Shoppers tighten purse strings

PETALING JAYA: Shoppers have tightened their purse strings this Deepavali and this has led to a drop in sales in supermarkets and hypermarkets generally in PJ.

At Amcorp Mall's Giant Hypermarket, branch manager Josephine Ho said demand was lower this year due to the increase in cost of living.

Ho said the Goods and Services Tax (GST) caused some slight price increase in most items while the higher US dollar-ringgit exchange rate meant the cost of imported products have also gone up significantly.

"As you can see, it is quiet here. The economy definitely contributed (to low demand), prices have increased slightly due to the GST, and there's a sharp price hike for imported products," she said when met at the usually busy hypermarket yesterday.

Other factors that have contributed to the slow sales, Ho said, include the PJ one-way-loop, which made Amcorp Mall less accessible, and the increase in the mall's parking rates.

A manager of a supermarket in The School, Jaya One, who did not wish to be named, agreed that sales have slowed down compared to last year's Deepavali.

"There are not as many customers as last year, and they are not spending as much as well. Reduction is about 8% to 10%," he told *theSun*.

He said customers are still buying essential items such as rice and cooking oil but are more cautious in spending and prefer to purchase cheaper brands.

"Shopping behaviour and spending patterns have changed, probably because of the economy and higher costs. Even the price of cigarettes has increased," he said.