

MARITIME BOUNDARY NEGOTIATIONS

Malaysia will not compromise on defending sovereignty, says PM

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KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia will not compromise on defending its sovereignty in maritime boundary negotiations, including with Indonesia.

He said matters on national borders, be they land, sea or air, directly affected sovereignty and must be approached with diligence and resolve.

“The International Court of Justice (ICJ) awarded Sipadan and Ligitan to Malaysia in 2002,” said Anwar, recalling negotiations with then-Indonesian president Suharto prior to the ruling.

“Those discussions helped clarify some maritime boundaries, including blocks ND6 and ND7. These matters are governed by treaties and involve state-level input,” he said during Prime Minister’s Question Time in the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar was responding to a question by Datuk Seri Dr Ronald Kiandee (PN-Beluran) on how the ICJ decision might influence delimitation of maritime boundaries in the Sulawesi Sea.

Anwar said negotiations on the area, particularly blocks ND6 and ND7, were ongoing and no agree-

ment had been reached.

Discussions are set to resume on July 29 with the participation of Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Hajiji Noor.

Sarawak Premier Tan Sri Abang Johari Openg was also expected to attend the next annual consultation between Malaysia and Indonesia.

“There is no agreement yet on the Sulawesi Sea. Once discussions reach a more concrete stage, the Sabah government will be directly involved.”

Anwar said his visit to Jakarta last month involved informal discussions with President Prabowo Subianto and did not constitute official negotiations.

“There was no formal agenda. It was a courtesy visit, a reciprocal gesture following Prabowo’s four visits to Malaysia.”

Anwar reiterated Malaysia’s firm stance on sovereignty over ND6 and ND7 despite ongoing proposals for joint development.

“Our final decision must be guided by the Sulawesi Sea Treaty Agreement. At present, Indonesia does not agree. What are our options? Go to war or negotiate. We choose to negotiate.”