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# No plan to raise GST, says Najib

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**PEOPLE'S WELFARE:**  
Matter not even brought up in meetings, says PM

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**THE** government will not consider raising the Goods and Services Tax (GST) in the 2016 Budget adjustment, even if oil prices continue to slip.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak gave the assurance yesterday after chairing meetings with economists, analysts, captains of industry and the Special Economic Committee.

He said the matter was not even raised in the meetings.

"We do not envision any increase in GST. The people's welfare and ability to deal with increases at this stage must be taken into account."

Present was Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Wahid Omar.

Najib said it would be hard for the people to absorb an increase in GST in the current climate.

He said adjustments to the 2016 Budget would be done to an extent that was acceptable to the market and people.

"The focus of the recalibrated budget will be on matters that can be perceived positively by the market and how to manage the people's expectations."

He said the meetings were called to ensure there was holistic engagement with various parties to get their input for the budget adjustment.

"We deliberated on numerous

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matters, from identifying new priorities, and fiscal and monetary policies; optimising spending, such as in operations and development; to reaping maximum effectiveness from the total expenditure."

He said issues, including the cost of living, unemployment, training, commodities and oil prices, were raised.

Attendees responded positively to

the decision to recalibrate the budget, and the government's measures to ensure the economy remained vibrant and resilient.

"We do not want situations to overtake us. Steps are being taken to dampen the negative impact on the economy and people's welfare," said Najib.

He said many suggestions were given in the meetings, to be revealed only on Jan 28 during the tabling of the recalibrated budget, adding that he would get input from consumer groups and government-linked companies.

"Measures that will be adopted must take into account the impact on growth, employment, inflation and cost of living. We must consider the consequences of our actions in advance."

In his blog yesterday, Najib urged the people not to be influenced by

politically motivated allegations about the country's economy, which hid the truth. He said the volatility of the global economy was beyond the government's control.

Najib said the government would give extra attention to the nation's economy in view of existing challenges, including the collapse in oil prices that had cost the country more than RM30 billion in revenue.

To cushion the reduction in oil revenue, he said, the nation had to shift to other resources.

"It is a bitter phenomenon for Malaysia," he said, urging the public and private sectors to re-evaluate their operations' efficiency and workers' contributions.

"We need to be more creative and innovative to optimise operating costs and maximise productivity."

**Additional reporting by Hashini Kavishtri Kannan**

**PM: Verify news first**

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak has urged Muslims to verify information or news before spreading it to others, to prevent slander.

"The khatib who delivered the Friday sermon spoke on the need to check on the legitimacy of any news before it is spread. This is to prevent slander," Najib wrote on Facebook last night.

He cited verses from *Surah Al-Hujurat*, which reminded Muslims to investigate the validity of any messages.