STAR Metro Info Base

GOVERNMENT DEPARTME	NT
ARKIB NEGARA	03-6209 0600
BANK NEGARA	03-2698 8044
CUSTOMS	03-7806 7200
FIRE & RESCUE	03-8892 7600
IMMIGRATION	03-8880 1000
INCOME TAX	1-800-88-5436
JABATAN ALAM SEKITAR	03-8889 1972
JAKIM	03-8886 4000
JPA	03-8000 8000
JPN (KL)	03-6201 1106
JPN (PJ)	03-7956 2634
JPJ	03-8886 6406
JKR [PETALING] 03-7839240	0 [FT] 03-92875436
KLSE -BURSA M'SIA	03-2026 5099
MANPOWER DEPT -JTR	03-8886 5555
METEOROLOGY	03-7967 8000
MIDA	03-2267 3633
MIMOS	03-8995 5000
PERKESO	03-4257 5755
POS MALAYSIA	1-300-300-300
REG OF BUSINESS	03-4043 0811
REG OF COMPANIES	03-2299 4400
ROYAL CUSTOMS	03-8776 6575
SIRIM	03-5544 6000
SOCSO	03-7949 8888

EPF	
HEAD OFFICE	03-2694 6566
CALL CENTRE:	03-8922 6000
CHERAS	03-9200 3304
GOMBAK	03-6185 0780
KAJANG	03-8737 5223
KEPONG	03-6258 9521
KLANG	03-3325 1626
PETALING JAYA	03-8922 6000
PUDU	03-2078 6788
WANGSA MAJU	03-4149 9499
SHAH ALAM	03-5519 2155

HOSPITALS	
TUN HUSSEIN ONN (EYE)	03-7718 1488
ASSUNTA	03-7680 7000
UNIVERSITY HOSPITAL (UMMC)	

	03-7949 4422
GHKL	03-2615 6391
HEARTSCAN	03-2287 0988
INSTITUT JANTUNG	03-2617 8200
KAJANG MEDICAL	03-8739 7070/7077
SELANGAR MEDICAL	03-5543 1111
SELAYANG HOSPITAL	03-6126 3333
SENTOSA	03-4043 7166

03-6259 2020
03-8024 0507
017-2733372
03-9221 7600
03-2162 8888
1-300-888-294
03-9057 5757
03-9222 2828
03-9131 8080
03 2144 3630

POLICE STATIONS PETALING JAYA HQ BUKIT AMAN HO	03-7966 2222 03-2266 2222
BUKIT AMAN HO	03-2266 2222
	OO LECU LLLL
DAMANSARA UTAMA	03-7722 2222
SEA PARK	03-7874 2222
SELANGOR POLICE HQ	03-5514 5222
SHAH ALAM	03-5520 2222
SG BULOH	03-6156 1222
KOTA DAMANSARA	03-6142 2222
TAMAN TUN DR ISMAIL	03-7728 6222
SG WAY	03-7875 2222
AMPANG	03-4289 7419
BRICKFIELDS	03-9051 6222
CHERAS	03-9284 2222
DANG WANGI	03-2070 2222

Housing the city's poorest

The low-income earners in Kuala Lumpur are badly affected by the severe housing crisis as tens of thousands of them are on a long waiting list for affordable homes.

Stories by BAVANI M bavanim@thestar.com.my Photos by ROHAIZAT DARUS

LMOST 70,000 residents are on the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) waiting list for affordable housing. Some have been waiting for more than 20 years to rent a public housing

DBKL's Housing Department statistics for March this year showed that 128,000 people have applied and are waiting for units in low-cost schemes. However, only 68,214 qualify to rent these units.

DBKL charges RM90 to rent a one-room flat and RM124 for a three-room flat a month. The low rental has made these units much sought after.

According to Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Ahmad Phesal Talib, because of the shortage, only "dire urgency" cases for low-cost housing will be entertained. "A panel will decide on the level

of urgency on a case-by-case basis," Ahmad Phesal told StarMetro.

