

Evidence on plot to topple gov't uncovered, say police sources

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Evidence from Thai police could prove crucial in the ongoing investigation by the Malaysian police into the role of several prominent Malaysians behind a plot to bring down the government led by Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak, according to police sources.

The scheme, they said, was being executed through a media campaign aimed at attacking 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB).

Thai police sources said Swiss national Xavier Andre Justo had provided investigators with a detailed timeline on the conspiracy to undermine the Malaysian government put together by parties led by Sarawak Report editor Clare Rewcastle-Brown over the last six months.

Justo, who was arrested in mid-June in Thailand, had confessed to stealing and trying to blackmail his former employer with stolen confidential data, and was sentenced to three years jail after he pleaded guilty to the charge.

In April 2011, while working as PetroSaudi International's head of IT unit, he stole more than 90 gigabytes of data from his company's servers and had his contract with the company terminated shortly after.

In 2013, Justo tried to extort financial gain from the information he stole to blackmail his former employers.

Those attempts failed and the 48-year-old began looking for new buyers of the information.

Police sources said that through a friend in Switzerland, Justo made contact with London-based businessman Kamal Siddiqi who introduced him to Rewcastle-Brown, who then made various attempts to broker the sale of the stolen information with several Malaysian groups.

Thai police sources said that Rewcastle-Brown first approached Nurul Izzah Anwar, the daughter of jailed former deputy prime minister Anwar Ibrahim, to acquire the information from Justo but the deal did not work out due to differences over the mode of payment.

After various attempts with potential buyers, Rewcastle-Brown finally made contact sometime in November with opposition figure Tony Pua who put her in touch with The Edge Media Group owner, Tong Kooi Ong.

The police sources said that Rewcastle-Brown, Justo, and Tong met at the Fullerton Hotel in Singapore sometime in February this year and, shortly after, The Edge owner and Justo agreed to terms for the sale of the stolen corporate data.

According to the sources, Tong agreed to pay US\$2 million to Justo Consulting Co Ltd, based

in the Thai resort town of Koh Samui, for the sale of what was described as 'Justo Property IT Software'.

Justo had confessed that agreement was meant to mask the payment for the sale of the stolen PetroSaudi data.

Shortly after the agreement was completed, Sarawak Report began its aggressive coverage together with The Edge and its news portal Malaysian Insider on developments surrounding PetroSaudi and 1MDB.

- Bernama

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