



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim speaking to reporters after Friday prayers at Surau Al-Manar in Putrajaya yesterday. NSTP PIC BY MOHD FADLI HAMZAH

BATU PUTEH INQUIRY

'RCI FINDINGS EXPOSE BETRAYAL, FLAWS'

Relinquishing sovereignty no trivial matter, says Anwar

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the findings of the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) into Malaysia's withdrawal of its application to review the International Court of Justice's ruling on Batu Puteh's sovereignty exposed significant weaknesses and acts of betrayal.

Speaking to reporters after Friday prayers here, Anwar said safeguarding every inch of the nation's sovereignty was paramount.

"The RCI revealed weaknesses and, in some aspects, betrayal, as every inch of our land must be defended to the utmost. The failure to do so has now been exposed," he said.

"This is no trivial matter. Any wrongdoing involving the relinquishment of sovereignty constitutes a serious betrayal."

Anwar added that follow-up actions regarding the RCI findings

tabled in Parliament on Thursday would proceed according to the rule of law.

"The legal process must be respected, so we shall observe the next step in this process."

The RCI, among its legal suggestions, recommended launching a criminal investigation against former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

According to the commission, a criminal investigation can be initiated for offences under Section 415(b) of the Penal Code, which covers offences related to cheating by intentionally inducing the person deceived to do something that can cause damage or harm to any person in body, mind, reputation, or property.

As such, the RCI proposed that a police report be lodged by its secretary to enable the investigation to commence.

On Aug 29, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reforms) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said the RCI report on the Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge issue would be tabled in Parliament, after it was presented to the cabinet on Aug 28.

The RCI, chaired by former chief justice Tun Md Raus Sharif, was tasked with reviewing the handling of matters related to the sovereignty of Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge.

In February, the government announced that His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, had consented to the establishment of the RCI.

The issue stems from the government's 2018 decision to withdraw Malaysia's application to review the ICJ's ruling on the sovereignty of Batu Puteh.

At the time, the government was led by Dr Mahathir.

In 2008, the ICJ ruled that Batu Puteh belonged to Singapore, while Middle Rocks was awarded to Malaysia.

It also ruled that the ownership of South Ledge would be determined based on the delimitation of territorial waters.

Malaysia had applied to review the ICJ ruling in 2017, but withdrew the application in May 2018.

The RCI report said Malaysia could refile a new interpretation application at any appropriate time.

The RCI also said the loss of sovereignty over Batu Puteh, as decided by the ICJ on May 23, 2008, should serve as a lesson, emphasising that weaknesses, carelessness and complacency in matters involving national sovereignty, as seen in the case, must not be repeated.

Page 1 pic: An undated file picture showing the Horsburgh Lighthouse on Batu Puteh.