

Dr M: We need to see WSJ documents before action can be taken

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PUTRAJAYA: The government needs to see documents cited by the *Wall Street Journal* (WSJ) that linked China to state investment fund 1Malaysia Development Bhd (IMDB), before taking action.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government needed to get the documents as evidence that China had allegedly offered to help bail out IMDB in return for securing lucrative railway and pipeline projects for its One Belt, One Road programme, as reported by WSJ.

“This is a statement made by somebody in the press. There are documents, I suppose but the documents must be shown to us and be in our hands before we can take any action.

“So until then, we can’t take any action. We have to get the documents first and use them as evidence that the agreement has indeed taken place.”

WSJ reported that senior Chinese leaders had, in 2016, offered to bail out IMDB, which was at the centre of a swelling, multibillion-dollar graft scandal.

The report which cited minutes from a series of previously undisclosed meetings, added that China also offered to bug the homes and offices of WSJ reporters in Hong Kong who were on IMDB’s trail, to learn who they were getting their information from.

Chinese officials told visiting Malaysians that China would use its influence to try to get the United States and other countries to drop their probes into allegations

that allies of the then prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, and others, had plundered the IMDB fund, the minutes of the meetings show.

“In return, Malaysia offered lucrative stakes in railway and pipeline projects for China’s One Belt, One Road programme of building infrastructure abroad.

“Within months, Najib, who has denied any wrongdoing in the IMDB matter, signed US\$34 billion of rail and pipeline deals with Chinese state companies, to be funded by Chinese banks and built by Chinese workers,” said the report written by Tom Wright and Bradley Hope.

When asked on fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho, or Jho Low, Dr Mahathir said the government would continue its search for him even though it was difficult.

“There are only seven billion people (in the world), so it’s not very difficult to find him. If we can find a needle in a haystack, Jho Low will be the needle in the haystack,” he said after chairing the sixth Special Cabinet Committee on Anti-Corruption here.

It was reported yesterday that Jho Low has dismissed WSJ’s report claiming that he had a role in facilitating deals with China to bail out IMDB in 2016 in exchange for lucrative contracts.

On Jho Low’s accusations that it was politically motivated, Dr Mahathir said the former had said that many times before.

“He was politically motivated to steal money.”