



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman at the Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, yesterday.
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ASEAN-GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL SUMMIT

PM: DON'T TURN A BLIND EYE TO PALESTINE

UN Security Council urged to play a bigger role as peace brokers to end atrocities in Gaza

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IN his mission to find a solution to the Israel-Palestine conflict, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

has warned that the international community cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the atrocities happening in Palestine.

Setting out the urgent needs and collective action that must be taken, he said Malaysia demanded that the United Nations Security Council, including the five countries with veto power, play a more prominent role as peace brokers to end the conflict.

In his speech at the first Asean-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit here, he said the global community needed to be united in rejecting hypocrisy and the unfair treatment of Palestine.

"We must end this. The basic reasons and cause of this conflict must be addressed. Without exception, human rights must be protected and international law must be adhered to."

As such, said Anwar, the Asean-GCC summit must play its role as

a second stage for countries involved to ensure the Gulf region was more resilient, dynamic and transformative, especially in the face of the issues plaguing them.

He said the summit was an opportunity to discuss issues of common interest, especially as the world was shackled by geopolitical disputes that have affected the Asian and Gulf regions.

He said as long as the cause of the Israel-Palestine conflict was not addressed, the Israeli regime would continue to attack and bomb Palestine for decades.

"Malaysia is deeply saddened and affected by the increasing number of civilians killed and wounded (in Gaza). We strongly condemn the senseless bombings and series of atrocities in Gaza, as well as the blockade of necessities, putting Palestinians in danger.

"Palestinians must be allowed to return to their homeland, to their homes and to their property. They must be given the opportunity to live in peace and dignity in a sovereign country with international boundaries that are recognised as those of maps in 1967, with East Jerusalem as their capital."

He said with time running out and amid a humanitarian crisis that could escalate into a territorial and global issue, Malaysia wanted all countries to join forces to find a permanent solution.

"The urgent need now is to establish a humanitarian corridor so that aid can be distributed to those in need.

"Malaysia's stand is that we are ready to join any international effort in distributing humanitarian aid and medicines."

After the summit, Anwar will fly to Turkiye to meet the country's leaders to discuss the Israel-Palestine conflict.

On Asean-GCC ties, Anwar proposed that a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) be formulated to enable progressive, inclusive and sustainable growth.

He said the Asean-GCC relationship had grown significantly since its inception in 1990.

"In facing current geopolitical challenges in the two areas, we must move forward by making this platform a way of maximising our potential. With the formulation of a CEPA, it is possible that there may soon be a first free trade agreement between Asean and West Asia."

Trade between Asean and GCC nations reached US\$93.9 billion in 2019, with exports amounting to US\$60.9 billion and imports totalling US\$30 billion.

Petroleum products make up 73.1 per cent of the commodity exports from GCC countries to Asean nations, worth US\$44.5 billion. Plastic and downstream products make up 8.7 per cent, worth US\$5.3 billion, and gold and steel make up 3.8 per cent, worth US\$2.3 billion.

Page 1 pic: Smoke rising over the northern Gaza Strip following an Israeli strike yesterday.