

Promises must be kept, Dr M says after Johor ruler criticises Batu Puteh decision

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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad has defended his government's decision not to proceed with an International Court of Justice (ICJ) review on Pulau Batu Puteh's sovereignty in 2018.

This was after Johor's Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar criticised the decision in a recent Facebook post.

On his blog today, Mahathir said Malaysia and Singapore had both agreed to let the ICJ rule on Pulau Batu Puteh and to accept the ruling.

In 2008, the ICJ gave the sovereignty of Pulau Batu Puteh to Singapore.

Malaysia then filed a fresh review in 2017.

Mahathir, however, said that the ICJ's decision was final and that the court's

ruling must be respected.

"An honourable country must keep its promise. Only a dishonourable country would break it.

"Final is final. If a country does not keep its promise, then no other country would enter an agreement with it. It would become a pariah state," he added.

Langkawi not in the same boat

Last week, Sultan Ibrahim said dropping the review on Pulau Batu Puteh was akin to giving up without a fight.

He also questioned why Mahathir's 2018 government did not take Johor's sovereignty into account and treated the state like a stepchild.

"How would Kedahans feel if Malaysia lost Langkawi to Thailand?" the monarch asked.

However, Mahathir said this was not an apt comparison.

This is as, unlike Pulau Batu Puteh, Langkawi belonging to Kedah has never been

disputed and neither has Thailand claimed control over the island, the Langkawi MP added.

Earlier this month the government had announced that a task force would seek international legal advice to explore options for a judicial review of the Pulau Batu Puteh case.

The task force will be led by former attorney-general Mohamed Apandi Ali who filed the 2017 ICJ review.

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