

**Protests or Not, Government will Implement GST Next April – Deputy Minister
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KUALA LUMPUR, May 1 (Bernama) -- Despite protests from some quarters, the Government will implement the Goods and Services Tax (GST), effective next April, which it has been fine-tuning over the past 30 years, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

Describing the protest rally against the GST as inappropriate, he said the rally organisers should use a better approach to voice their opinions.

"They should have submitted a memorandum on the matter, this (the protests) only serves to politicise all the good things that the government wants to implement", he told reporters at the Kuala Lumpur International Book Fair 2014 here Thursday.

The GST will be implemented at a fixed rate of six per cent, replacing the existing sales and services tax.

It will not be imposed on basic food items such as rice, sugar, salt, flour and cooking oil.

Some of the other services exempted include government services such as issuance of passports and licences and healthcare services.

Ahmad said the GST was not something new; in fact, 90 per cent of the world's population lived in countries which had been practising the GST.

The GST rates to be charged next year were also among the lowest in the world, he noted.

"The principle that all must understand is that tax processed from the people is returned to the people for their social and economic development.

"The government does not keep the money because we will return the money to the people through the annual budget," he said.

Earlier, Ahmad presented a mock cheque worth RM750,000, from Bank Simpanan Malaysia - the book fair's main organiser - to the National Book Council of Malaysia.

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