

PM: No plan to bring back GST

Govt will reduce subsidies for those in the affluent group instead

KUALA LUMPUR: There are no plans to reintroduce the Goods and Services Tax (GST), says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"We have no plans to bring back the GST or broad-based consumption tax.

"What we will do is tighten the reduction of subsidies for those in the affluent group," the Prime Minister said when answering a supplementary question raised by Wong Kah Woh (PH-Taiping) in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Wong asked if there would be any consumption tax increases for the rakyat to address the nation's rising debts.

Anwar said the government would continue to reduce the nation's liabilities by lowering subsidies.

He cited the recent example where electricity tariffs were reduced for the T20 category, multinational firms and big corporations unless they were companies involved in food security.

Earlier, Anwar, the Finance Minister, also told the House that government liabilities and debts stood at almost RM1.5 trillion, or 82% of the national gross domestic product (GDP).

He listed RM107.9bil government debts, RM205.9bil loan commitments, RM414.2bil other liabilities, and RM18.2bil 1Malaysia



Fielding questions: Anwar speaking during the Prime Minister's Question Time at the Dewan Rakyat. - Bernama

Development Bhd debts as among the debts.

He noted that the government paid RM41bil last year as debt service charges.

"For 2023, we will be paying

RM46bil in debt service charges," he said.

Anwar acknowledged that while the nation had racked up huge debts during the Barisan Nasional administration, the former

Perikatan Nasional (PN) government had also done the same.

"There is truth in the statement that during Barisan's rule, there were leakages of public funds in cases involving 1MDB. However,

there was also a lot of damage during PN's time," he said.

Anwar assured Parliament that he would not abuse his position as Finance Minister.

"Whether the posts are merged or not is not the problem but using the position to rob property belonging to the rakyat.

"It applies to both sides of the political divide, and those who are clean have nothing to worry about. But those who are involved in corruption should feel pressure and fear.

"I have resolved that under this unity government, I will use all effort to avoid and prevent corruption from being widespread," he said when answering a supplementary question raised by Datuk Dr MohdRadziMdJidin (PN-Putrajaya).

Anwar's decision in December last year to be Finance Minister came under criticism as Pakatan Harapan had pledged in its 2018 General Election manifesto that the prime minister would not hold the finance portfolio in its administration.

Datuk Seri Najib Razak was the last prime minister to hold the finance portfolio.