

Pakatan MPs : rid KL of illegal foreign traders
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Pakatan Rakyat parliamentarians today urged the Federal Territories Ministry and the Kuala Lumpur Mayor to clamp down on foreign petty traders.

The matter was raised by the MPs during a two-hour courtesy call meet with minister Zulhasnan Rafique, mayor Abdul Hakim Borhan and ministerial officers in Kuala Lumpur.

zulhasnan pakatan dbkl 040408 pakatan mpsThere are 10 Pakatan MPs in the Federal Territories. Three MPs - Tan Seng Giaw (Kepong), Tian Chua (Batu) and Khalid Ibrahim (Bandar Tun Razak) - were however absent from the meeting.

Titivangsa MP Dr Lo' Lo' Ghazali told reporters after the meeting that such illegal foreign petty traders had 'controlled' areas that were meant for locals.

"There is a problem of foreigners renting licenses from locals. They are taking away local business opportunities when legally they cannot do so," she said.

According to Lo' Lo', City Hall by-laws also disallow hawkers from hiring foreigners. She urged City Hall to look into the problem immediately.

Meanwhile, Cheras MP Tan Kok Wai said he had raised the issue of City Hall officers allegedly "punishing" hawkers and petty traders for minor offences after the general election.

"Why not license those traders? Why can't they have such a policy? Just don't license traders who are a public nuisance," he said, adding that this was the most humane thing to do and that it would bring revenue for City Hall.

Tan said he complained to Zulhasnan that the officers took action against hawkers and traders in opposition held parliamentary constituencies but not Setiawangsa, which is held by the minister.

These were among the host of issues that the seven MPs tried to raise but Zulhasnan urged to reserve such issues for a roundtable discussion with the ministry on April 17 and 18.

'Roundtable discussion'

The roundtable discussion would mark the first time ever where opposition MPs from the Federal Territories would be able to contribute to policy matters.

Currently, Pakatan Rakyat holds 10 out of the 13 parliamentary seats in the Federal Territories.

zulhasnan pakatan dbkl 040408 zulhasnan saravananAt a press conference after the meeting, Zulhasnan said the roundtable discussion would be a proper platform for the opposition MPs to raise problems arising from their respective constituencies.

Zulhasnan said the roundtable discussions would be held in between parliament sessions to allow ministry officials and MPs to discuss policy matters that can be raised in parliament.

To a question, Zulhasnan promised that City Hall would not hold back against development plans for opposition held areas.

"There would not be any discrimination," he stressed.

Also present was Zulhasnan's deputy M Saravanan.

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