Demand exceeds supply DBKL is managing 60,853 units of People's Housing Scheme (PPR) throughout Kuala Lumpur.

Of that number, 11,587 units have been sold to residents while 49,266 are currently being rented.

A person seeking a low-cost home in the city must be a Malaysian citizen, married, works in Kuala Lumpur and has a joint income of RM2,500 and below.

They must also not have property within a 35km radius of Kuala

Lumpur. "That criteria will cover about 40% of Kuala Lumpur residents, pointed out Ramanujam Ramadass from Majlis Perwakilan Penduduk (MPPWP).

The long waiting list and waiting period exposes the critical need for affordable housing for the urban poor and it cannot be ignored any

longer," Ramanujam said. Development of Human Resources in Rural Areas, Malaysia (DHRRA) president Saravanan Sinapan agrees with Ramanujam, adding that the demographics of who constitute the urban poor had changed.

"The urban poor cannot be generalised as the elderly, single mothers or the disabled anymore," Saravanan said.

"I am not at all surprised with the rising number of people on DBKL's waiting list.

"Some young graduates' starting salary, which is between RM1,500 and RM2,200, is no longer sustain-

"A huge portion of their income will go towards paying rent and servicing their car loan," added

He added that many young couples also fall into debt servicing their education loans or post-wedding bills.

"And if there is a baby on the way, there won't be enough to survive especially if you want to live and work in the city," he said.

Long waiting period

Ramanujam and Saravanan pointed out that it was ridiculous that some people have been on the waiting list for over a decade.

"A more reasonable duration is



Possible solution: While the city is facing a housing crisis for the poor, hundreds of units at PPR Batu Muda in Kepong, PPR Pantai Ria in Lembah Pantai, PPR Kampung Muhibbah in Puchong and PPR Intan Baiduri have been left vacant

between one and two years.
"The list should also be updated

regularly to ensure urgent cases are

"This scenario does not bode well for a city that is striving to be world class," said Ramanuiam.

Pusat Aduan Rakyat Malaysia

(PAR) chairman Datuk A. Chandrakumanan said the high demand for low-cost housing is proof that Kuala Lumpur is facing a housing crisis.

He said DBIAL --issue immediately.
> SEE NEXT PAGE He said DBKL should address the

Families on waiting list for almost 10 years

THE blue card confirming his registration to rent a housing unit with Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is worn out and the faded ink confirms its age

Kunalan Thanapal keeps it safely tucked away inside a plastic cupboard in a tiny room where he lives with his wife R. Rajimah, 43, and two children in Puchong

The card shows that he applied for a PPR unit way back in 2009.

For the past six years, Kunalan has been going to DBKL to enquire about the status of his application.
"They keep telling me there are

no units available and to come back next year.

"Some people tell me that I should seek help from a politician and that with a son who suffers from cerebral palsy, my chances are better.

"I had to send my two other children to my mother-in law in Perlis as I cannot afford to take care of



Since 2009: Kunalan (right) showing the blue card and DBKL notice in green acknowledging that he is on the affordable housing waiting list. His son (second from left) suffers from cerebral palsy.

them," he added.

The 43-year-old makes a living doing odd jobs and earns RM600

His wife earns about RM1.200 a month working as a cashier in a

hypermarket. 'A friend was kind enough to let

me have a room in his house rent-

"But I still pay the electricity and water bills," he added. Rajimah said it is a struggle mak-

Transportation and food is expen-

sive, and GST (Goods and Services Tax) has made things worse.

"We cannot go on like this," she

Over at PPR Kg Muhhibah in Bukit Jalil, Murugan Elumalai, 45, rents a unit from the former tenant and owner who bought it from DBKL.

He lives in the three-room unit with his wife and four children.

