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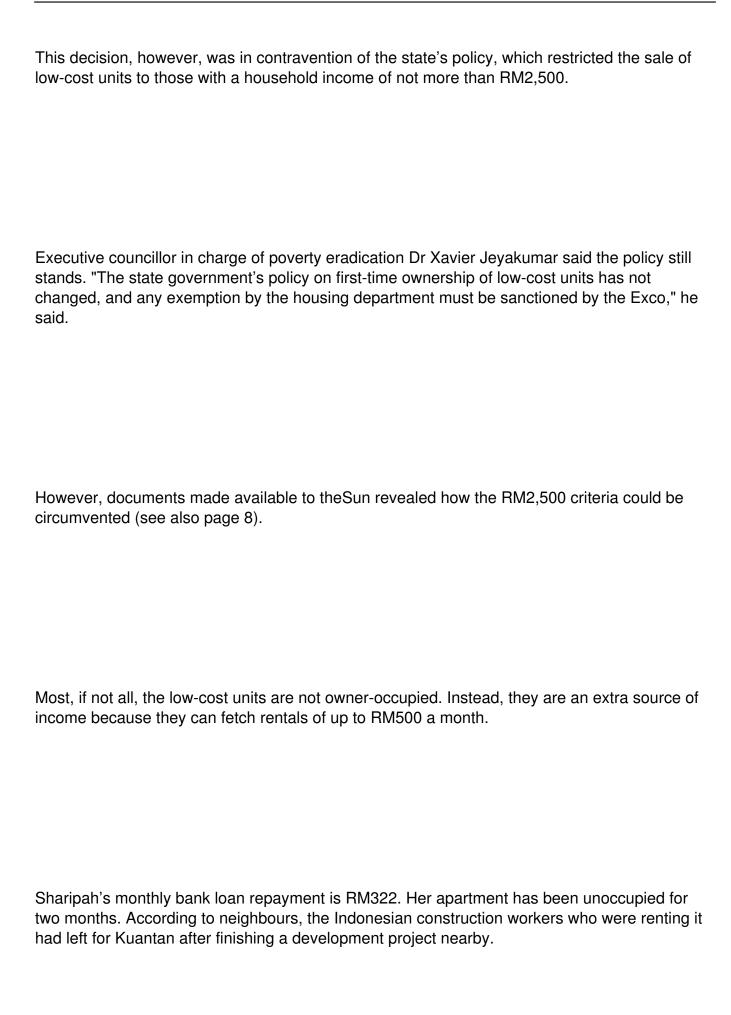
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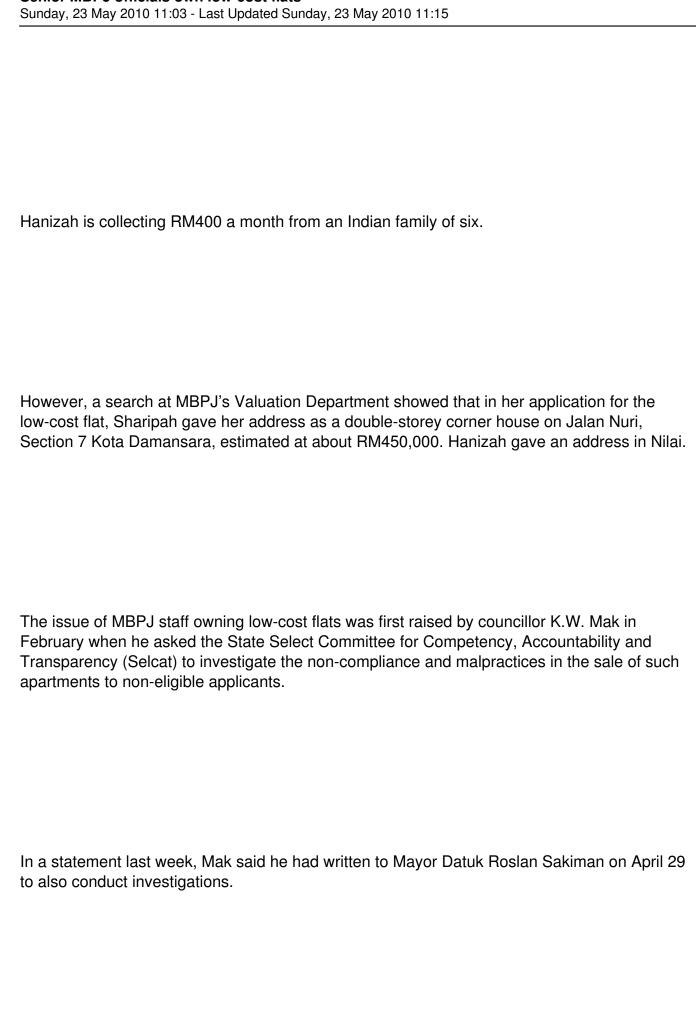
PETALING JAYA (May 20, 2010): SHE is chauffeur-driven in an official four-wheel drive on duties and states her address in official documents as a double-storey corner terrace house in Kota Damansara. But Sharipah Marhaini Syed Ali is also the owner of the low-cost apartment in Ara Damansara and happens to be the planning director of the Petaling Jaya City Council (MBPJ).

She is not the only senior official owning a low-cost apartment.

MBPJ's senior assistant engineer, Hanizah Katab, owns one in the same block – and so does about 500 other MBPJ employees, many using the names of wives, husbands and relatives to

own low-cost homes in Petaling Jaya.
By her own admission, Sharipah is not the only director who owns a low-cost flat. Questioned by a councillor, she charged that there are other "directors and deputy directors" who own such properties.
In a reply to a memo from Deputy Mayor Puasa Md Taib dated Feb 4, Sharipah argued that "if the policy is that those earning above RM2,500 are not eligible, then all the other officers involved should be asked to explain".
Going by the state government's guidelines on eligibility for low-cost units, they would not qualify by a mile because only those having combined family income of less than RM2,500 a month can apply.
However, according to Sharipah, there was a policy introduced in 2001, when the council took over squatter eradication efforts from the state, to allocate low-cost units to council staff.





Mak raised the issues after receiving complaints from former squatters who were promised low-cost units but never received offers once the construction of the low-cost flat was completed.
"These former squatters have shown me proof that they were interviewed and given alternative accommodation prior to waiting for the demolition of their village to make way for development and subsequent relocation to the completed flat in their former locale," he said.
Last week, two residents who had complained to Mak turned to theSun claiming that MBPJ officers had taken away apartments meant for them.
Mak said he has yet to see documents supporting the so-called policy to open up low-cost units to council staff.
In a statement today, MBPJ said developers offered excess units in eight low-cost housing schemes, on private lands, to its management team from year 2000 theSun