), which will be implemented on April 1, will be used to pay the government's debts.

The tax collection, he said, would be returned to the people for their own benefit.

"The GST collection will go into a consolidated fund whereby it will be returned to the people for the good of the people," he told reporters at Parliament's lobby today.

Ahmad was commenting on the speech by Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah (BN-Gua Musang) during the debate on the motion of thanks for the royal address in the Dewan Rakyat today.

Tengku Razaleigh had questioned the purpose of the tax, saying it was being introduced at a time when the economy was unpredictable.

The veteran member of Parliament also repeated his call that the GST be postponed so as to lighten the financial burden of the people.

Meanwhile, commenting on Tengku Razaleigh's call that all MPs declare their assets and liabilities, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Shahidan said all BN MPs had already done so to Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak.

"We have already declared our assets...that is our practice and we declared them earlier to the Prime Minister," he said.

In his speech, Tengku Razaleigh had also urged all cabinet members, MPs and public and private sector officials who had the power to make decisions to declare their assets and liabilities periodically and for that information to be kept with an independent body set up under an Act of Parliament.

The proposal, he said, would be a step to overcome issues relating to a conflict of interest.

- Bernama