

Piece of Penang in dispute

SULTAN OF PERAK LAYS CLAIM TO 50 SQ KM OF LAND IN SOUTH OF PROVINCE WELLESLEY

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Sultan of Perak today laid claim to about 50 sq km of land in the southern end of Province Wellesley and wants Penang to return it to his state.

He has also asked Perak's 21 members of parliament to raise the issue when Parliament sits in October. Several MPs have confirmed receiving the request but declined comment.

The Penang government also declined comment on the claim, which is based on the 1874 Treaty of Pangkor that established British presence in Malaysia.

The claimed land is made up predominantly of padi fields and lies between Sungai Krian in the north and the Perak-Penang border in the south.

The two nearest towns outside the claimed area are Parit Buntar in Perak and Nibong Tebal in Province Wellesley.

Demarcation

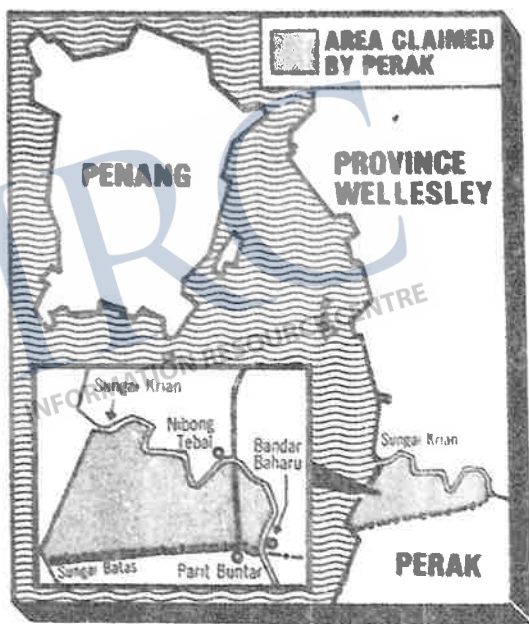
The Sultan made his claim in an interview with The Star newspaper today, adding that a river or mountain range normally marked the boundary between a state or country while the demarcation of the Perak-Penang boundary was a road at Parit Buntar.

Under the Pangkor treaty, three islands in Perak together with the Dindings district were transferred to the then Straits Settlements of Penang. This was done to help the British fight pirates, the Sultan said.

But this interpretation is not accepted by some historians who say the treaty was to ensure an orderly British mercantile presence in Malaysia at a time when the tin mining industry was making businessmen wealthy.

Still, the three islands — Pulau Pangkor, Pulau Sembilan and Pulau Jarak — and the Dindings district were returned to Perak in 1933. But the 50 sq km now claimed by the Sultan remained with Penang.

An attempt to look at the original Pangkor



By M. G. G. PILLAI
Our Kuala Lumpur Reporter

treaty drew a blank. The Muzium Negara has only a copy of the treaty and the original appears to be missing.

Sources said the original was once thought to be in Singapore but that is not so. "It is more likely to be in London or India," an historian today.

Request

The Sultan hoped the federal authorities would intercede and get the land returned to Perak. There was no comment today from federal authorities.

This is not the first time that Penang has been involved in disputes with its neighbours. A few years ago, Kedah tried to get the authorities to raise the annual payment it receives in perpetuity for ceding Province Wellesley or Sebarang Prai, as it is now known, to Penang when Penang was still a Straits settlement.

But the federal author

ities, as the successor power of Britain, turned down Kedah's request.

Political sources said today this was the first time that a Malaysian state had laid claim to another's territory since independence.

In 1965, the Sultanate of Brunei laid claim to the Limbang and Lawas area of Sarawak's fifth division but the Malaysians have persistently rejected the claim.



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