

**Probe getting 'curiouser and curiouser'
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Curiouser and curiouser - that's how Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang has described the investigations into the serious corruption allegations against the Anti-Corruption Agency director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor.

And he posed one key question today.

Is the ACA trying to derail and sabotage task force investigations into serious corruption allegations against its chief by unilaterally releasing unverified information about his assets declarations?

On Sunday, ACA's former Disciplinary Management Centre chief and currently ACA Negri Sembilan director, Halim Ibrahim, has sought to exonerate his boss by revealing details of Zulkipli's various declaration of assets while in public service since 1999.

According to Lim, this is "not only most unusual, unprecedented but questionable".

According to Halim, Zulkipli had made the declaration on three occasions since 1988. The first declaration, approved in 1999, was when Zulkipli was Johor police chief.

The second declaration on Sept 14, 2003, was said to be approved by the then chief secretary to the government on March 25, 2004.

The third declaration was sent to the Public Service Department on July 7 last year.

Halim said Zulkipli listed five properties - none in Pagoh, Johor, and no business interests as alleged by former subordinate, ex-Sabah ACA chief Mohd Ramli Manan - in his declaration of assets to the department.

"While welcoming such publication, ACA should as a matter of policy and principle adopt an open and transparent culture and not be selective in releasing information to suit the needs of its masters, whether political or bureaucratic," said Lim.

Why no probe on Osu?

According to the veteran opposition leader, ACA had earlier failed to take action in the case of the former Sabah chief minister and federal minister for land and co-operatives, Osu Sukam.

Osu has amassed such an astronomical wealth as to gamble RM158.7 million, lose RM31.6 million and run up RM7.1 million of debts in a London casino a year after his political retirement.

"I had pointed out that in Osu's 15 years in various public offices from deputy works minister in 1986 to Sabah chief minister 1999-2001, Osu would have at least made four declarations of his assets to the prime minister."

These declaration of assets should be the basis for ACA to launch a thorough investigation into Osu's unusual wealth, said Lim.

"Or are declarations of assets - whether by political leaders in government or top government officers - so unsatisfactory and defective that they are worthless tools in the battle to promote national integrity and combat corruption?"

Lim expressed fears that the investigation into allegations of corruption against ACA chief would not be independently carried out.

"In this connection, in the interests of accountability, transparency and integrity as well as public confidence in the investigations into the serious corruption allegations against Zulkipli, the composition of the special task force and who is heading the investigation should be publicly announced."

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