

'Peace is the only option available'

THE STAR 25 JUL 2025

Pg. 5

Anwar urges Thailand and Cambodia to de-escalate tensions after border clashes

By ZAKIAH KOYA

zakiah@thestar.com.my

PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has called for peace and urged Thailand and Cambodia to de-escalate tensions following deadly clashes at their border that resulted in multiple casualties.

As the current Asean Chair, he said Malaysia had conveyed its concerns to both nations and that he was scheduled to speak with the prime ministers of Thailand and Cambodia yesterday.

"These two countries are mem-

bers of Asean and are also close to Malaysia. The least we can expect is for them to stand down and hopefully enter negotiations.

"Peace is the only option available," Anwar said after attending the Asean Semiconductor Summit 2025.

The conflict flared up on Wednesday, with both nations accusing each other of initiating hostilities.

Thailand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the Cambodian military had attacked both civilian and military targets, including a hospital.

Cambodia, meanwhile, accused Thai jets of bombing a road near the Preah Vihear temple and defended its actions as a response to "armed aggression".

Tensions escalated after a landmine blast on Wednesday wounded five Thai soldiers, prompting both countries to downgrade diplomatic ties.

Cambodia expelled the Thai ambassador, while Thailand had earlier done the same.

Border disputes between the two countries have erupted periodically, with some of the most violent clashes occurring near

historic temples like Preah Vihear.

In 1962, the International Court of Justice recognised Cambodia's sovereignty over the Preah Vihear temple area. Cambodia returned to the court in 2011, which led to a 2013 ruling reaffirming the decision, a continuing source of resentment in Thailand.

Thailand's Interior Minister Phumtham Wechayachai is currently acting Prime Minister following the suspension of Paetongtarn Shinawatra.

Cambodia is led by Prime Minister Hun Manet, who said that his country has always main-

tained a position of resolving problems peacefully.

Asked whether Asean might mediate, Anwar said the bloc is focused on direct engagement with both governments.

"It's premature to suggest that trade will be affected, as both countries appear interested in resolving this amicably. Both nations also want to keep Asean engaged in the matter."



FOR MORE:
See page 19