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Mahathir-Singapore

M'SIA DOES NOT RECOGNISE S'PORE'S AUTHORITY IN PULAU BATU PUTEH

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Malaysia does not recognise Singapore's authority in the waters off Pulau Batu Puteh because the matter is still under dispute and has not been decided on.

"As such, we have as much right as Singapore (to be there)," he told a media conference at the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) base in Subang, near here, upon his return from a weeklong working visit overseas.

He said this when asked to comment on Singapore Defence Minister Dr Tan Keng Yam's statement on Wednesday urging Malaysia to stop the repeated intrusions by its naval and police boats in the waters off Pulau Batu Puteh.

On Singapore Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar's statement that the republic's actions on Pulau Batu Puteh were no different in law from Malaysia's own actions on Pulau Sipadan, Dr Mahathir said that it was not true.

"No. In Sipadan, the Indonesians came there and some of them landed there, we didn't stop them.

"It (Sipadan island) was in dispute. We didn't behave like Singapore, we (Malaysia) didn't chase them (the Indonesians) away... and we didn't fight against them and we didn't try to shoo them off," he said.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the Hague, Netherlands, ruled on Dec 17 that the two islands belong to Malaysia.

Singapore and Malaysia have also agreed to refer their dispute over the tiny outcrop of Pulau Batu Puteh to the ICJ.

Asked whether Singapore's warning to Malaysia not to go near the waters of Pulau Batu Puteh, when its own air force had often encroached on Malaysian airspace, reflected the island republic's arrogance, Dr Mahathir said that the media could make their own interpretation.

On Singapore's willingness to resolve its water dispute with Malaysia through arbitration, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would study the matter first.

"We will study what they want to weigh and balance," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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