

Meeting with Hamas was to seek peaceful resolution says PM

TOKYO: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has reiterated that his meeting with Hamas leaders was to persuade them of a peaceful solution to the Gaza conflict.

The Prime Minister said he has known the Hamas leaders, Ismail Haniyeh and Khalid Meshaal, for decades.

"There's no reason why we should not meet them. I said (to them), please respect the decision of your neighbouring countries.

"I presented my views that they should try to secure peace,

exchange prisoners and accept a two-state solution," he said during a question-and-answer session at the Nikkei Forum 29th Future of Asia yesterday.

He met with Haniyeh and Meshaal in Doha on the sidelines of the Qatar Economic Forum 2024 earlier this month.

"Is that an offence? Did I promote terrorism? No. I appealed because I have an advantage. What is my advantage? I know them, they consider me a friend.

"Gaza's situation is a humani-

tarian crisis on an unprecedented scale. Let us view it in this context. Never-mind the differences in ideologies or bilateral relations with other states.

"But can we, in this period and age, condone and turn a blind eye towards the massive atrocities?

"We can go on discussing what happened on Oct 7, but that does not erase seven decades (of atrocities) from the period of Nakba in 1948," he said, Bernama reported.

Anwar said he had asserted that for a peaceful resolution,

there was a need to support the position taken by neighbouring Muslim countries and the international community, and force both parties to accept peace and a two-state solution.

"What is important now is to stop the killings. Stop shooting women and children, stop the destruction of hospitals, schools, churches and mosques," he added.

The meeting on May 13 with Haniyeh, who is the chief of Hamas' political bureau, and for-

mer Hamas chairman Meshaal, was Anwar's first in his capacity as Prime Minister.

Anwar had met Haniyeh twice before, in 2019 and 2020.

Wisma Putra, in a statement dated Nov 14, 2018, said Malaysia firmly upholds its position that a two-state solution, in which the Palestinians and Israelis live side by side in peace based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine, is the only viable solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.