

PM: Sceptics not privy to facts

'Malaysia's role is to mediate Thailand-Cambodia ceasefire'

By **TARENCE TAN**
tarrence@thestar.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Criticisms on Malaysia's role in mediating tensions between Thailand and Cambodia are merely the views of sceptics who are not aware about the facts of the matter, says Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister also said accusation that Malaysia is being biased in the ongoing Thailand-Cambodia conflict is just the perception of one or two entities.

"They are not privy to facts or information.

"I have consistently taken a very reserved and cautious approach, discussing it with both Thai Prime Minister Anutin (Charnvirakul) and (Cambodian) Prime Minister Hun Manet," he told a press conference.

Anwar said Malaysia's role is to help mediate a ceasefire and ensure the cessation of hostilities between Thailand and Cambodia.

"The decision is entirely up to the Thais and Cambodians. We don't decide. The criticisms (against Malaysia) are based on

"The decision is entirely up to the Thais and Cambodians. We don't decide. The criticisms (against Malaysia) are based on pure ignorance and prejudice."

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

pure ignorance and prejudice," he added.

The Prime Minister said Malaysia welcomes the immediate ceasefire that was brokered between Cambodia and Thailand following talks held in China recently.

"The swift transition from cessation of hostilities to a structured follow-up discussion reflects determination to prevent relapse and to stabilise the situation," he said.

Anwar said he is grateful of China's role, especially its Foreign Minister Wang Yi's efforts in host-

ing discussions where Thailand and Cambodia are able to meet.

"Both sides are able to focus on practical steps to reduce risks and rebuild confidence.

"I want to also recognise the vital role played by United States President Donald Trump, whose engagement helped broker the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accord that laid the groundwork for the cessation of hostilities.

"That contributed to creating a political space in which parties are able to step back from confrontation and commit to restraint," said Anwar.

On Dec 29, Anutin and Hun Manet met with the Chinese foreign minister for two days of talks aimed at ending fierce clashes at the border, after Thailand and Cambodia had agreed to a ceasefire.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister said Malaysia is against any proposal to use "Somaliland" or any other territories to forcibly transfer already displaced Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

"Such notions are totally and wholly unacceptable. It violates international laws, humanitarian principles and will perpetuate injustice rather than contribute to peace.

"Let us be clear, there must be no return to large-scale violence. Any resumption to that would exact an intolerable cost to civilians and erode the already fragile prospects for peace.

"Israel must be held fully accountable for its actions and obligations under international law," said Anwar.

Israel became the first country to recognise "Somaliland" as an independent state, sparking con-

demnation by countries, including China, Turkiye and Saudi Arabia.

"Somaliland" is a breakaway state which became independent from Somalia in 1991.

Meanwhile, Anwar said Asean will continue monitoring the latest developments in Myanmar which concluded its first phase of elections.

"We will be guided by the need to reduce violence, avoid actions that could deepen division or confer premature legitimacy, and to preserve the possibility of an inclusive and credible pathway forward," he added.

Myanmar's main pro-military party has claimed an overwhelming victory in the first phase of the country's junta-run elections which finalised on Dec 28.

The second phase will be held on Jan 11, while no date has been set for the third phase of the polls.