

Paying to lift up low-cost flats



Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department T. Murugiah will hand in his report on Friday

KUALA LUMPUR: The government may take over the maintenance of lifts in low-cost flats nationwide.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department T. Murugiah said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi had tasked him with investigating public complaints about run-down lifts in low-cost flats, especially after an incident in Sentul on Sunday where a resident's body had been carried down from the 10th floor.

"The minister was asked by what happened and told me to investigate."

Murugiah said he was expected to submit the report to Abdullah on Friday at the post-cabinet meeting.

He said one of the solutions was for the government to either fully or partially subsidise the maintenance of lifts at low-cost flats.

"There are two types of low-cost flats: those maintained by the local councils and those by private companies.

"The problem with flats managed by private corporations is that it would only conduct repairs when sufficient funds are collected from the residents."

Murugiah said many lifts and flat facilities were left in poor condition for years because the residents could not afford the maintenance fees.

"I have heard of cases where residents owe the management up to RM1.2 million in

fees and the management say nothing can be done until the backdated payments are made."

Murugiah, however, is drawing criticisms for his efforts.

Federal Territories Deputy Minister Datuk M. Saravanan said Murugiah should first know the issues at hand, investigate them and then come up with proper solutions.

"He (Murugiah) should not shoot his mouth off and comment on everything under the sun, just because he is the deputy minister in charge of the public complaints bureau.

"If he thinks this is the way he can solve (the people's) problems, then he is dead wrong. All he is doing is dam-

aging the credibility of the Barisan Nasional government," Saravanan told Bernama.

Saravanan said the Sentul lifts issue, which was highlighted in the media, did not fall under Kuala Lumpur City Hall's jurisdiction as the flats were privately-owned.

"We have our own mechanism in dealing with such complaints. The residents must first push the developer, failing which they can ask its management committee to handle the issue.

"City Hall cannot carry out repair works as the residents are not paying maintenance fees. Murugiah should know about this as he's in charge of the complaints bureau."



Federal Territories Deputy Minister Datuk M. Saravanan says Murugiah should not shoot his mouth off