

Najib: Way govt counts equity holding no secret

NST-16/10/2006

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KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak yesterday took exception to inferences that the government has not been transparent over the issue of Bumiputera equity ownership.

He said the government's methodology to calculate the equity ownership could be disclosed if necessary.

"If there are those who are still sceptical, we can reveal the methodology applied."

Najib was asked to comment on the request by Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik on Saturday that the government disclose how it arrived at its percentage of Bumiputera equity ownership.

Dr Lim said transparency on the matter would not give room for any party to question the government's findings.

Najib disagreed with Dr Lim's statement.

"What he said seems to imply that we are not transparent. We conduct our research based on an objective analysis.

"The government is transparent. There should not be any inferences that we are not," he said.

When it was pointed out that the request had come from a BN component party, Najib said its origin was irrelevant.

"It doesn't matter who made the statement. We want to ensure that whatever figure we use is for the whole country and that it is not a modified figure in the interests of any community.

"We can disclose the method applied," he said yesterday after launching the Transport Ministry's Deepavali and Hari Raya Road Safety Campaign.

Dr Lim's request is the latest in the debate on the Bumiputera corporate ownership.

The issue arose when the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) stated that Bumiputera equity ownership may be as high as 45 per cent.

The government questioned the findings and said its more exhaustive study showed that Bumiputera corporate ownership was at 18.9 per cent.

On the appointment of South Korean Foreign Minister Ban Ki Moon as the new United Nations secretary-general, Najib hoped that Ban would ensure peace and prosperity in Asia.

"As an Asian, he should understand the aspirations of the Asian region, the fastest-growing region in the world. There are some very daunting issues confronting him and we hope he's up to the task with his vast experience.

"Malaysia welcomes his appointment and will give our fullest co-operation," he added.