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By FINTAN NG

PUTRAJAYA: The Government will introduce a raft of measures to curb profiteering once the goods and services tax (GST) is implemented in mid-2011, said Second Finance Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Husni Hanadzlah.

He said the framework to monitor price movements would be similar to the 143 other countries that had implemented the GST or value-added tax since 1948.

Among the measures to prevent indiscriminate price increases will be the formulation of an Anti-Profiteering Bill, to be tabled in Parliament next March by the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry, he said at an editors' briefing on the GST yesterday.

Husni said the Finance Ministry would also prepare a shopping guide of over 300 items to inform the public about the expected prices of these goods and services following the imposition of the GST.

He added that there would be swift enforcement and heavy penalties on businesses found guilty of profiteering or taking advantage of the implementation of the GST to hike prices.

Husni said other measures that would be used to prevent unjustified price increases included the setting up of a price monitoring council and the enforcement of financial reporting standards such as those under the Malaysian Accounting Standards Board.

These standards would be enforced by the Companies Commission of Malaysia and the Securities Commission.

As for the prices of basic goods, Husni said the hypermarkets would be the price setter. He said the GST would not affect wage earners negatively as certain basic goods and services would be exempted.

Source: <http://thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2009/12/24/nation/5361093&sec=nation>