

Anwar: Peace effort in Mindanao must succeed

MANILA: Efforts to attain peace in Mindanao, the southern Philippines, have to succeed because any failure could affect not only the Philippines and Malaysia but also the whole region, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

He applauded Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr for making great strides in ensuring that the peace process in Mindanao would succeed.

"It is our (Malaysia's) duty as a good neighbour to support this effort (peace process). We will have to utilise all bilateral and multilateral means to achieve this.

"The peace process has to succeed because it not only affects the Philippines and Malaysia but also the region," he said at a joint press briefing after holding a bilateral meeting with Marcos at Malacanang Palace here yesterday.

Anwar is here for a two-day official visit, his fifth to an Asean country since becoming Prime Minister late last year.

He attended a welcoming cere-



Vital ties: Anwar speaking to Marcos during his official two-day visit to the Philippines at Malacanang Palace.
- Bernama

mony at the Malacanang Palace and inspected a guard of honour mounted by 165 soldiers of the Philippine Armed Forces.

Anwar is accompanied by his wife, Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, and several Cabinet members.

Anwar said Malaysia remained committed to playing a constructive role in the peace process in Mindanao.

"Malaysia will also continue to offer assistance to the Bangsamoro people through various capacity-building programmes, including

through our Malaysia Technical Cooperation Programme," he said.

According to Anwar, there are immense opportunities to be reaped by both countries should efforts to attain peace in Mindanao succeed.

Marcos commended the progress made towards achieving sustaina-

ble and inclusive peace in Mindanao.

"It is a combination of years of effort and sincerity among all parties, which will soon bear dividends in peace," he said.

The Philippines, according to him, recognised the great contribution that Malaysia has made to the peace process in the southern Philippines.

He hoped the support shown by Malaysia would continue to contribute to the success of the peace process and the establishment of the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region.

On the issue of Filipino immigrants in Malaysia, Anwar said he had asked for the Philippines' assistance and cooperation to expedite the documentation of its nationals so that they could be repatriated to their country in a timely manner.

"I also reaffirmed Malaysia's readiness to discuss with the Philippines ways to address the illegal Filipino immigration (issue) in Malaysia," he said. — Bernama