

Najib Hopeful CoC Framework Can Be Finalised By Year End

MANILA, April 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said he is hopeful that the framework of the Code of Conduct (CoC), which is currently at the senior officers level, is finalised and adopted by the end of the year.

"The CoC is to be legally binding for all parties to ensure continuous peace and stability in the South China Sea," he said after a bilateral meeting with Vietnamese Prime Minister, Nyugen Xuan Phuc here today.

He said Vietnam also has a similar stand that South China Sea should be a peaceful and stable area.

"On the question of peaceful navigation, freedom of navigation as well as overflights over the South China Sea, maritime security must be assured so that nothing untowards happens," he said.

Najib said Malaysia and Vietnam had the same stand that the area should not be militarised and there should be no tensions in the South China Sea any higher than the level seen currently.

"We hope all parties will not do anything to escalate tensions in the South China Sea while seeking solutions through peaceful negotiations which is the choice of ASEAN countries on the issue of South China Sea," he said.

Apart from that, Najib also said they discussed the question of defence and piracy in the South China Sea, which requires the close cooperation of Vietnam and Malaysia.

Vietnam has also expressed its desire to send more workers to Malaysia and called for the quota (on the hiring of Vietnames workers) to be revised upwards.

The CoC was mooted following overlapping claims on certain areas in the South China Sea.

Najib and Phuc are in Manila to attend the 30th ASEAN Summit.

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