

## **Anti-GST lot vows 11th hour 'radical delay tactics'**

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**By Zikri Kamarulzaman**

With the clock ticking faster to the April 1 implementation of the goods and services tax, anti-GST activists say they will employ "radical" tactics to stop the new tax.

The GST, which replaces the sales tax, will be introduced in less than a fortnight, at a rate of six percent.

"The Anti-GST Coalition has some radical programmes in the next few days, and we hope the (Pakatan Rakyat) MPs will be brave enough to join us," PSM secretary-general S Arutchelvan told a GST forum at @Kini in Petaling Jaya last night.

However, Arutchelvan (right) declined to divulge details of his programme when asked by Malaysiakini.

Equally secretive was DAP's Klang MP Charles Santiago, who said Pakatan would employ delay tactics to stall the tax.

Announcing this at the forum, Charles said the initiative would be launched in the next few days, to throw a spanner into the GST move.

"In the next couple of days, you will see something happen... (but) we're still working it out, so you will just have to be patient," he said.

Charles also said that while time is short, there is a chance Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak may suddenly realise that the GST implementation should be postponed.

"Najib can wake up the day before and say, 'We won't implement GST.' - If we have to put 200,000 people in front of Putrajaya, then that's what we will do," he said.

### **Malaysia 'not ready yet' for GST**

He later clarified that Pakatan is not organising a march, like the May Day rally last year that saw about 50,000 people throng downtown Kuala Lumpur to protest the GST, but to no avail.

Opponents of the tax claim it will burden the lower- to lower middle-income groups, and add to household debt.

Others say Malaysia is not yet ready to implement GST, as income levels are too low.

"GST is a big deal for us in Malaysia, because our wages, which generate the household income, are among the lowest among middle-income countries.

"According to EPF statistics... 96 percent of Malaysian households earn below RM6,000 a month," advocacy NGO Blindspot co-founder Azlan Awang (right) told the forum.

The forum was initially advertised as a debate between the Anti-GST Coalition and ministers from the the Finance Ministry and the Domestic Trade, Cooperative and Consumerism Ministry.

However, the ministers did not turn up, leaving the speakers to address about 30 people in the audience, who were mostly supporters of PSM and who have been actively campaigning against the GST for several years.

Other speakers at the forum were PSM's Sungai Siput MP Dr Michael Jeyakumar Devaraj and PAS central committee member Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad.

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