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Plan to give NHC free hand buying low-cost units

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IPOH, Sat. - The National Housing Company may buy low-cost houses from government and private developers for sale to qualified buyers, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Dr Ting Chew Peh said.

"The matter is still being discussed and an announcement will be made soon," he told newsmen after launching the Respect for Teachers campaign organised by the Perak MCA and Perak Chinese Hall last night.

Ting said such a move would complement the government's efforts to ensure only the genuine got such units.

"We build thousands of units but there are still complaints of shortage due to irresponsible people who do not qualify for the units but manage to buy them by submitting false information," he added.

All States have now adopted the open register system whereby the particulars of the buyers can be scrutinised by the public.

Asked if the Ministry can act against a low wage earner who "lends" his particulars to a rich buyer, he said: "This is stupidity and we cannot do anything."

They must remember a person can only register once in his lifetime to buy such a unit, he said.

Ting said the Ministry was also discussing with banks and financial institutions to relax loan conditions for low-cost units from groups like hawkers, traders and others.

This group finds it difficult to get loans since they do not have proper financial accounts or documents like income tax statements but have the financial ability to service their loans.

"We hope the financial institutions will give approval to this group of people," he added.

The Minister also asked government agencies, departments and local authorities to cultivate the "maintenance culture", which has been stressed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"They should not use a shortage of staff as an excuse not to clean and maintain their buildings, but should mobilise the existing workers," he added.

They must also look out for irresponsible people who vandalise properties and hand them over to the authorities.

The Ministry has received complaints of government buildings not being maintained, including lifts being faulty.

Recently, the lifts in the 20-storey Kinta Heights broke down but was not repaired immediately by the Ipoh City Council.

Ting also reminded local authorities to ensure their contractors collected rubbish on time and not to make excuses.

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