

MALAYSIA TO GET BACK RM1B FUNDS LINKED TO 1MDB

US, Singapore ready to return embezzled money by next week, say sources

KUALA LUMPUR

THE United States and Singapore authorities are preparing to return almost RM1 billion of funds linked to the Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal to Malaysia.

Bloomberg, quoting “people familiar with the matter”, reported that US\$200 million (RM828.46 million) of funds misappropriated from 1MDB was being made

ready to be returned to Malaysia.

The total included about US\$140 million from the sale of a stake in New York’s Park Lane Hotel and some US\$60 million from a settlement paid by the producer of the *Wolf of Wall Street* movie, said two of the people, who asked not to be named as the details are private.

The transfer could happen as soon as next week, they said.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reached out to countries from Switzerland to Singapore for help in tracking and recouping the US\$4.5 billion believed to have been siphoned from 1MDB.

The scandal surrounding the state fund, set up to finance development projects in the Southeast Asian nation, has ensnared

people and institutions from Malaysia’s former leader Datuk Seri Najib Razak to Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Bloomberg reported.

It said representatives of the US Department of Justice did not immediately respond to a request for comment on Thursday after regular business hours.

The US\$140 million stake in the Park Lane Hotel, which sits on Central Park South, was sold in February after fugitive Malaysian businessman Low Taek Jho agreed to drop his claims on the property.

The US\$60 million was paid by Red Granite Pictures Inc, co-founded by Najib’s stepson Riza Aziz, as part of a settlement with the Department of Justice over claims that it financed the *Wolf of*

Wall Street movie with funds misappropriated from 1MDB, Bloomberg reported.

This week, the Department of Justice said a set of diamond jewellery worth US\$1.7 million that Low gave to his mother, allegedly using money from 1MDB, would be returned to the US as part of a forfeiture lawsuit.

Meanwhile, Singaporean authorities are preparing to return about S\$35 million (RM78.99 million) surrendered by former Goldman Sachs Group Inc banker Roger Ng and his family in connection with the 1MDB scandal to Malaysia.

A Singaporean court in recent weeks cleared the way for the funds to be repatriated, Bloomberg reported, adding that Singapore authorities did not im-

mediately reply to an email seeking comments, nor did Ng’s lawyer.

Ng faces charges in Malaysia and the US for his involvement in US\$6.5 billion of bond sales that Goldman arranged for 1MDB.

Ng has denied wrongdoing. He was deputy to Goldman’s former Southeast Asia chairman Tim Leissner, who has pleaded guilty to US charges, including conspiring to launder money.

Both men have been banned from the US financial industry by the Federal Reserve, Bloomberg reported.

Singapore in September ordered the first batch of misappropriated 1MDB money — S\$15.3 million recovered in various currencies — to be returned to Malaysia.



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