

Collective responsibility to rebuild Gaza, says PM

BRUGES: Malaysia, Belgium and the European Union welcome the ceasefire in Gaza and hope Israel will maintain peace, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He expressed relief that Israel and Hamas were willing to seek reconciliation amid the tension.

"This means the ceasefire can stop the brutal attacks by Israel on Gaza. For us, that is the effect," he said at a press conference after his two-day visit to Belgium.

He said the most pressing issue now was rebuilding Gaza, which was in ruins.

"Now, it is our collective responsibility to rebuild Gaza," he said after delivering a keynote address titled "Bridging Regions: Strengthening Southeast Asia-European Resilience" at the College of Europe here.

The Gaza ceasefire agreement came into effect at 11.15am on Sunday, after a delay of several hours due to accusations by Israel that Hamas had delayed handing over the list of hostages to be released. It was initially set to begin at 8.30am.

Since Oct 7, 2023, nearly 47,000 people, mostly women and children, have been killed and more than 110,700 others injured in Israeli attacks on Gaza, according to local health authorities.

Earlier on Monday, Anwar met Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo to discuss Malaysia-Belgium ties, enhance bilateral cooperation and exchange views on regional and international issues.

He also met senior EU officials, starting with Kaja Kallas, who is the EU high representative for foreign affairs and security policy and vice-president of the European Commission, followed by a private meeting with European Council president Antonio Costa.

The prime minister then left for Davos, Switzerland, to attend the World Economic Forum (WEF) Annual Summit 2025.

Anwar, who is finance minister, will be in Davos for the WEF until Friday. WEF will see some 3,000 participants, including 60 heads of state and key decision-makers. **Bernama**