

**Guan Eng: Ministers, not kin, must declare assets**  
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**By Clara Chooi**

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 19 — Lim Guan Eng said today that public officials should declare their assets but appeared to agree with Umno minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Aziz to exclude family members.

However, the Penang Chief Minister stressed that declarations should be verified by independent audit firms instead of the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission (MACC), which he labelled a Barisan Nasional (BN) "tool".

"The first step is to start with ministers and those who hold positions of public trust, not with family members, because they may have their own sources of income," Lim (picture) told a press conference today.

He was responding to Nazri's statement today that ministers and their kin should not be compelled to disclose their assets to the public as it could endanger them.

"I think I can understand where Nazri is coming from. For those who have inherited assets, inherited wealth, or those with family wealth, those who were successful even before politics... that wealth, of course, may be subjected to attention for unhealthy elements.

"But there is a necessity, at least as the first step, to ask all office bearers, those who hold positions of public trust, to declare their assets," Lim said.

The MACC announced yesterday its proposal that all Cabinet ministers, deputy ministers and their immediate family members sign statutory declarations (SD) to declare their assets with the agency.

But Lim said the MACC could not be trusted, and urged the federal government to follow in the footsteps of Penang by appointing an independent audit firm to oversee the asset declarations.

"I feel the MACC is a tool of the BN. That's why we (Penang government) never asked the MACC... our assets are verified by KPMG, an international independent audit firm... because I think they have more standing than MACC," said Lim.

Cabinet ministers are presently required to disclose their assets to the Prime Minister but the information is not made public.

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