

'Violence not way to end discord'

Anwar pledges to facilitate peace process in southern Thailand

BANGKOK: Malaysia will not condone violence to resolve any conflict in southern Thailand, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Anwar, who is personally known to many in the south, pledged to "do whatever is required" to facilitate the peace process in southern Thailand.

"I have come here with a very clear categorical message that the (Malaysian) government does not condone any sort of violence to resolve conflicts.

"We will exercise our rights as friends and family to express our legitimate concerns while acknowledging that South Thailand is an internal issue within Thailand.

"It is our duty as good neighbours and family to do whatever required to facilitate the (peace) process.

"That's why we agree to appoint an acceptable facilitator from a retired chief of our Armed Forces to



Warm welcome: Anwar along with his wife Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail meeting with Prayut and his wife Naraporn Chan-o-cha in Bangkok. - Bernama

assist and give our assistance," he said during a joint press conference with his counterpart Prayut Chan-o-cha after they meet here yesterday, reported Bernama.

Anwar is on a two-day official

visit to Thailand. Malaysia is a facilitator for the peace dialogue process in ending the decades-old conflict in southern Thailand.

Former chief of defence force Tan Sri Zulkifli Zainal Abidin has

been appointed as the new Malaysian chief facilitator effective Jan 1, 2023.

Meanwhile, Anwar said building trust is vital in resolving the conflict in southern Thailand.

"It is unfortunate these small skirmishes have led to distrust, resentment and we have to appeal to both forces, in Thailand and the South to understand that peace is paramount.

"Therefore, I want to start with some elements of trust within us to resolve this problem (trust) with understanding.

"I have asked the permission of the Prime Minister (Prayut) to allow me to express my concerns through peaceful means and resolution.

"It's up to the committees, joint border committee, to work together with their Thai counterparts and have frank discussions and build trust," he said.

Discussions were held between the government and insurgent

groups since 2013, but the talks came to a grinding halt when the army took control in Thailand a year later. Talks resumed without the involvement of the main parties, including Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN).

General Wanlop Rugsanoah headed the panel for peace dialogue in the southernmost provinces in Thailand (PEDP).

At a separate event, Anwar said Malaysia will be well governed in line with the "Madani" concept, and will make up for lost ground due to previous poor governance, corruption and abuse of power.

"Now, we have a chance, whatever they may say against me and my colleagues (Cabinet ministers), they are there to make sure Malaysia is governed well for all Malaysians.

"That is what Madani is about for Malaysians," he said at a hi-tea with Malaysians here.

About 200 Malaysians residing in Bangkok attended the event.