

Asean, Beijing committed to diplomacy on waterways

VIENTIANE: Asean and Beijing have agreed to avoid violence in the South China Sea and will instead adopt diplomacy to solve disputes in the contentious waterway, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"This is an issue that concerns all countries (in Asean). The solution we proposed, which was agreed upon by all, including China, is to avoid violence and use diplomatic channels.

"There must be negotiations, and I suggested, if possible, for all parties to use the Asean platform," he told the Malaysian

media at the conclusion of the 44th and 45th Asean Summits and Related Summits yesterday.

The Prime Minister said that recent clashes involving China and the Philippines at the South China Sea are concerning.

"However, Chinese Premier Li Qiang has given his word that the South China Sea issue will be dealt with peacefully and according to the spirit of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)," he said.

The South China Sea has been a contentious issue in the region after China claims nearly the

entire region, despite overlapping maritime claims by Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam and Brunei.

At the Summits, there were numerous calls by Asean leaders to speed up the conclusion of the Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.

The Prime Minister also said Malaysia had expressed "strong views" that Myanmar has to be more inclusive and stop perpetrating violence against its people.

Anwar said Asean is bound by the principle of consensus among member states, and terms under the Five-Point Consensus have to

be fulfilled in order to solve the ongoing Myanmar conflict.

The Five-Point Consensus is a peace effort by Asean against Myanmar's ongoing civil war after its military ousted an elected civilian government.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia does not echo the views of some countries that Myanmar should hold immediate elections.

"Our concern is peace and security. Stop the violence and the killings. Engage with all parties in an inclusive manner so we can find a solution," he said.

On Palestine, the Prime Minister

said Malaysia remains firm in its stance to continue emphasising the violence perpetrated by the Zionist regime and also to continue demanding justice for the Palestinian people on international platforms.

"We must continue to carry out this task, to voice out the aspirations of the Palestinian people.

Anwar said during his meetings with leaders at the summits, including United States Secretary of State Anthony Blinken, he relayed Malaysia's condemnation of Israel's aggression on Gaza, which has now spread to Lebanon.