

'GST will not be used to pay govt debts'

QUERY: Tax revenue to benefit public, says Ahmad

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REVENUE from the Goods and Services Tax (GST) will be used for the benefit of the people and not to pay off the government's debts, said Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Ahmad Maslan.

He said tax collected would be returned to the people through developments and the notion that it would be used to settle debts was not true.

"Revenue from GST will be placed in a Consolidated Fund and will be utilised for the benefit of the people," he told reporters at Parliament yesterday in reaction to Gua Musang member of parliament Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah's query earlier.

Razaleigh, during his debate, had, among others, asked whether revenue from the new tax system, to be implemented on April 1, would be used to settle the government's debts or used to help the people.

He said the people had the right to know if GST would benefit them because it would be an additional burden to the people as the country was facing high household, cor-

porate and government debts. He also repeated his call that the GST be postponed to lighten the financial burden of the people.

Razaleigh, or fondly known as Ku Li, also urged the government to explain the national debt situation to the Dewan Rakyat.

He also asked the Finance Ministry to explain the status of the Employees Provident Fund and the Retirement Fund Incorporated's investments in financial institutions burdened with providing loans to certain corporations.

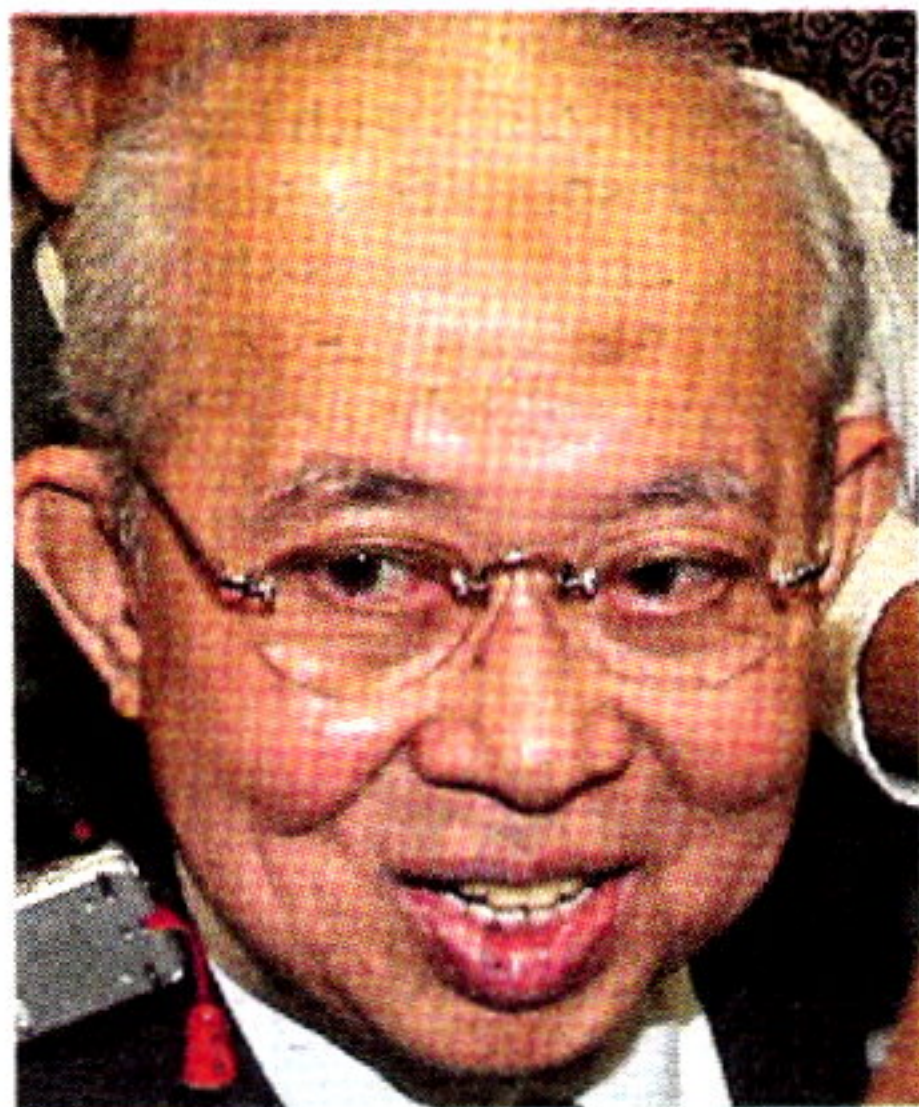
Razaleigh reminded members of parliament of their roles and duties towards the nation and not only towards their political parties. He raised the issue of conflict of interest, which could be addressed through the declaration of assets and liabilities.

"The declaration should cover not only current and former cabinet ministers and members of parliament, but also those in the decision-making levels from both the

public and private sectors.

"The process can be done in stages and the record must be held by an independent body set up under the Parliament Act."

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said Barisan Nasional MPs had declared their assets to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak. **Additional reporting by Sarah Rahim**



Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah
reminds MPs of their responsibilities