

'Equanimity' will be sold by this year- AG

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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 14 (Bernama) --The luxury superyacht 'Equanimity', believed to be owned by fugitive businessman Low Taek Jho or Jho Low will be sold within three to four months, said Attorney-General Tommy Thomas.

He said the yacht worth RM1 billion, believed to be part of the assets purchased using funds from 1Malaysia Development Berhad (1MDB), could be sold pending litigation in a very transparent way as they (1MDB) need to transform the ship into monies.

"We expect the process (of selling the yacht) will be completed within three to four months pending nobody contesting the ownership of the yacht in our courts.

"The money that we get (from the selling) will be transferred into a fixed bank account which will be granted to any party who can successfully establish the ownership of the yacht in a civil suit," he said at a special session during 2018 International Malaysia Law Conference here, today.

The super yacht arrived in Malaysia on Aug 7 after being handed over by the Indonesian authorities.

The Equanimity was seized off the coast of Bali by Indonesia in February at the request of US authorities as part of a multi-billion dollar corruption probe launched by the DoJ over 1MDB.

However, an Indonesian court ruled in April that the seizure was illegal and that the yacht should be returned to its owners.

But Indonesian authorities seized the yacht again in July following a formal request for legal assistance from the US. Indonesia then agreed it would hand over the super yacht to Malaysia.

In a separate matter, Thomas said Jho Low should appoint a lawyer to set aside the warrant order by the Kuala Lumpur High Court against the seizure of the luxury super yacht.

"He should appoint a good shipping lawyer to set aside the order in our Court," Thomas said.

He said this when asked about Jho Low's comment that Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad 'hijacked' the legal proceedings of other countries in order to acquire the Equanimity.

Furthermore, Thomas also said that he had no jurisdiction to interfere with the investigations of police or any other relevant authority like the Malaysian Anti-Corruption Commission or Customs Department.

"Multiple agencies will investigate independently and we receive the IPs (investigation papers) after the investigations are completed. So far SRC papers came to us," he said.

Former prime minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak is facing criminal breach of trust and abuse of power charges related to SRC International funds. SRC used to be a subsidiary of 1MDB before it was taken over by the Ministry of Finance,

It was reported on Aug 7 that 1MDB claimed ownership over Equanimity, which docked at the Boustead Cruise Centre in Klang, Selangor.

Other claimants are two of 1MDB subsidiaries and the government of Malaysia who believe their money was misappropriated in the purchase of the yacht.

It was also reported that the A-G's Chambers had invoked the Admiralty jurisdiction of the High Court in Kuala Lumpur against the yacht and on Aug 6, the court issued a warrant against it.

Commenting about political interference, Thomas said politicians are entitled to say anything.

"I do not mind. Principle of sub-judice does not exist. I support free speech," he said.

Asked about civil servants who sabotage or leak information to those who had been in the previous government, Thomas said they will be prosecuted if there is sufficient evidence.

"Charges will be made against several individuals," he said.

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