

## **Malaysia has not put in request for Sirul's extradition - Dr Mahathir**

**BERNAMA**

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PUTRAJAYA, June 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government had not put in any request to Australia for the extradition of convicted murderer Sirul Azhar Umar.

He said the former police officer who was convicted and sentenced to death for the murder of Mongolian model Altantuya Shaariibuu was not allowed to return home.

"Sirul cannot return to Malaysia because Australia does not allow people who are facing the gallows to return to their own country.

"We might commute his death sentence to life imprisonment so that he can return to Malaysia," he told a press conference here today.

Earlier, he chaired a Cabinet Committee meeting on Integrity of Government Management.

UK daily, The Guardian, reported that Australian authorities had approved Malaysia's request to extradite Sirul, who is expected to return to Malaysia within a month.

It quoted that Sirul was expected to leave Australia after Malaysia agreed to cover the costs.

Australia had initially refused to extradite Sirul as it would violate the country's law which forbids a person facing the death sentence to be returned to his country of origin.



On whether Sirul feared for his safety should he return to Malaysia, Dr Mahathir replied, "he has a choice for not coming back."

On whether the government would reopen the case of Altantuya, he said, "we have been asked to look into it."

On May 16, Mongolian President Khaltmaagiin Battulga wrote to Dr Mahathir requesting him to help bring justice in the case of Altantuya.

In 2013, the Court of Appeal overturned the sentences of Sirul and his accomplice Azilah Hadrim. However, upon the prosecution's appeal, their death sentences were upheld by the Federal Court. Azilah is still awaiting a response from the Selangor Pardons Board to his

application for a pardon.

Sirul fled to Australia where he was detained by Australian Immigration after Interpol issued a red notice on him.

PKR leader, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim suggested that Sirul be brought back to Malaysia for fresh a trial.

Sirul had indicated that he was prepared to assist and tell the new government about the murder, on condition of a full pardon.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir said the government might arrest Low Taek Jho or Jho Low for his alleged involvement in the 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB) scandal.

He is not in the country and we don't have extradition rights where he is staying, he said.

Asked which country Jho Low was presently in, he replied, many countries.

Regarding his meeting with UMNO acting president Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi yesterday, he said the latter requested to see him to express his support for the new government.

He is welcome to support the government and he is welcome to oppose the government, said Dr Mahathir.

Yesterday, Ahmad Zahid uploaded on his social website a photograph of him meeting the premier at Perdana Leadership Foundation.

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