

PM orders continuance of Pandora Papers probe

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has ordered that investigations related to the Pandora Papers should continue to be carried out thoroughly to ensure that action can be taken.

He said the probe, which among others, involves the Police, Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission and the Inland Revenue Board, is focused on major personalities in the country, including the former prime minister and former finance minister who were believed to have misused their powers to garner wealth during their tenure of service.

"My instruction to these

> Investigation to focus on personalities, including former premier and ex-finance minister; MPs urged to take firm stance and not dispute move

bodies is to continue thorough investigations, and I am asking my fellow MPs, comprising a total of 222 individuals, to take a firm stance not to be protective and dispute the intentions of the investigation.

"If there is proof, if there are facts, then action will be taken. However, 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. Not many countries have the political determination to direct a thorough investigation but Malaysia is a nation 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 Question and Answer session in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

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

To a supplementary question by Noraini about steps taken by the government to ensure transparency and accountability of the financial sector and tax protection, Anwar, who is also finance minister, said the government has established transparency in the open tender process, especially involving bumiputeras.

Replying to 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, Anwar said these matters, including the Pandora Papers, are a priority because they affect the interests of the country as a whole.

He added that the amount of money involved in the Pandora Papers issue is considered quite high when compared with the total population and the country's economic position, Bernama reported.

"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 bodies but this number is quite high for this country.

"Although there are 3,000 (names), the priority is according to the coordination of the investigative bodies," he said.



Anwar stressing a point in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday. - **BERNAMAPIC**