

Federal Territories minister to look into mayoral election
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Federal Territories Minister Zulhasnan Rafique today said the proposal to replace the direct appointment system of mayor of Kuala Lumpur and members of the city hall's (DBKL) advisory board will be discussed in the cabinet. MCPX

zulhasnan rafique ft minister pc 260308 03Speaking at a press conference in his office in Putrajaya today, Zulhasnan said that the matter was currently being discussed by the Housing and Local Government Ministry (KPKT).

"I believe that KPKT will be able to give a comprehensive reply to the proposals of the new MPs (opposition MPs)," said Zulhasnan, who added that once the housing ministry has done studying the proposal, the result will then be submitted to cabinet for review.

As it stands now, the mayor of KL and members of DBKL's advisory board are directly appointed by the king. There are a total of 15 members on the advisory board.

Following the March 8 polls, ten out of eleven parliamentary seats in Kuala Lumpur fell to opposition hands. Opposition MPs since then have demanded that the mayor and members of DBKL's advisory board be elected instead of being directly appointed.

Zulhasnan had survived the opposition uprising and succeeded in retaining his Setiawangsa parliamentary seat by defeating PKR's Ibrahim Yaakob by 8,134 majority votes.

The opposition claimed that only through elections can the mayor and city hall be held accountable for its actions.

Ministry's retreat

Zulhasnan said that the proposal could not be simply implemented as there are already existing laws and that it would require these laws to be amended first before the proposal can be carried out.

However, Zulhasnan said his ministry was willing to hold detailed discussions on the matter at a retreat for all members of Parliament from the FT on April 4. The retreat is organised by his ministry.

"All the new FT MPs will be invited to the retreat and there they can express their opinions on how to enhance the efficiency of the city and also on other matters," said Zulhasnan.

This move said Zulhasnan is part of the ministry's ongoing move to "democratise" the ministry. Relevant government agencies, NGOs and residents' associations will also be invited for the retreat.

"The result from this retreat will then be forwarded to the cabinet for further review. I truly believe that this method will help us understand the aspiration of the people.

"It will also assist the FT Ministry and DBKL in bettering ourselves at lubricating the

operations mechanism to be more effective in delivering services to the people," stressed Zulhasnan.

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