

Minister: 23k GST complaints yesterday

MalaysiaKini.com

Apr 2, 2015

By Zikri Kamarulzaman

The government seems to be getting conflicting reports about the number of complaints over the goods and services tax (GST) which came into effect yesterday.

Domestic Trade, Cooperatives, and Consumerism Minister Hasan Malek said over 23,000 complaints about the GST were filed via the MyKira GST application yesterday.

This contradicts a statement made by Deputy Finance Minister Ahmad Maslan that there were only 800 complaints about the GST yesterday.

"23,871 complaints were made via MyKira GST yesterday. Of this number, 8,618 complaints were about prices that were out of the (acceptable profit) margin," Hasan told reporters at a press conference at Kuala Lumpur's Midvalley Megamall today.

Hasan's ministry had developed the MyKira GST app to enable users to check the prices of over 10,000 items.

"If the item is priced to make excessive profit, (after you key it in the app), it will give you a thumbs down.

"If you get a thumbs down, you can immediately make a complaint to the ministry, 24/7," he said, explaining how the app works.

Hasan said the phone lines at the ministry's GST hotline service has been ringing non-stop, but the majority of complaints have been dealt with.

"Someone complained to me (the hotline centre) was like Bursa Saham (the Stock Exchange).

"Alhamdulillah, the ministry has been able to answer all those calls and I understand that most of the complaints have been answered properly," he said.

The minister added, 77,700 business premises were inspected yesterday and most traders have complied with the implementation of the GST.

Those who are profiteering or evading taxes, he said, will be punished, although it will take some time.

"When it comes to profit margin, we need time. We need to investigate and this takes time...so don't accuse the ministry of being slow to act. Usually, we will settle it within 30 days, " he said.

Claims M'sia not ready is 'nonsense'

Hasan also dismissed criticism of GST hiccups yesterday as proof that Malaysia is not ready for the new tax.

"The whole world knows Malaysia will implement GST on April 1. So i deny those made-up stories which insinuate that we are not ready. It's all nonsense," he said.

Earlier, the minister did a walkabout in the mall to monitor the implementation of GST as part of 'Ops Catut'.

Ops Catut is to monitor the price of goods to ensure traders do not increase prices unreasonably following the implementation of the consumption tax.

During the minister's round, he spoke with two foreigners, one from China and one from Bangladesh, who were happy with the prices at a hypermarket in the mall.

A Malaysian customer however reacted negatively when Hasan asked if the price of her groceries were normal.

"If it's not normal, will the government help us?" asked the middle-aged woman.

The minister did not respond, and later tried to make small talk by asking her where she stayed, before continuing with his inspection.