

Key Asean matters discussed with Brunei Sultan: PM

KUALA LUMPUR: The Myanmar crisis, South China Sea disputes and intra-Asean trade were among the topics discussed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the Malaysian Asean chairmanship advisory team during an audience with the Sultan of Brunei Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah at Istana Nurul Iman in Brunei on Tuesday.

Former Thai prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra is the head of the advisory team.

In a post on his Facebook page, Anwar said they had very engaging discussions with Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the most senior Asean leader with a wealth of invaluable experience across a wide spectrum of matters concerning Asean.

"About the situation in Myanmar, the view was that while it remains bound by the Five-Point consensus, no effort should be spared to continue the process of engagement with all relevant stakeholders.

"We also viewed with concern the rising tide of problems brought on by a thriving illicit economy dominated by the drug trade, alongside human trafficking and widespread scam operations."

Anwar said they also discussed how best to work towards a positive trajectory for a resolution of the Myanmar crisis and to keep all Asean foreign ministers informed.

"The view was that the proposed Asean-US Summit under the Asean Foreign Ministers' Retreat held in Langkawi in January should be followed through expeditiously."

On the South China Sea disputes, he said they concurred that there should be greater multilateral diplomatic progress with the aspiration that the Code of Conduct negotiations should be concluded sooner rather than later.

"Substantive focus was given to how best to enhance intra-Asean trade and foster greater economic collaboration, including the imperative of a business-friendly and more effective regulatory framework.

"The strategic thrust in this regard is to promote vibrant capital inflow and stimulate more robust intra-regional growth for shared prosperity."

On cryptocurrency, Anwar said they discussed the importance of establishing a proper Blockchain infrastructure and enabling digital accessibility as key prerequisites for healthy and progressive development for the region. - Bernama