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## Federal govt not an outsider, says Dr M

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad has rejected the notion that the federal government is an "outsider" with regard to the status of Johor's Pulau Kukup as a national park.

Responding to a statement by Tunku Mahkota Johor Tunku Ismail Sultan Ibrahim that "outsiders" should not meddle in the state's decision to change the island's status from a national park to sultanate land, Dr Mahathir said the government was within its rights in handling the issue.

"Malaysians are not outsiders. The federal government... not outsiders.

"We are responsible for everything happening in the country," he said.

Asked if Sultan of Johor Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar would accept the cabinet's decision that Pulau Kukup should retain its status as a national park, Dr Mahathir said he hoped so.

"I hope Johor will accept the decision as it is the stand of the federal government.

"Pulau Kukup should remain as a forest reserve, particularly as it is a mangrove forest.

"It should not be developed," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking after officiating the Empowering Local Council Convention hosted by the Housing and Local Government Ministry at the Putrajaya International Convention Centre.

Present was Housing and Local Government Minister Zuraida Kamaruddin.

The Johor government announced recently that Pulau Kukup had been degazetted as a national park and declared as sultanate land.

However, the Johor assembly later voted to urge the government to review the decision.

On Thursday, Tunku Ismail tweeted that his father, Sultan Ibrahim, had decided that Pulau Kukup would remain a national park but also turned into sultanate land.