

Govt not taking security for granted, says PM

PUTRAJAYA: The nation's security must not be taken lightly as attacks could come without warning, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said.

He said the country, as part of Asean, would not rest on its laurels, even though it was peaceful and prospering.

"Asean has countries that are among the most peaceful, except for some border issues.

"There are also issues pertaining to the South China Sea, but our diplomatic relations with the United States, Western countries and China remain good," Anwar said at the launch of the 2024 National Security Month.

He said the government had made defence and home security a priority, with huge allocations provided in its budget.

Anwar said equally important was good governance within the security forces, including transparent procurement processes.

"Procurement causes leakages and this must be stopped and conducted responsibly," said Anwar, who is also finance minister.

He cited several cases, including the recent shooting of policemen at a police station in Ulu Tiram, Johor, the 2013 Sabah incursion and claims by the purported heirs of the Sulu Sultanate against Sabah, which he said the government would not entertain.

Meanwhile, Bernama reported that Anwar advised fishermen and anglers in the South China Sea not to worry about the reported presence of a China Coast Guard (CCG) vessel, particularly around Beting Patinggi Ali.

"Don't be afraid, don't be afraid," he said briefly when asked about local fishermen's concerns regarding the sighting.

Media reports said fishermen had felt intimidated by the presence of the CCG ship, which made it difficult for them to carry out their activities.

Beting Patinggi Ali is located 84 nautical miles (155km) from the coast of Miri, and is within Malaysia's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).

The Defence Ministry had previously emphasised that the Royal Malaysian Navy continuously monitored six of Malaysia's maritime areas, including the Strait of Malacca, South China Sea, Sulu Sea and Sulu Sea, to detect suspicious vessels and foreign warships.