

# Pandora Papers probe to continue

## PM orders agencies to conduct thorough investigations concerning the allegations

**KUALA LUMPUR:** The investigations into the allegations in the Pandora Papers will continue to ensure that action can be taken.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the investigation which involves the Royal Malaysia Police, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and Inland Revenue Board, among others, was focused on big personalities in the country, including a former prime minister and former finance minister.

“My instruction to these bodies is to continue thorough investigations and I am asking my fellow MPs to take a firm stance not to be protective and dispute the intentions of the investigation.

“If there is proof ... there are facts, then action will be taken. But if action is taken without facts, then it can be challenged as an abuse of power or being politically motivated. But if hundreds of billions or millions of ringgit are siphoned off, it will bring ruin and disaster to the country.

“At the international level, this is an expose but not many countries have the political determination to direct a thorough investigation, but Malaysia is a country which clearly wants to take action and stop this practice - the culture of shifting, looting the country’s money,” he said during the Prime Minister’s



**No let-up:** Anwar replying to questions on the Pandora Papers issue during the Prime Minister’s Q&A session in Dewan Rakyat. - Bernama

Question and Answer session in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar was replying to Datuk Seri Dr Noraini Ahmad (BN-Parit Sulong), who wanted to know the government’s stance on the Pandora Papers, as well as the extent of the investigation and follow-up by the those conducting the investigation.

To a supplementary question by Noraini about steps taken by the government to ensure transparency and accountability of the financial industry, Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said the government had established transparency in the open tender process, especially involving bumiputras.

“There is a practice of helping the bumiputra, but embezzling cannot be allowed. While there is a policy to help the bumiputra, we cannot allow bumiputra to ask companies to give money to individuals and parties,” he said.

Answering an additional question from Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (PN-Kubang Kerian) on whether the government intends to examine offshore accounts, including political funds that have been channelled abroad, the Prime Minister said these matters, including the Pandora Papers, are a priority because it affects the interests of the country as a whole.

Elaborating further, Anwar said the amount of money involved in the Pandora Papers revelations was considered quite high compared to the total population and the country’s economic position.

“Money that was taken out of Malaysia was from illicit sources, mostly illegal but I can’t say all are (illegal). This is up to the investigative body, but this number is quite high for this country.

“Even though there are 3,000 (names), the priority is according to the coordination of the investigative bodies, and it is not excluding the funds from abroad or within the country or to offshore tax havens to elude tax; and those that violate the

law are being investigated, and several actions have been taken,” he said.

Anwar also gave the assurance that the investigation regarding the issue would not be carried out shoddily as it must serve as a lesson to all parties that the government will not allow such matters to persist.

The Pandora Papers refers to an investigation report released in October 2021 by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) in which over 11.9 million confidential financial documents were leaked from 14 financial services companies worldwide.

The leak exposed the secret offshore accounts of world leaders, including current and former presidents, prime ministers, heads of state, billionaires, celebrities, and business leaders, with two Malaysians among the 336 global politicians alleged in the report.

On Oct 25, 2021, Former Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Parliament and Law) Datuk Seri Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar had said that a federal investigation into the papers would be launched.