

KL sets its sights on Pulau Batu Puteh

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Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and cabinet ministers also attended the function.

Abdullah also said the cabinet has decided to thank Wisma Putra and its team for the success on Sipadan and Ligitan islands at the ICJ.

"The cabinet is satisfied with the solution and we can consider that one of the problems within Malaysia-Indonesia bilateral relations has been solved."

However, Malaysia and Singapore have failed to resolve the dispute over Pulau Batu Puteh through the normal diplomatic channels.

Singapore has not indicated any plans to bring up the matter for arbitration but the dispute may have to be referred to the ICJ due to the inability of both countries to resolve the issue.

Yesterday, the ICJ decided by a 16-1 majority that Malaysia has a rightful

claim to Sipadan and Ligitan based on its effective control of both islands.

The dispute over the two islands had dragged on since 1969.

In Johor Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said he was confident that facts like the history, management, administration and location of the disputed island would favour Malaysia.

Kuala Lumpur was confident its claims to Pulau Batu Puteh would be resolved in its favour, he said after chairing the state executive council meeting, Bernama reported.

The only structure on Pulau Batu Puteh is a lighthouse and the island is tightly guarded round-the-clock by Singapore personnel although it is only about 13km off Malaysia's coast.

Malaysian fishermen have been stopped from fishing in the island's waters by Singapore marine police.

PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia now plans to stake its rightful claim on Pulau Batu Puteh which has been disputed by Singapore since 1996.

"Pulau Batu Puteh will be next," said Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday after the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled on Tuesday that the disputed islands of Sipadan and Ligitan, which were jointly claimed by Indonesia, belong to Malaysia.

"A thorough preparation will have to be made and arguments to prove the claim that the island belongs to us must be articulated as best as possible," Abdullah, who is also home minister, said after attending the ministry's Hari Raya gathering.