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Four new faces in Selangor Exco line-up (HL)

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SHAH ALAM, Fri. - Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar today named four new faces to the State Executive Council and dropped Datuk Mohd Aini Taib and S. Rajagopal, the State Assemblymen for Sungai Burung and Bukit Raja respectively, from the line-up.

Mohd Aini was the chairman of two committees, State Finance and Budget, and Local Authority and Urbanisation, while Rajagopal headed the Unity, Estate and Mine Workers Housing and Consumer Affairs Committee.

The four new faces are: Datuk Mohd Sharif Jajang (State Assemblyman for Dengkil), K. Sivalingam (Ijok), Dr Pius Martin (Bukit Lanjan) and Datuk Fuad Hassan (Hulu Kelang).

Sharif, 54, is former Member of Parliament for Sepang; Martin, 62, is a Gerakan deputy speaker and central committee member; Sivalingam, 48, is a State MIC executive council member and chairman of the Shah Alam MIC division and Fuad, 45, is a prominent youth leader.

Abu Hassan was sworn in before the Sultan of Selangor at Istana Alam Shah this afternoon with a pledge to run a clean, committed and efficient Government.

Also sworn in were nine of the 10 Exco members. The absentee was Martin who is away on holiday in South Korea.

Except for Abu Hassan who holds five portfolios - Religious Affairs, Finance and Budget, Planning, Privatisation and Land and Housing - each of the Exco members now holds two portfolios.

The Exco, which was made up of eight members previously, had two more posts approved by the State Assembly, but these were left vacant by former Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib who resigned on April 14.

In announcing his line-up this morning, Abu Hassan said his decision to fill the additional posts was to ensure better distribution of the increasing workload in the State.

"This will enable them to concentrate and perform better in their respective portfolios. Previously, some held as many as three portfolios and that had created some problems because those with too many portfolios were bogged down with work," he added.

Abu Hassan stressed that although most of the members had been retained, the line-up was decided by him after consulting the Sultan, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Asked if his decision to drop Mohd Aini and Rajagopal had anything to do with the Anti-Corruption Agency's investigations into several State Assemblymen, Abu Hassan said:

"I did not say that. They (Mohd Aini and Rajagopal) told me that they wanted to concentrate on business so I decided to leave them out of the line-up so that they can do so without hindrance."

Mohd Aini, however, remains as Shah Alam Municipal Council president.

Abu Hassan also said that all the Exco members had been given one month from next Wednesday to declare their assets to him.

"Although they have made the declaration to the Anti-Corruption Agency, I still want them to make a similar declaration to me so that I will know what they now have," he added.

Mohd Aini was among six candidates who were disqualified from contesting Supreme Council seats in last year's Umno elections, over involvement in money politics.

The others were Perak Exco member Datuk Dr Abdul Malek Hanafiah, Shah Alam MP Datuk Salamon Selamat, Penang Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar, former Penang Exco member Datuk Abdul Latiff Mirasa and Johor Exco member Adam Hamid.

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