

DR M: IT WAS A COLLECTIVE DECISION

Cabinet did not oppose dropping ICJ appeal, says ex-PM

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FORMER prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday denied that he alone made the decision to drop the appeal against the International Court of Justice's (ICJ) decision to award Batu Puteh sovereignty to Singapore.

He said he only gave his opinion not to proceed with the matter.

"Accusing me of making the de-

cision on my own is nonsense. I followed the progress of the ICJ's findings. We had a very weak case and didn't have a (silver) bullet to win it.

"Even though I was prime minister, I chose not to decide on my own. It was decided by the cabinet, and we had to give our decision (on making an appeal) to the ICJ on June 8, 2018."

Dr Mahathir said the cabinet did not oppose or reject the idea that Malaysia should not go ahead with its appeal.

In April, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said said Dr Mahathir, who made a decision "in secret", was responsible for Malaysia's loss in the Batu Puteh case.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir testified before a seven-member panel at the Royal Commission of

Inquiry proceedings (RCI) over the sovereignty of Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge.

He arrived at the Legal Affairs Division of the Prime Minister's Department at 10.46am and left nearly two hours later.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir had failed in a bid to get the RCI proceedings to be held in public.

High Court judge Datuk Amarjeet Singh dismissed the former prime minister's judicial review application on matters relating to the ongoing proceedings.

Dr Mahathir sought the recusal of RCI chairman Tun Md Raus Sharif and RCI commissioners Datuk Dr Baljit Singh Sidhu and Datuk Mohammed Ridha Abdul Kadir due to alleged conflicts of interest.

He also wanted the proceedings to be open to the public and to bring along his lawyers when he testified in the proceedings.