

M'sia to resume talks after Thailand halts KL peace deal over explosion: PM

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PARLIAMENT | Chief of Defence Forces Nizam Jaffar has been tasked to resume negotiations after Thailand yesterday halted progress on the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord signed with Cambodia, Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim told the Dewan Rakyat today.

Speaking during Minister's Question Time, Anwar said he had been in constant communication with successive Thai prime ministers - Srettha Thavisin, Paetongtarn Shinawatra, and the current Anutin Charnvirakul - leading up to the signing of the accord, which was witnessed by US President Donald Trump during the recent 47th Asean Summit.

He explained that Anutin's decision to halt implementation came after a landmine explosion along the Thai-Cambodia border reportedly injured several Thai soldiers.

"The issue being raised now is due to a landmine explosion in an area believed to involve Cambodian soldiers.

"So he (Anuthin) said as long as that matter isn't resolved, we'll postpone the

approval. But he didn't retaliate (to attack Cambodia)," said Anwar.

"So right now, our chief of defence forces is renegotiating. I remember the agreement - 'withdraw from the border and resolve the explosion issue caused by the landmine'. That's in progress.

"Of course, this recent incident... naturally angered the Thais, (who questioned) 'Has this agreement been violated?' But the prime minister did not question our responsibility or our role," stressed Anwar, adding that Thailand had urged Cambodia to fully comply with the terms of the agreement.

'If war breaks out, we'll suffer too'

Anwar was responding to Shahidan Kassim (PN-Arau), who cited recent foreign and local media reports that highlighted criticisms of the KL Peace Accord by former Royal Thai Army Radio and Television Station chief Rangsi Kitiyanasap.

Rangsi reportedly accused Anwar of causing economic losses to Thailand through the peace accord, claiming that it had allowed the US to interfere in Thailand's economy.

Anwar brushed off such claims, saying that while there are critics at home and abroad, Malaysians should instead pray for peace.

“Is it fun to argue just to show that the prime minister has failed?”

“Wishing for the agreement to fail just to prove the Malaysian PM has failed... come on. I’d rather pray for peace, because if conflict breaks out, it’ll affect us too,” he said.

“As for that general who disagreed, again, I have no issue with that. Whether he’s credible or not doesn’t matter. There are also many here who disagree with the peace agreement.

“Many in Cambodia see Thailand as the aggressor, while many in Thailand think Cambodia violated principles. That’s why we helped mediate,” said Anwar in reaffirming Malaysia’s position as facilitator of the process.

Peace process must resume

Bernama reported that Nizam said Malaysia’s stance was to ensure that the peace process continues, as it is important to regional stability.

“We understand there will be a ‘cooling period’ to allow both sides to assess the situation. However, we hope the matter can be resolved as soon as possible, especially since the Asean observer team for Thailand is attending a meeting of Thailand’s National Security Council.

“We hope a positive decision can be reached so that this peace process can continue and achieve its objectives,” he was quoted as saying.

Nizam said that the Asean observer team was not allowed to enter the area where the explosion occurred.

“If a crisis similar to the previous one recurs, observer teams will be redeployed to Phnom Penh and Bangkok. For now, most of the plans under the peace agreement have already been implemented, including demining operations and other related measures.

“If the process is temporarily suspended, the Asean observer teams will reposition themselves and continue discussions with both sides to ensure all activities can resume,” he added.

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