

Mixed responses to Federal Territory retreat
Malaysiakini.com
Apr 17, 2008
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The Pakatan Rakyat parliamentarians offered mixed responses when asked for their views on the Federal Territory roundtable discussion retreat which began in Kuala Lumpur today. MCPX

federal territory round table retreat zulhasnan rafiqueFederal Territories Minister Zulhasnan Rafique in his opening speech said the closed-door retreat at Istana Hotel seeks to obtain views and feedback from parliamentarians, NGOs, resident associations and interested parties in a move to enhance the administration of the ministry.

The first retreat held at the Cyberview Lodge and Spa, Putrajaya, last November was attended by 50 NGOs and 29 government agency representatives.

Each parliamentarian will be given 20 minutes to talk, followed by a 30 minute question and answer session. Several group discussions will be held tomorrow on the final day of the retreat.

Malaysiakini approached several MPs that were present to comment on the FT ministry-organised retreat. Here are their views:

Tian Chua (PKR -Batu)

tian chua 02Well, it's just starting, we'll see. We hope to see greater transparency in the operations of the KL and FT authority. We also hope that it's not going to be a PR (public relations) exercise but a genuine sense of responsibility-sharing in planning and developing this area. I hope that our intervention as MPs could effectively bring about the long overdue change in KL administration.

(The issues that I will be raising) are very much the old songs we've been singing (smiles) which the minister himself picked it up (in his speech). We'll probably go into a bit of the details but again we hope that this all won't just remain as talk. After a while, our residents will get a bit fed up because every retreat or meeting, they will be raising the same issues.

Wee Choo Keong (PKR -Wangsa Maju)

wee choo keongIt's a waste of public funds and this retreat is just meant to prop up the image of the ministry. Zulhasnan holds a post that is redundant. In fact, the government knew about it in the previous administration under Dr Mahathir (Mohamad) had already abolish the FT Ministry.

We don't need one. From 1990 up to 2004, there was no FT Ministry and KL functioned just as well. So what's the difference?

I will go up to the stage and teach this minister and his deputy not to make stupid press statements. Their standard line seems to be like 'oh I don't know, I have to check'. This goes to show that they are merely public servants and the ministry is like the messenger. If

you are like a messenger, I don't think you need a minister to be a messenger, an office boy would do just as fine.

The FT Ministry should be abolished instantly because we need to save the people's money and this money amounting to millions can be used to build roads, provide welfare, build schools, build mosques and temples and others. This is a waste of time and money, that's why I didn't bother coming for the opening ceremony to hear Zulhasnan speak.

We've met him three times already and nothing happened, what's the point? This is all his work to get political endorsement and he will not get it from me.

Tan Kok Wai (DAP-Cheras)

tan kok wai This is my first time participating in this forum so I'm not sure if it will produce some positive or concrete results. As we were told, the first forum was held sometime last November and that some proposals and resolutions were achieved then. We were also told about the problems raised but they remain unresolved after six months.

It is good that elected representatives like us who know people's problems best are invited to join the forum where we will voice out constituency and FT problems. It's good to see BN change its attitude after being beaten 10 to 1 in KL by giving us this opportunity so we will do our best. I've got more than a dozen matters to raise (laughs).

Nurul Izzah Anwar (PKR-Lembah Pantai)

I'm giving it a chancelah, for now.

Fong Kui Lun (DAP-Bukit Bintang)

fong kui lun I think after the March 8 general election, the opposition is the strongest force in KL winning 10 out of 11 seats. I think this is a political reality for them. If you want to settle all the problems in KL, there are too many.

Even though we have the DBKL (KL City Hall) and local authority, people still choose to see their MPs to solve their problems. But there have been changes because DBKL now wants to see the press every week, that has never happened before. Hopefully this retreat can settle some issues and let KL folks feel that the change is there.

Teresa Kok (DAP-Seputeh)

teresa kok I won't be skeptical about it because I think this is the first time (the retreat is held). That day we had a half-day meeting with the minister and this is the first time the ministry has invited the KL MPs to come for a discussion and even ask us to speak out and present our views.

I think this is a good move so that we don't make so much noise in the Parliament (laughs). I believe there will be some positive outcome because since this is the first time and first move by the ministry, I believe he is serious in improving the situation and also the service of DBKL because that is what caused BN's downfall and loss in the elections.

Dr Tan Seng Giaw (DAP-Kepong)

tan seng giaw I think it would take them some time to realise how the retreat can be effective. So this is just the second time. I was there the first time the retreat was held and they did try. But this second time they have to work out and see how it can be effective. We hope there will be follow up to what we've said.

For example today, I've not written any speech, I just have the outline of what I'm going to say. I have 16 big subjects and 20 minutes is too short (laughs). So I have outlined some of the programmes that should be looked into.

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