

Minister: Keng Yaik statement sarcastic

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KUALA LUMPUR: Information Minister Datuk Zainuddin Maidin said Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik's statement calling on the Economic Planning Unit to explain the methods used in determining Bumiputera equity ownership, smacked of sarcasm that would only create more doubt on government transparency.

"His statement will not help eliminate suspicion of the Chinese community, especially the younger group, who does not understand history, the consensus and formula that had been reached between the leaders of the various ethnic groups since the early days of independence in the interest of national stability.

"As such, the younger generation was taken in by the statement made by Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew who claimed that the Chinese in Malaysia were marginalised."

Zainuddin was commenting on the statement by Dr Lim, who is also Energy, Water and Communications minister, who said that an explanation on the methods of study were necessary because Gerakan, a component party of the Barisan Nasional-

al, was of the view that something wasn't right about the 18.9 per cent figure given by the EPU.

The issue of Bumiputera stake in the economy became controversial when the Asian Strategy and Leadership Institute (Asli) claimed that Bumiputeras controlled 45 per cent.

The claim was rejected by the government because the EPU study recorded Bumiputera equity ownership at only 18.9 per cent.

Asli subsequently apologised and retracted its report.

Zainuddin said although Dr Lim had claimed he merely wanted an academic solution in the rejection of the Asli report, it was perceived by the Malays as sarcasm because it implied that the government lacked transparency and sincerity in dealing with the issue of Bumiputera equity.

Zainuddin said: "With his vast experience and involvement in nation building, Dr Lim should help bring calm and not be a thorn in the flesh.

"Lee Kuan Yew's statement should not cause Chinese leaders in Malaysia to feel pressured and feel the need to seek popularity by playing up racial issues." — Bernama