

## CAMBODIA-THAILAND BORDER DISPUTE

# 'ASEAN MEETING ON CONFLICT DELAYED'

Foreign ministers to meet on Dec 22 after Bangkok asked for delay, says Anwar

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**M**ALAYSIA has agreed to postpone a Special Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting on the conflict between Thailand and Cambodia to Dec 22, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim yesterday. "We are still coordinating, monitoring. They (Thailand) have asked for a slight postpone-

ment of the Special Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting, which was scheduled for Tuesday (today), so we are postponing to get everything in order.

"But we are still appealing to them to stop the fighting. Very critical. I'm in touch with them virtually on a daily basis," he said.

The meeting was scheduled to assess the situation and support measures to wind down the conflict, which has entered its second week.

The Foreign Ministry later confirmed that the meeting was postponed to Dec 22 and would be chaired by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan in Malaysia's capacity as the current Asean chair.

When asked about the blockade on Cambodia via the Gulf of Thailand proposed by the Thai armed forces, Anwar reiterated that negotiations were ongoing to cool down tensions.

He was speaking after the "Remembering Uncle Idris: Renewing the Spirit of Civic Activism" colloquium and book launch yesterday.

The book was dedicated to late consumer activist S.M. Mohamed



A Buddhist monk handing out aid to displaced people at a shelter in Cambodia's Banteay Meanchey province on Sunday. AFP PIC

Idris at the International Institute of Advanced Islamic Studies (IAIS) Malaysia.

Present was IAIS chairman and former education minister Dr Maszlee Malik.

On Saturday, Anwar said he had requested the deployment of the Asean Observer Team, led by Armed Forces chief General Tan Sri Mohd Nizam Jaffar, to monitor the Thai-Cambodian border crisis.

The findings of the mission, to be complemented by satellite monitoring provided by the Unit-

ed States, would be presented at the Asean Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

The conflict is rooted in the colonial-era demarcation of the 800km Thailand-Cambodia border. The current fighting had displaced around 800,000 people, said officials.

At least 28 people, including soldiers and civilians, had been killed and around 800,000 displaced, said officials, with each side blaming the other for instigating the clashes.