

COMMON STANCE

'Singapore's ties with Israel won't hinder relationship'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Singapore's diplomatic ties with Israel will not affect Malaysia's relationship with its neighbour.

He emphasised that Malaysia and Singapore shared a common stance, having voted in favour of the United Nations ceasefire and humanitarian resolution amid the Palestine-Israel conflict.

Anwar said Malaysia ought to show a stronger position as the matter was not related to the incidents two weeks ago.

It was more of a political disposition by Israel for decades, the prime minister added.

"A country cannot continue to colonise another, but what is critical for now is peace and stopping the killing of civilians, including women and babies. The sentiments shown by Malaysia are strong (towards Palestine), but we (Malaysia and Singapore) have expressed our position for a

peaceful resolution.

"Humanitarian assistance is paramount," Anwar said in a joint press conference with his Singaporean counterpart, Lee Hsien Loong.

Lee said though Singapore has diplomatic relations with Israel, it also has friendly relations with the Palestinian Authority.

He said Singapore had made repeated statements condemning the violence and tragedy of civilians caught in the crossfires and hoped both Israel and Palestine would soon make progress for a two-state solution.

"We understand Malaysia's position is not the same as ours.

"The diplomatic situation is not identical, but there is no reason to cause difficulty between the relations of both countries,"

Both the country leaders met for the 10th Malaysia-Singapore Leaders' Retreat held in Singapore.