

Kit Siang: Will 'wife of MO1' now do as Leonardo and Miranda?

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DAP veteran asks if 'wife of MO1' will hand over assets worth millions allegedly bought with 1MDB funds.

PETALING JAYA: Now that prominent celebrities such as Leonardo DiCaprio and Miranda Kerr have handed over 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB)-linked assets worth millions of dollars, DAP veteran Lim Kit Siang wants to know whether the wife of "Malaysian Official 1" (MO1) will do the same.

"With American actor Leonardo DiCaprio and Australian supermodel Miranda Kerr handing over their multi-million dollar 1MDB-linked gifts from Jho Low to the DoJ, all eyes are now on the 'wife of MO1'," he said in a statement today.

He asked if the "wife of MO1" would emulate DiCaprio and Kerr and turn over to US authorities "all these multi-million US dollar worth of jewellery gifts from Jho Low which were diverted and misappropriated from 1MDB funds".

He was referring to news reports today that Kerr had handed over US\$8.1 million (RM35 million) worth of jewellery allegedly purchased with 1MDB funds to the United States Department of Justice (DoJ).

According to The Wall Street Journal, Kerr had transferred the gifts to government agents last Friday and reiterated her intent to cooperate with the DoJ's inquiry in any way possible.

Her move followed that of DiCaprio, who on June 16 turned over an Oscar won by Marlon Brando to US investigators probing alleged money laundering in connection with 1MDB.

DiCaprio's representatives said the actor had also initiated the return of other unidentified items that he said he had accepted as gifts for a charity auction and which originated from people connected to 1MDB.

This came after news on June 15 that the DoJ was seeking to recover US\$540 million in assets including art works, jewellery and film rights that it says were purchased with funds misappropriated from 1MDB.

This brings the total sought by the DoJ to US\$1.8 billion.

The items cited in the new suit as subject to seizure include a Park Avenue condominium, diamond jewellery, shares of fitness club operator Fly Wheel Sports Inc, a painting by Pablo Picasso titled “Nature Morte au Crane de Taureau” and rights to the 2014 film “Dumb and Dumber To”.

The DoJ suit added that Malaysian businessman Low Taek Jho, also known as Jho Low, had purchased a 22-carat pink diamond necklace worth US\$27.3 million for the “wife of MO1”, using the same source of funds.

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