

Najib: MACC chief can now access ministers' asset info
MalaysiaKini.com
February 27, 2012
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The chief commissioner of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC) can now have access to the asset information of ministers, which before this was only available to the premier.

The announcement was made by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak today at the opening ceremony of Certified Integrity Officer Programme in Putrajaya.

"Today, I am heeding the call by the MACC advisory board, and agree that the MACC chief commissioner will have full access to the asset declaration documents of any members of the administration," he said to a round of applause.

Najib's administration has been under pressure after both Selangor and Penang state government, held by Pakatan Rakyat, declared assets of their state exco members in March 2009 and January this year respectively.

'Pakatan learned from us'

The proposal by MACC advisory panel chairperson Zaitun Zawiyah Puteh to allow MACC to keep a record of the declaration of assets of cabinet members, was initially met with objection within the administration including Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department VK Liew, who said it is inappropriate.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Mohd Nazri Abdul Aziz also against the idea of disclosing the ministers' asset to public "as this may endanger them".

Najib reiterated that BN government has long pioneered the policy of asset declaration compared to others.

"It is compulsory for all members of the administration to declare their assets and that of their immediate family members to the prime minister.

"Every addition and disposal of asset must be declared. Moreover, all the relevant asset declarations were made through statutory declarations," he added.

More MACC officers soon

Najib also announced that the government has agreed to increase the posts within MACC by 150 annually from the current 1,805 until it reaches 5,000, in order for the anti-graft body to perform better.

According to him, the number had actually dropped from 1,840 in 2008, when MACC had yet to be upgraded to a commission.

"This matter is quite worrying and raises questions. How is it possible for MACC to perform its duties effectively with such limited staff.

"More so when the purview given by the MACC Act 2009 is wider compared to the previous Anti-Corruption Act 1997 before the establishment of MACC," he added.

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