

# BORDER PEACE ROLE TO REMAIN WITH KL

**PM: Mandate to coordinate talks not tied to Asean chairmanship**

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**M**alaysia will continue to spearhead peace-monitoring efforts along the volatile

Thailand-Cambodia border under the General Border Committee (GBC).

This role will remain even after its tenure as Asean chair ends next year, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said the mandate to coordinate the border negotiations was not tied to Malaysia's Asean leadership, but rather entrusted by both countries and bloc leaders to secure long-term stability.

"I was asked to continue until the issue is resolved.

"It's not bound by Asean or a timeline, but we are targeting a resolution within three months."

He said this in the Dewan Rakyat during the prime minister's question time, in response to a question from Dr Mohammed Taufiq Johari (PH-Sungai Petani). Tensions between Thailand and Cambodia escalated on May 28 after a clash between troops in the Preah Vihear area, a flash-point in their long-standing 817km border dispute.

The violence led to 15 deaths

and displaced more than 100,000 people.

A breakthrough came on July 28 when Malaysia hosted a meeting here involving Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet and acting Thai Prime Minister Phumtham Wechayachai.

Both sides agreed to an immediate and unconditional ceasefire, as well as a commitment to convene a GBC meeting to chart a path forward.

Malaysia's role as chair, host and observer of the talks was mutually agreed on by both nations.

Anwar said he had contacted every Asean leader, including the sultan of Brunei and the presidents and prime ministers of other member states, to seek their endorsement.

All responded in the affirmative and agreed to deploy their defence attaches to monitor the situation on the ground.

"Our defence attache is coordinating efforts alongside Asean counterparts in the border areas, with satellite monitoring underway."

He added that further decisions, including the possible deployment of a full Asean monitoring team or a permanent presence, would be decided at the GBC meeting tomorrow.

The GBC meeting will involve 54 delegates from both sides, including their defence ministers and military leadership.

Preliminary secretariat-level discussions were held here earlier this week, focusing on the terms of reference and operational mechanisms for the ceasefire.

Anwar said while logistical sup-

port from external powers like the United States and China would be welcomed, the peace process must remain under Asean's purview.

He ruled out military involvement from outside powers.

"If peacekeeping is necessary, it should involve only Asean military attaches. No troops from foreign countries."

He said this in response to a supplementary question from Datuk Seri Hamzah Zainudin (PN-Larut).

He cautioned against overstating the success, adding that while tensions had eased, the situation remained sensitive.

"What is promising is that when new tensions arise, they are now referred to the foreign ministers, to me or to the armed forces chief.

"This puts Malaysia and Asean in a priority position."

Looking ahead to tomorrow's meeting, Anwar expressed hope that the discussions would lead to a formal and lasting resolution.

"We hope the agreements coordinated by Malaysia will lead to a final resolution or, at the very least, help maintain or extend the ceasefire and prevent further violations in the contested areas."

He thanked the armed forces for their pivotal role.

He added that Malaysia was proud to be chosen to host and mediate the process, a testament to its political stability and diplomatic goodwill within the region.

"This conflict not only affects Thailand and Cambodia, but also Asean's credibility. We pray for a lasting breakthrough."