

No country will surrender its land, says Anwar

PUTRAJAYA: No country would relinquish even an inch of its soil or a small rock to another nation, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Reflecting on the Batu Puteh dispute, the Prime Minister criticised the carelessness of certain parties, which he believes led to a “betrayal” of the country.

In his National Day address here yesterday, he said nations have gone to great lengths, including engaging in wars and sacrificing lives, to defend their land.

He gave his assurance that the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) report on the sovereignty issues concerning Batu Puteh would be debated in both Parliament and public forums, “so that it will be a lesson to all”.

On Thursday, Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Law and Institutional Reform) Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said announced that the RCI report on Batu Puteh, Middle Rocks and South Ledge had been presented

to the Cabinet. She said the Cabinet is concerned about the country’s sovereignty and decided to have the RCI report tabled in Parliament for debate.

On Feb 27, Azalina said the RCI aims to address and improve the handling of national sovereignty issues, rather than assign blame to any party.

She stressed the need for transparency, particularly for Malaysians in Johor, regarding the decision not to pursue further

action at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) concerning the sovereignty disputes.

On June 12, former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad testified during the RCI’s closed-door proceedings.

The RCI’s final report was submitted to His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, on Aug 12.

The RCI was established in February with Sultan Ibrahim’s consent, following the ICJ’s 2008

ruling which awarded sovereignty over Batu Puteh to Singapore, while Middle Rocks was assigned to Malaysia and South Ledge’s ownership was left to be determined by territorial waters delimitation.

Malaysia’s application to review the ICJ ruling, filed on Feb 2, 2017, was withdrawn by the Pakatan Harapan government led by Dr Mahathir in May 2018, just two weeks before it was scheduled for a hearing.