

No plans to reinstate Goods and Services Tax: Anwar

KUALA LUMPUR: The government has no plans to reinstate the Goods and Services Tax (GST) or introduce any other broad-based consumption tax as a means of addressing the national debt issue, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said other measures would be taken to reduce expenditure and settle government liabilities and debt worth RM1.5 trillion, which is equivalent to 82% of the country's gross domestic product, Bernama reported.

"What we will tighten (in spending) is through subsidy reduction for the wealthy, such as that done in terms of the electricity subsidy.

"As I have explained in a previous session (in Parliament), while the previous government planned to raise electricity tariff rates, the present administration has aborted the plan and only decided to impose (subsidy reduction) on the T20 (top 20% income group) as well as

> Other measures to be taken to trim expenditure, settle govt liabilities and debt worth RM1.5 trillion'

multinational and large companies, except those dealing with food security," he said during question time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar, who is also finance minister, was responding to a supplementary question from Wong Kah Woh (PH-Taiping) on whether the government would introduce new taxes to ease the nation's debt burden.

He said the government would also strengthen administrative positions in view of billions of ringgit being lost due to weak administration and leakage.

"Due to the national debt being higher than the country's growth, other measures need to be taken, including ensuring that the revenue

base is expanded while reviewing the public expenditure method without burdening the people, especially in the areas of education, health and basic needs.

"We will consider all these matters when tabling Budget 2023 on Feb 24."

Anwar also said the government is in the midst of studying provisions in relevant laws to enhance protection for whistleblowers who report on corruption and misconduct cases.

He said it is among his main areas of focus now as there are many whistleblowers, including civil servants, who may feel insecure and unsafe in reporting such cases.

He added that there is also a

view from the legal side that this would not provide a way for any party to make false accusations or create slander.

"So, as an effort to get facts and information, I agree with the call (for amendment) and we will table it at the next Parliament session at the latest," he said in reply to Datuk Mas Ermieyati Samsudin (PN-Masjid Tanah).

Mas Ermieyati wanted to know the government's commitment to amending the legislation on protection for whistleblowers, which should be done as soon as possible as suggested by the All-Party Parliamentary Group Malaysia on integrity, governance and anti-corruption.

Replying to an original question by Lo Sui Fui (GRS-Tawau) on the improvement strategy to ensure that the investigation of corruption cases has a real impact and effect, Anwar said the current focus of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission is the investigation of large-scale corruption cases.