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What the minister says

KUALA LUMPUR: It has been 100 days since Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin was appointed the Federal Territories Minister on April 14.

While he is focused on making Kuala Lumpur a world-class city, his main priority is still the improvement of the living condition of the poor.

He said his work is guided by the 7Ps — Pembangunan (development); Perumahan (housing opportunity for the poor); Penjaja dan Peniaga Kecil (hawkers and petty traders); Pengangkutan (transportation); Penyelenggaraan Prasarana dan Kemudahan Awam (maintenance of infrastructure and public amenities); Perkhidmatan dan Penguatkuasaan (delivery of service and enforcement); and Prihatin (concern towards grouses and complaints by the public).

Raja Nong Chik said as the Umno Lembah Pantai division chairman, he still spends time with the people in the area but what used to be an hour-long discussion was now shortened to 15 minutes because of his tight schedule.

He meets the people at least three or four times a week and interacts with the public on the online social networking website, Facebook. He also has his own blog and uses Tweeter to keep in touch with the public.

In conjunction with his 100th day in office today, Raja Nong Chik shared his views on several issues which are close to his heart:

● **On improving living condition of the poor:**

It is still my main priority to improve the living condition of the city's poor, especially those with a household income of less than RM1,500 monthly. I am not only looking at providing them with a better place to stay but also an improved maintenance of low-cost flats and job opportunities.

This can be done by awarding them hawker's licences to increase their income. We can also help them by providing them with a house which is near their workplace as they will be able to cut down on transport



Datuk Raja Nong Chik Raja Zainal Abidin says his main priority is to improve the living condition of the city's poor.

expenses. An improved public transport will also be a big help to these people.

We are also extending financial aid through the Yayasan Wilayah Persekutuan (Federal Territories Foundation) to single mothers and the disabled and also those in need of medical aid.

● **On improving delivery service and enforcement by City Hall:**

I have always stressed the importance of being prompt in responding to complaints by residents. There are certain things that need time (for deliberation) before action is taken but we have to keep the complainants informed of the status of their reports.

City Hall needs to buck up in its enforcement, but they must do it with due consideration for the people.

● **On traffic jam and insufficient**

parking in the city:

There is only one way to overcome these problems — improve the public transport system. Currently, the ratio of people driving compared to those who use public transport is 70 per cent to 30 per cent. In order to reduce traffic jam, we have to increase the number of people taking bus and trains to travel, thus reducing the number of vehicles on the road. At the same time, it will also solve the insufficient parking space and indiscriminate parking in the city.

Transport is under another ministry, but we can help to achieve this goal by working closely with them by giving our feedback and facilitating the process. The same goes with issues involving other government agencies.

● **On the revival of the Plaza Rakyat project and the opening of the**

RM70 million integrated transport hub at Bandar Tasik Selatan:

We have to do something about the Plaza Rakyat project which has been stalled for years. We have given an ultimatum to the developer — either they resume work or we will find another company to do it. I hope to see some progress soon.

As for the Bandar Tasik Selatan hub, I have gathered some feedback from residents who are worried that the hub will worsen traffic on the already congested road there. Once the project is completed next year, we will see about 500 express buses coming in and out of the area daily. City Hall is working on finding a solution to the problem.

● **On grouses raised by residents on the KL Draft Plan:**

I have to admit that there were certain things in the draft plan which were done without consulting the residents. I have to focus issue by issue while still having the overall interest of the public in mind.

Take Kampung Padang Balang, for instance. It is a Malay reserve land, so the residents are obviously upset with the development plan which includes extending the light rail transit (LRT) line, which will take up some of the plots. Sure, the residents there as well as other KLites had the opportunity to voice out their grouses during the public hearing, but consultation should have been carried out beforehand.

I have to make sure that the residents' rights to their land are not violated just for the sake of development. In making decisions on the draft plan, I have to look at what is being presented to me by the committee in-charge of the public hearing, get some feedback from the mayor, Datuk Ahmad Fuad Ismail, and also from the residents.

I remember going to my parents' house in Petaling Jaya and having to put up with the noise from an LRT project in their backyard. But it is for

the benefit of the public and now I can hardly notice the train passing by whenever I'm there (laughs).

● **On the extension of the Keramat Mall:**

We are in the midst of acquiring land to build an extension to the existing Keramat Mall. The Datuk Keramat hawkers and petty traders had previously refused to move into the new complex as they were unhappy with the layout. But we are now involving them in the design and planning.

We always must have the stakeholders in mind when making decisions. In this case, the stakeholders are the residents and the hawkers. If they are not happy with the development, then our efforts will go to waste. That is why it is important to get their feedback beforehand.

● **On Kampung Baru redevelopment:**

I can't say much at this moment as I have yet to meet the residents there. All I can say is that the landowners will not lose out.

● **On keeping in touch with the public through Facebook:**

My children taught me how to use Facebook after getting my wife to sign up. It is a useful tool for me to get feedback, especially from youngsters, who mainly use the Internet. It also serves as a platform for me to gather suggestions and views from the public. I may not be able to meet everyone but I can reach out to them through this channel. I am on Facebook every Wednesday from 6pm to 7pm.

I have my own blog and I'm also active on Tweeter to keep the public informed of my activities.

As much as I want to spend more time meeting the people, I also need to do a lot of reading which will help me make informed decisions. If I spend too much time outside, I will not have the time to study the proposed plans and will end up making mistakes.



Suwida Mohamed says tighter security is needed

What the people say...

KUALA LUMPUR: We spoke to the residents of low-cost flats to find out their hopes and grouses in conjunction with Federal Territories Minister Datuk Raja Nong Chik's 100 days in office. These were what they had to say:

● **SUWIDA MOHAMED, 34, housewife, Flat Sri Rakyat, Bukit Jalil:**

"We need to beef up security, maybe by putting up a fence around the flats' perimeter.

"There have been a lot of car thefts and break-ins reported by the residents. My car got stolen three years ago."

● **ANGIE NG, 44, housewife, Flat Pulau Pinang, Cheras:**

"I wish that the rental at my family's shop at the flats can be reduced. My mother is paying RM124 a month but business is not good here.

"I also hope that the minister can do something about the indiscriminate parking around the flats."

● **SAREPAH HAMAD, 58, sundry shop operator, Taman Ikan Emas longhouse, Cheras:**

"I hope that we will be allowed to buy our unit. I have been paying rent to City Hall for both the house and shop for almost 30 years."

● **ABDUL MUTHALIB MUHAMAD, 58, general worker, Flat Pantal Permai, Pantal Dalam:**

"I believe the minister is serious about improving main-

tenance at the flats.

"I feel that it can be achieved through better communication and cooperation among residents, and not just depending on City Hall and its contractors.

"For instance, there are cleaners at the flats, but if the residents still have the 'squatter' mentality and throw rubbish everywhere, the place will never be clean.

"The same goes for vandalism of public property like lifts and playground equipment."



Sarepah Hamad hopes to own her house and shop