

Malaysia committed to southern Thai peace talks

PASIR MAS: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated that the Malaysian government wants to help expedite the peace process in southern Thailand.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia will commit to providing whatever is needed by Thailand, whether in terms of economic, security or educational support.

"The issue of the peace negotiations in southern Thailand is not a Malaysian issue but a domestic

issue for Thailand. The good relations between Malaysia and Thailand have led them to seek our cooperation.

"We leave the proposals to Thailand. We are just facilitators, meaning we are merely catalysts. What is important here is that the leaders of Thailand and Malaysia want to expedite the peace process," he told reporters here yesterday, Bernama reported.

He said this at a press confe-

rence at the Pasir Mas Land and District Office yesterday after a working visit to Rantau Panjang and Sungai Kolok, which included a meeting with his Thai counterpart, Srettha Thavisin.

Malaysia is the facilitator to negotiations to end a decades-long insurgency that has engulfed the southern Thai provinces of Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani and parts of Songkhla.

According to Thai daily *Bangkok*

Post, the conflict has claimed the lives of 4,577 people, including 2,700 civilians over the past 20 years.

Former National Security Council director-general Mohd Rabin Basir was appointed as the new chief facilitator of the Malaysian government for the Southern Thailand Peace Dialogue Process effective July 1.

Negotiations between the Thai government and insurgent

groups began in 2013 but were halted following a military coup in Thailand a year later. The talks resumed without involving the main parties, including the Barisan Revolusi Nasional (BRN).

On Feb 22 last year, the Royal Thai Government's Peace Dialogue Panel and the BRN agreed to form the Joint Comprehensive Cooperation Plan for Peace as a roadmap for 2023-2024 to resolve the conflict.