

PM urges Thailand and Cambodia to exercise restraint

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has urged Thailand and Cambodia to exercise maximum restraint, maintain open channels of communication and make full use of the mechanisms in place following reports of armed clashes along their common border.

In a Facebook post, the Prime Minister said he was deeply concerned by the reports and offered his condolences to the families of those killed or injured.

He stressed that Malaysia stands ready to support steps which can help restore calm and avert further incidents, adding that Thailand and Cambodia are close partners of the country and key members of Asean.

"The renewed fighting risks unravelling the careful work that has gone into stabilising relations between the two neighbours," he said yesterday.

Anwar said the region could not afford to see long-standing disputes slip into cycles of confrontation, Bernama reported.

"The immediate priority is to halt the fighting, safeguard civilians and return to a diplomatic path supported by international law and the neighbourly spirit on which Asean depends," he added.

Earlier, international media reported that Thailand had launched airstrikes along its disputed border with Cambodia.

At least one Thai soldier was killed and four were wounded in

the fresh clashes that broke out around two areas in the eastern-most province of Ubon Ratchathani.

Cambodia's defence ministry countered that Thai forces carried out dawn assaults at two locations following "days of provocative actions", adding that its troops had not retaliated.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan said Malaysia views regional peace, stability and security as its highest priority, and is closely monitoring the situation.

"Malaysia takes the latest incidents at the Thailand-Cambodia border seriously and calls on all parties to undertake immediate steps to reduce tensions and avoid

any actions that could jeopardise previously achieved peace efforts," he said in a statement.

Mohamad reaffirmed Malaysia's recognition of the commitments made by both countries through the Cambodia-Thailand Ceasefire Agreement signed on July 25, the Cambodia-Thailand General Border Committee (GBC) Meeting signed on Aug 7 and the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord signed on Oct 26.

He said Malaysia is urging all sides to adhere to Paragraph 7 of the 28 July Ceasefire Agreement, which states:

"In the event of an armed conflict, whether intentionally or unintentionally, both sides must promptly consult at the local level

through existing bilateral mechanisms to prevent the situation from escalating along the border."

Mohamad stressed that continuous dialogue, constructive diplomacy and full respect for established bilateral mechanisms are essential to maintaining lasting peace.

"Malaysia firmly believes that through sustained engagement and adherence to existing frameworks, peace and stability can be preserved for the shared benefit of the region," Mohamad said.