

## **Anwar: Mishandling of Batu Puteh issue a betrayal to nation**

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**Bernama**

Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim has described the mishandling of the Batu Puteh issue as a form of betrayal to the nation.

He said despite the government's acceptance of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruling, no nation would willingly cede territory without a fight, often going to great lengths to defend even a small area.

"...and that is why the Madani government has decided to establish a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) to uncover the truth.

"It is crucial to understand why Malaysia, a proud and distinguished nation, easily allowed such a great lapse, failing to use all available legal avenues to safeguard our rights.

"If anyone considers this a minor issue, they have a problem with their attitude as a Malaysian as this has never happened in global history," he said during the National Day 2024 address in Putrajaya today.

On May 23, 2008, the ICJ ruled that Singapore had sovereignty over Batu Puteh, while Middle Rocks, situated less than 1km from the island, belongs to Malaysia.

The ICJ also ruled that ownership rights over South Ledge, approximately 4km from Batu Puteh, would be determined based on the maritime boundaries of the state in control.

On Jan 24, the cabinet approved the establishment of an RCI to examine the handling of the sovereignty case related to Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and the South Ledge.

Yesterday, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reforms) Azalina Othman Said stated that the RCI report will be tabled in Parliament, and the recommendations debated.

She said the report was presented in the cabinet meeting on Wednesday by RCI chairman and former chief justice Md Raus Sharif.

### **Reminder to future generations**

Anwar said the debate in Parliament regarding Batu Puteh will serve as a lesson and a reminder to future generations not to sacrifice national interests.

“We will allow open debates in Parliament and outside Parliament to serve as a lesson and reminder to future generations that this country was built through struggle, sweat, tears and the blood of warriors who fought against colonial powers for centuries, and its interests should not be compromised,” said Anwar, who is also finance minister.

He also advised youths to embrace the spirit of independence by engaging more with history and enhancing their knowledge to uphold the nation’s values.

The event, organised by the National Unity Ministry, saw the participation of around 7,000 attendees and featured a special performance by Tabika Perpaduan pupils, highlighting elements of the Rukun Negara and also a discussion on National Sovereignty as a Collective Responsibility, reflecting on the Lahad Datu incident.

- Bernama

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