

Ku Li warns Putrajaya not to turn a deaf ear to GST woes
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Former finance minister Tan Sri Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has called on Putrajaya to consider postponing the impending goods and services tax (GST), citing his fear for the country's economy prospects.

Razaleigh, who is known as Ku Li, said Putrajaya was turning a deaf ear to the concerns of the people and was not listening to them.

"The budget every year seems to belittle a problem that needs urgent attention," he said in a letter issued to all parliamentarians today.

"There is so much criticism in Parliament and also from the public through social media, but government leaders are completely deaf to the cracks in our economy with an attitude of not caring."

Ku Li's six-page letter on the 2015 Budget presented by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak was distributed to all MPs in Parliament today.

The letter said that Putrajaya must be sensitive of other factors that could lead to the downfall of the economy, including laws such as the Official Secrets Act and the Universities and University Colleges Act.

Ku Li said Putrajaya should think about postponing the GST to a time when the economy was more stable and firm.

"And if it has to be implemented, the rate should also be looked at again."

Putrajaya announced that the GST of 6% will be effective April 1 next year and that the move was necessary to trim national debt.

But the public and opposition leaders severely criticised the move, saying the consumption tax would hit disproportionately low- and middle-income earners.

Ku Li also proposed that every ministry and government agency be equipped with an officer from the Auditor General (AG) to curb wastage, leakage and mismanagement that have been highlighted in the AG reports.

"With the AG's exposure about wastage, excessive spending, irresponsible losses, absolute mismanagement and corruption, we, as the people and the taxpayers, should be forgiven if we show our anger towards these problems."

"We should have been successful in managing and with that, in bringing down the budget for management which has sky-rocketed."

Expressing fear over the country's dwindling economy, the Umno lawmaker said a drastic economic reformation was needed to avoid a crisis that could lead the country into chaos.

"The people need a brave change that has to be brought about by leaders who are sensitive to the wants and the feelings of the people. We have to care about their worries and their aspirations.

"The reality is, they need a change now. Otherwise, the country will seem to have failed. Remember, we are responsible about this for the future generations." – October 30, 2014.

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