



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim inspecting a guard of honour at the Malaysian Red Crescent Society's 75th anniversary celebration in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

EXTRADITION BID

PM: GOVT IN TALKS TO BRING BACK JHO LOW

Negotiations via diplomatic channels for 1MDB fugitive to face the music

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has confirmed that efforts are ongoing to bring fugitive

businessman Low Taek Jho, better known as Jho Low, back to Malaysia.

Negotiations, he said, were underway to bring Low, wanted for his role in the multi-billion ringgit 1Malaysia Development Bhd (1MDB) scandal, back to face criminal charges.

However, the prime minister declined to confirm if the negotiations involved China, saying that discussions were taking place with the countries involved via proper diplomatic channels.

"We never confirmed the country (where Low was believed to be hiding in). However, negotiations are taking place to expedite the (repatriation) process.

"Discussions (on the matter)

are underway with the countries involved through the proper diplomatic channels," he said after officiating at the launch of the 75th anniversary celebration of the Malaysian Red Crescent Society and the launch of its headquarters here yesterday.

Pressed further if the negotiations involved China, Anwar replied: "No, I can't comment on that."

However, he stressed that the government was committed to prosecuting Low for his crimes as soon as possible.

"Of course. That has always been our position. We have been tough about it from day one (of the present administration)."

Anwar acknowledged that the process of bringing Low back was complicated, involving several countries, intelligence services, Interpol and others.

"Having said that, the countries involved are cooperating, staying in touch and providing their support."

Bradley Hope, co-author of the book *Billion Dollar Whale*, which chronicled the 1MDB saga, last month said the Malaysian government was negotiating with China over Low's extradition.

Hope cited sources as saying that Low had become a "liability of the worst kind" for China after

former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak lost the general election in 2018.

He quoted sources as saying that such a deal would allow Malaysia to recover all the money stolen from 1MDB along with other assets linked to the sovereign wealth fund.

Low, who has also been charged in Malaysia and the United States over the 1MDB scandal, was believed to be in Macau. However, China had denied harbouring the fugitive.

In March, he was sentenced in absentia to 10 years' imprisonment by a Kuwait court on charges of money laundering.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Acryl Sani Abdullah Sani last year reiterated the police's commitment to hunting down the fugitive businessman and to bring him back to Malaysia to face the charges against him.

Former US attorney-general Jeff Sessions had previously described the 1MDB scandal as "kleptocracy at its worst".

The US Justice Department had dubbed the 1MDB issue as the world's biggest kleptocracy.

Legislative bodies in countries such as Switzerland and Singapore had initiated action against banks and individuals connected to money-laundering activities linked to 1MDB.