Their joint income is less than RM2,500 a month and the family had applied for a unit in 2008 but with no

Kunalan and Murugan's families represent thousands of other poor applicants who are still waiting for good news from DBKL



Editor II FREDERICK FERNANDEZ

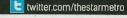
News Editor, Metro Eddie Chua V.P.Sujata

Assistant Production Editor SHARIFAH FATIMAH SYED ALI

Deputy Editors SAM CHEONG IACOBUS RAJ ESTHER CHANDRAN

ADVERTISING Tel: (03) 7966 8388







Deserted: Empty units with broken doors and missing windows in PPR Cempaka in Pantai Dalam (left) and PPR Intan Baiduri (right). Some quarters think that DBKL should fix it up and give it to the hardcore poor.

DBKL urged to act on PPR tenants who default

> FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

Chandrakumanan pointed out that schemes like RUMAWIF (Federal Territories Affordable Housing) and PR1MA (1Malaysia People's Housing Scheme) were aimed at providing affordable housing to middle-income group, not the urban poor.

"On paper it is a good plan but how many can afford to buy them?

"The number of residents who took up the government's offer to buy their PPR units 10 years ago was far from encouraging, in fact it was worrying

"If most can't afford a RM35,000 unit, how are they going to buy a RM300,000 unit?" Chandrakumanan pointed out.

Some solutions

Ramanujam and Saravanan suggested several short-term options to resolve the problem.

They pointed out many PPR units in Kuala Lumpur are uninhabitable. In fact, hundreds of units at

PPR Batu Muda in Kepong, PPR Pantai Ria in Lembah Pantai PPR Kampung Muhibbah in Puchong and PPR Intan Baiduri have been

They said DBKL should repair the units and make them habitable

They also pointed out that while



Longing for a home to call their own: Murugan (right) and his family are currently renting a unit in PPR Kg Muhibbah for RM350. They have been on the waiting list since 2008.

thousands of poverty-stricken city folk are on the waiting list, tens of thousands have defaulted on

According to the latest statistics, PPR residents owe DBKL a whopping RM46.5mil in unpaid rent.

More than 15,000 residents owe at least two months of unpaid rent. About 546 owe more than RM10.000:

This state of affairs has led to

MALAYSIAN HARMONY

TOUR & TRAVEL S/B

some questioning DBKL's rationale of "pampering" or protecting defaulters.

While DBKL is "prevented" from evicting tenants who default on their rent, some quarters want it to lock out non-genuine cases who are abusing the system.

"I am not saying that DBKL should kick out all tenants who default but I know of those who refuse to pay rent because they

feel they are entitled to the units as former squatters who were relocated.

There are also those who have sub-let their units to third parties and charge up to five times more.
"Political will is needed to stop

the rot and bring credibility back into a system that was originally intended to help the city's poorest residents have a roof over their heads," pointed out Ramanujam.

ASIA CATHAY

TRAVEL S/B

SOUNDBITES

We want to hear from you about the issues we have highlighted. Please send your views to us by 3pm.

metro@thestar.com.my, twitter.com/thestarmetro

www.facebook.com/ starmetro

Racing through KL

Kuala Lumpur City Hall has approved for the Kuala Lumpur City Grand Prix to make its debut in August with a challenging 3.2km street circuit.

> Insensitive

Isn't this initiative a bit insensitive at the moment? Unwise sir, unwisel -M Haidir Hashim

> Giving others 'ideas' There will surely be a lot of illegal

racing on this circuit in the wee hours of the morning once this event is over. - Patrick Thavaraiah

> Unnecessary

Just use the Sepang track! - Mohd Mike

Good move

I welcome any legal racing track in the country. - Cilla

Having no room to grow

Flower traders in Brickfields unhappy over DBKL's plan to relocate them

> Good idea

Shifting the traders to the complex would be a good idea as this would ease congestion in the area. It would also be convenient for customers and traders. The traders should not protest against such petty issues and instead cooperate and promote their businesses rather than complain. - Selvaraju Perumal

> Less congested Good idea - Less traffic and the

shop verandah will look better. - Suresh Rama Nathan

03-2142 5566

