

Batu Puteh RCI not act of revenge, says PM

PUTRAJAYA: The Tioyal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) related to the sovereignty of Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge is not an act of revenge on Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said the narrative of vengeance should not be raised in the issue, especially by the Opposition.

“There is no such thing as revenge.

“The special task force was set up before my time. It was when Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob was the prime minister, the ministers (then) were Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin and Datuk Seri Takiyuddin Hassan.

“The findings by their special task force were far worse. So, don’t play the revenge narrative,” he said.

Anwar said this to reporters after Friday prayers at Surau

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

Darul Ulum, SMK Agama Putrajaya, Presint 11 here, yesterday, Bernama reported.

On Oct 8, 2021, the Cabinet then agreed to establish a special task force to review the laws related to Batu Puteh.

Anwar reiterated that the RCI is a principle to defend the country’s sovereignty.

“This is a matter of territory. Is there a country that allows its territory to be handed over so easily?” he said.

On Thursday, several opposition MPs claimed that the Batu

Puteh RCI procedure was vindictive.

Asked if Dr Mahathir should be subject to action as recommended in the RCI, Anwar said: “I am not suggesting anything. I leave that to the Attorney General’s Chambers.”

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

The issue stems from a 2018 decision made by the government, then led by Dr Mahathir, to withdraw Malaysia’s application

to review the International Court of Justice (ICJ) decision on the sovereignty of Batu Puteh.

In 2008, the ICJ had granted Middle Rocks to Malaysia and Batu Puteh to Singapore, while leaving the ownership of South Ledge to be determined based on the delimitation of territorial waters.

On Dec 5, the RCI released its declassified report, stating that Dr Mahathir had unilaterally decided to withdraw applications to review and interpret the ICJ’s 2008 decision.

The RCI, headed by former chief justice Tun Md Raus Sharif, also suggested that a criminal probe be initiated against Dr Mahathir for his action in the sovereignty issue.

On Thursday, three former ministers - Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Datuk Seri Mohamad Sabu and Anthony

Leke - said Dr Mahathir, then in his second stint as the prime minister, had informed the Cabinet meeting on May 23, 2018, of the unilateral decision on Batu Puteh.

In reaction, Dr Mahathir and opposition Perikatan Nasional chairman Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, also a Cabinet minister then, said the decision was a “collective responsibility”.

On Friday, the Dewan Rakyat was told that any decision to charge Dr Mahathir over the issue must be made by the Attorney General after police investigations. However, no police report has been lodged yet to enable a probe to commence.