

REGIONAL STABILITY

'Malaysia committed to preserving Asean peace

BALING: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said Malaysia will continue to play an active role in safeguarding peace in Southeast Asia, particularly with ongoing tensions between Thailand and Cambodia.

He was grateful that regional tensions had eased, saying that the situation would be closely monitored, with Asean nations working together to ensure lasting stability.

"Back when I assumed the Asean chairmanship, what did I say? Malaysia and Asean are among the most peaceful regions in the world.

"Today, there are some challenges, but *Alhamdulillah*, we have managed to address them," he said in his speech at the closing of the Madani Rakyat programme here yesterday.

Anwar said the military was committed to ensuring regional stability, citing the swift action to facilitate talks between the military leaders of Cambodia and Thailand after clashes broke out along their border.

He said Malaysia's success in mediating peace was not solely due to the leadership, it was the collective effort of the security forces.

"That is why I said it is important to know and appreciate our history.

"I could not have done this without the Defence Ministry, the Home Ministry, cooperation between governments, the police, the armed forces and the Foreign Ministry, all working in unity."

On recent skirmishes in the region, Anwar said he was grateful that a recent shooting did not escalate into a wider conflict.

"It does not take much to cause a larger clash.

"After the incident, our Foreign Ministry and armed forces contacted their counterparts and demanded answers. Their response was that it was an incident. They apologised."

The current tensions between Thailand and Cambodia started on May 28, when troops in the Preah Vihear border area clashed, reigniting a long-standing dispute over their 817km shared border.

So far, 15 people have died and more than 100,000 displaced in the two nations.