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KUALA LUMPUR folk hope newly appointed Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim will focus on much-needed policy changes as he takes on the new role.

He has been urged to hit the ground running to learn the ins and outs of Kuala Lumpur, Putrajaya and Labuan, look into long-standing issues plaguing residents as well as new issues brought on as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Resident activist Yee Poh Ping said it was important for Shahidan to engage with stakeholders at the ground level.

"He (Shahidan) is not from Kuala Lumpur and may not be fully aware of the unique challenges we face.

"The only way he would fully understand these issues is to *turun padang* and listen to our voices," he highlighted.

Yee, who is Kepong Community Service Centre head, added that the rise in urban poverty, exacerbated by the pandemic, was a critical

'Get familiar with FT issues'

KL stakeholders urge new minister to address critical problems

matter to be looked at.

"There must be a concerted effort with long-term planning, not ad hoc programmes and initiatives," he said.

Kampung Padang Balang Residents Association chairman Mohd Amir Faisal echoed similar sentiments, saying that there must be clear economic strategies to help those affected by job losses during the pandemic.

"The new minister and his deputy must buckle down and concentrate on governing.

"Too much politics will only hinder what needs to be done," he said.

Brickfields Rukun Tetangga chairman SKK Naidu said poor maintenance of public infrastructure remained an issue in Kuala Lumpur.

"Facilities for the disabled are severely lacking.

"For example, there was a plan a few years ago to turn Brickfields into a disabled-friendly place, but the sidewalks are not up to international standards," he said.

Naidu also commended former minister Tan Sri Annuar Musa for a number of successful programmes, including setting up urban farms and job training for the homeless as well as the mobile vaccination initiative.

"The deputy minister (Datuk Seri Dr Edmund Santhara Kumar) also chaired the non-Islamic houses of worship (RiBi) committee that managed to settle land issues surrounding places of worship," he added.

Setapak resident Mohd Helmi Mohd Nor, 35, hoped Shahidan would relook at the implementation of the free trade initiative that the Federal Territories Ministry launched last year.

"There are too many of these roadside stalls with little enforcement.

"While it was a good initiative when people were desperate for work, it has caused more problems than anticipated.

"The programme needs to be more streamlined as the licences issued are being abused," he said.

Shahidan, the Arau MP, was Perlis menteri besar from 1995 to 2008, and later held the post as minister in the Prime Minister's Department until the 2018 general election.

He replaces Annuar, who now helms the Multimedia and Communication Ministry.

Jelebu MP Datuk Seri Jalaluddin Alias has been appointed Deputy Federal Territories Minister, replacing Datuk Seri Dr Edmund Santhara, who is now Tourism, Arts and Culture Deputy Minister.



Shahidan replaces Annuar as the new Federal Territories Minister.