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Corruption: Two States issue directives

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Taking the cue from acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who had outlined the Government's seriousness in combating corruption, the heads of two State Governments issued new directives today on the declaration of assets.

Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Abu Zahar Isnin ordered his two new State Executive Coucillors to declare their assets within one month, while Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon went a step further and directed even the two municipal presidents in the State to make similar declarations.

Anwar had said yesterday the Government has sent out a clear signal on its stand on corruption.

In Penang, the order was issued to the Penang Island Municipal Council and Seberang Prai Municipal Council presidents.

Koh said this was necessary as the two council presidents were politicians and State Assemblymen holding executive positions in the Government.

The MPPP president is Dr Teng Hock Nan who is the Assemblyman for Kebun Bunga while MPSP is headed by Penanti Assemblyman Daud Taha.

Speaking to reporters during the State Assembly lunch break, Koh said however, that he would not ask the Penang Water Authority chairman, Permatang Pasir State Assemblyman Ahmad Saad to do likewise as the position was non-executive.

Koh said he had today received the declaration of assets from the newest member of the State Executive Council, Penaga Assemblyman Azhar Ibrahim who was appointed on May 1.

Koh said with Azhar's declaration, he now held the declaration of assets of the entire State Executive Council.

On whether the declarations would be made available to the Anti-Corruption Agency, he said he would do so if there was a request from the agency.

Koh said, however, that he might in the meantime, send a set of the declarations to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or his deputy Anwar who is currently the Acting Prime Minister.

In Malacca, Abu Zahar said the State Committee chairman for Education and Religious Development Datuk Sharif Md Drus, and State Committee chairman for Agriculture and Rural Development Datuk Ahmad Hamzah, would be given a month to declare their assets.

"This shows that the State Government is serious about preventing abuse of power," he said after chairing the State Exco meeting at his office in Seri Negeri.

The two Exco members took their oath of office before the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin on May 27.

Sharif replaces Datuk Mo'min Abdul Aziz who has been appointed the State Committee chairman for Housing and Local Government while Ahmad replaces Datuk Noordin Yaani who has taken over the portfolio of Youth, Sports and Family Development.

Meanwhile, two others who retained their portfolios include State Committee chairman for Health, Manpower and Consumer Affairs Datuk Wira Gan Boon Leong and Culture, Tourism and Environment, Datuk Poh Ah Tiam.

Abu Zahar, besides holding the post of Chief Minister, is also the State Committee chairman for Land, Finance and Economic Development.

Datuk Sahar Arpan who previously held the post of State Committee chairman for Science, Technology and Environment has been dropped.

Sahar had claimed trial on Monday to three counts of corruption relating to applications for two plots of land he allegedly approved in 1994 and 1995.

Meanwhile, the DAP welcomed the Government's move to check corruption.

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