

**GST bill still on the agenda**  
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**S Pathmawathy**

The Dewan Rakyat has not been officially notified of the government's decision to put off the second reading of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Bill.

Deputy speaker Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar said the item will remain in the Order Paper until an official is made for its withdrawal.

Wan Junaidi said this after Kota Raja PAS MP Siti Mariah Mahmud pointed out that the GST bill is still up for debate.

Technically, this means that the government can still put up the Bill before second reading during the current sitting.

Last Saturday, Second Finance Minister Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah had announced that the second reading would be postponed while the government seeks more feedback on the new tax.

The proposed bill aimed at widening the tax base and reducing the country's deficit, once passed scheduled to be enforced in the third-quarter of next year.

Malaysia's budget deficit hit a 20 year high of 7.4 percent of gross domestic product in 2009.

The opposition have denounced the bill, arguing that the new tax will burden the poor.

'Improper practice'

Veteran opposition parliamentarian Lim Kit Siang slammed the government for maintaining the bill in the order paper, adding that it is not a common practice.

"It is improper and it clearly show that the government is out of sync. There is no coordination between the left and right," said Lim.

Once the government has made a decision to defer the bill, they should have informed Parliament, he added.

"I suspect the cabinet has not put it's stamp on the decision and they probably only deferred it to stop the protest that was suppose to take place on Monday," said Lim.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz, however said there is "no harm" so the bill will remain on the order paper.

"The government has made its decision to delay the bill... there is nothing (more) to it being in the order paper," said Nazri when met.