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Asean must counter IS threat collectively: PM

PUTRAJA: A; Asean needs to act collectively in handling the Islamic State (IS) militant group threat as it cannot be countered by member countries acting alone, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak.

Calling for closer cooperation among the 10-member states to ensure IS influence and threat does not intimidate regional stability and peace, he said Asean

is prepared as cooperation over the issue is put in place via the Asean Defence Ministers Meeting and other platforms involving the home ministers, police and armed forces.

In an interview with Bemama ahead of the 26th Asean Summit in Kuala Lumpur and Langkawi on April 26 and 27, he expected the issue to be touched on at the Asean heads of government

meeting. Taking a leaf from 'moderation, which has been accepted by Asean member countries, he said it should be fostered to maintain peace and harmony in the region

"It should be imbued in messages or narratives during Asean conferences to remind all of us that if we want the region to be peaceful, we should reject fanaticism, extremism and

militancy, he said.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein said Malaysia is proposing the formation of an Asean Peacekeeping Force to ensure continued peace in the region.

He said the proposal involves a special cross-border security unit that will address threats such as the IS.