

# PM: No protection for anyone with graft scandals

*Anyone will be taken to court and the court will decide whether the individual is guilty or innocent, says Ismail Sabri*

THE government does not allow selective prosecution and will not protect any individuals who are embroiled in corruption scandals.

Prime Minister (PM) Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob said there are many ongoing court cases relating to corruption involving leaders from the Opposition as well as government blocs.

"This shows that the government is serious in taking action against those who practice corruption as well as other things relating to it.

"The government does not protect anyone when it comes to corruption. Anyone will be taken to court and the court will decide whether the individual is guilty or



*Pic by Muhd Amin Naharul*

**Anwar claims Malaysia's ranking drop in the 2021 CPI to 62nd is due to many unresolved corruption cases involving political figures**

innocent," he said in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Ismail Sabri was responding to a question from Opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who questioned the drop in Malaysia's

position in the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) for 2021, which the latter claimed was due to many unresolved corruption cases involving political figures.

Anwar said the Pandora Papers that were exposed last year, as well as the ongoing 1Malaysia Development Bhd trials, have tainted the country's image as it reflects the government's inefficiency in taking action against those implicated.

Ismail Sabri, however, denied the claims and stressed that the government does not protect selected individuals involved in the wrongdoings just to please certain quarters.

"I do not know if there was selective prosecution before this but in today's government, selective prosecution does not exist for anyone," said the PM.

The Pandora Papers had more than 11.9 million confidential files shared by an anonymous source which was obtained by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists.

It includes data from 14 offshore service firms that set up shell com-

panies and trusts in tax havens globally. The data include providers in Singapore, which has become among one of the preferred gateways for wealthy Malaysians to transfer their assets to tax havens.

There were also documents with regards to offshore dealings involving high net worth individuals in Malaysia from providers in Hong Kong or in the Caribbean and among the individuals named include Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Deputy Finance Minister II Yamani Hafez Musa and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, among others.

On the CPI, Ismail Sabri said corruption was not the sole contributor to the drop in Malaysia's position in the index as it was also dragged down by other human rights issues present in the country.

He said international organisations may have different views on human rights values in Malaysia and evaluated the country based on the values that they are familiar with.

"The drop in our score was not because of corruption, but it was also contributed by other issues such as human rights whereby the international organisations may have different values than our country," he said.

Malaysia was placed 62nd in terms of corruption out of the 180 countries that were evaluated in the global ranking by Transparency International.

The PM said Malaysia's CPI for 2021 was calculated based on nine out of 13 researches done by various international agencies. The report stated that Malaysia placed second after Singapore among the nine Asean countries involved.

"Among the matters that influenced the score and position of a country in the CPI include the different set of questions used for each country as well as varying number of respondents, target groups or countries involved in the report every year. For example, CPI for the year 2021 did not include Brunei," he added.

In 2020, Malaysia was ranked 57th, while in 2019 it was 51st.