

Cabinet must address sexist, racist conduct
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Tomorrow's cabinet meeting must address the racist and sexist conduct of Barisan Nasional (BN) ministers and parliamentarians, said Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang.

Lim said he had sent an urgent fax to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today regarding this.

The opposition leader said he raised three issues, which must be discussed by the ministers at their weekly meeting.

Firstly, on the complaint by Malaysian student Sheena Moorthy against Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation Jamaludin Jarjis for making racist and derogatory remarks about Malaysian Indians when he met Malaysian students in Los Angeles last month.

"I raised this issue in Parliament last week and Sheena had emailed complaints to the prime minister and various cabinet ministers, including MIC president and Works Minister S Samy Vellu, but has not received a single reply," said Lim.

"Furthermore, Jamaludin has yet to make a public apology for his totally uncalled-for racial insults," he added.

Secondly, on the derogatory and gender-offensive remarks by two BN MPs Mohd Said Yusof (Jasin) and Bung Mokhtar Radin (Kinabatangan) in the Dewan Rakyat last week.

Lim said their action brought "shame and dishonour" to Islam Hadhari, the Parliament, Malaysian women and the country's image and reputation.

"Apart from punishing the two sexist BN MPs, the cabinet should come out with a public apology to Parliament, Malaysian women and the nation," he added.

Slash extravagance

Meanwhile, the opposition leader also wants the cabinet to express support for the Regent of Perak Raja Nazrin Shah's exemplary conduct of moderation and simplicity by launching a nationwide campaign to slash government extravagance and ostentatious ceremony.

"Raja Nazrin has shown exemplary modesty and rectitude, wanting only a simple royal wedding ceremony and declining to accept state-allocated funds," he said. The regent had advised the Perak state government to spend the money instead for the development of the people.

He also called on companies and individuals to channel their funds meant for newspaper advertisements to charity and the people's welfare.

"This should remind the cabinet of the prime minister's forgotten directive in November 2003 to government departments and agencies to be simple and modest and to slash elaborate ceremonies and lavish functions," said Lim.

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