

PM: South China Sea issues can be resolved peacefully

BEIJING: There should not necessarily be any conflict to resolve the South China Sea issues with China, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said Malaysia's stance had always been clear in the South China Sea dispute.

"If there are any issues, we discuss them bilaterally or multilaterally, but we also use Asean as a mechanism.

"There should not necessarily be any conflict (in resolving the matter)," he told the Malaysian media on the last day of his work trip to China.

Anwar said this when asked about ties with China amid tensions regarding the South China Sea issue.

Present were Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, Investment, Trade and Industry

Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, and Human Resources Minister Steven Sim.

Anwar had said Asean countries must unite to defend against Beijing's claims of sovereignty over the South China Sea.

However, the prime minister dismissed suggestions that China was "aggressive", saying that such narratives were the work of "Western capitalists".

Last month, Mohamad said Malaysia, together with Asean countries, was negotiating a Code of Conduct framework in the South China Sea with China to prevent conflicts and tensions in the region.

He said the framework would be developed without prejudice, to the territorial and maritime claims of each nation.