



The Malaysian Medical Association is hoping that the government will exempt most healthcare services from the Goods and Services Tax (GST).

'Look into reducing cost of living'

FINANCIAL RELIEF:
Subsidies on public transport, medical services, education will benefit more people, govt told

ALIZA SHAH
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my



THE government should look into reducing the cost of living by providing subsidies on public transportation, education and medical services, said National Consumer Complaints Centre yesterday.

Its board member, Mohd Shaani Abdullah, said other than focusing on the lower-income group who receive Malaysia People's Aid (BR1M), the government should also look into the needs of other income groups. "The government should conti-

nue giving BR1M to the lower-income group.

"This is important to help them get out from the lower-income bracket.

"At the same time, the government should focus on the middle-income group to free themselves from the financial burden.

"Public transport, medical services and education are used by all and giving subsidies to these areas will benefit more people."

He said the government should also introduce a mechanism to assist Malaysians to buy houses.

Shaani said the government should review the Foreign Workers Recruitment policy which might threaten locals in job opportunity.

"We can engage foreigners in some industries, but there is a need for stern enforcement," he said.



The government is also urged to exempt more than 2,000 medicines from GST. At present, only about 400 types of medicine are GST-free.

Budget Wish List

With another five days to go before Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak announces next year's budget, several groups have detailed their budget wish list, expectations and aspirations.

EDUCATION

Education Minister Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid says there is a need to increase the number of male students in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, while Parent-Teacher Association chairman Professor Datuk Dr Mohamad Ali Hassan says a special allocation to hire Mandarin, Tamil and Arabic language teachers in national schools should be considered.

Top on the wish list for education:

- **Primary and secondary education** to be given a higher budget.
- **Book vouchers of RM200** or more for higher education students.
- **Preschoolers to have special allocation**, just like in the Permata Early Childhood Education and Care Centres.
- **Education Ministry should focus** on learning English in schools by providing extra tutorials and modules.
- **Special retraining scheme** for teachers to develop critical thinking modules.
- **Focus on vocational**, technical and entrepreneur training by providing proper infrastructure.
- **Better IT coverage** at rural and suburban schools.
- **Close the gap between rural and urban** school infrastructure.
- **Build more residential** schools in rural areas.
- **Open up sabbatical leave** to primary and secondary school teachers for industrial training. At present, only lecturers are allowed to do so.
- **Send language teachers overseas** to be exposed to native speakers.
- **Get private sector to support** Parent-Teacher Association activities, especially in rural areas. The companies that sponsor the activities should be granted special tax reduction.



MEDICAL

The Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) hopes the government will remove Goods and Services Tax (GST) from most healthcare services.

MMA president Dr Ashok Philips said that included services rendered by consulting doctors on contract with private hospitals.

"Just as full-time doctors' services are not charged with GST, the same should go for consulting doctors, who earn more than RM500,000 monthly," he said, adding that the GST charged on consulting doctors were, at present, borne by patients.

Top on the wish list for the medical sector:

- **Remove GST from therapeutic treatment charges**, such as for cancer treatment. Some of the treatment cost RM10,000 per month.
- **Remove GST charges** from more than 2,000 medicines. At present, about 400 medicines are GST-free.
- **Allow tax deductions for doctors** buying tickets to attend conference. This is because it is mandatory for doctors to attend medical conference.
- **Not to charge income tax on legal cases** where a doctor is sued by a patient, the doctor loses the case but yet charged with income tax over the amount paid to the patient.

TRANSPORT

Transport industry players want the government to reduce cost for commercial vehicle spare parts. Pahang Lorry Association president Datuk Jack Ho and Taxi Operators Association president Abdul Jalil Maarof said after the implementation of GST, prices of spare parts had increased slightly.

Their wish list:

- **The government to reduce** the 6 per cent GST charges, or help them to buy spare parts, such as tyres, at a cheaper cost.
- **Taxi operators hope the government** will reduce the prices of Natural Gas Vehicles by 50 per cent.
- **Lorry associations hope lorry drivers** will be given a toll reduction to help them keep the prices of goods low.

