

Ex-minister flays The Star for 'pandering to DAP'

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A former information minister has slammed The Star's unflattering report on Tanda Putera's poor audience turnout, saying the daily was pandering to DAP.

NONE "What is The Star's intention of highlighting the news that Tanda Putera has not received a good reception at several cinemas especially in Penang?" wrote the ex minister and former top Utusan Malaysia editor Zainudin Maidin on his blog 'Zam Speaks'.

"The Star would not print such a story about the poor reception of the film or try to belittle the film if it did not embrace the spirit and views of DAP.

"Perhaps The Star put down the film to prove that the banning of the film suggested by Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng on Tanda Putera was successful," he wrote.

Yesterday the MCA-owned English daily reported that the Pavilion Kuala Lumpur's Golden Screen Cinema (GSC) screenings of the controversial film were drawing meagre audiences.

It reported that in Penang also saw a "cool response from cinema goers", except in a cinema in Prai when Permatang Pauh Umno Youth chief Mohd Zaidi Mohd Said booked the entire hall for his division members and friends.

'Only appeals to an informed audience'

Zainudin defended the film, that has been highly criticised for attempting to portray a skewed version of the May 13, 1969 riots, as something that only appeals to an informed audience.

NONE "It is normal that serious films based on facts of history, that are not fantasy, find it hard to be received well.

"However you must remember that those who watch the film are the select few in society, viewers who are of quality regardless of their small numbers, people who care to understand and appreciate the history of the nation.

"From among them will rise the future leaders small and great, of the future," he

waxed.

Last week Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim defended Penang's advisory to its cinemas not to screen the film on the grounds that it would jeopardise racial harmony, saying the film was "propaganda" and not a reflection of historical fact.

The movie's director Shuhaimi Baba meanwhile lamented critics making fun of the movie in cyberspace were hurting not just the film, but the entire local film industry.

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