

ASEAN-Australia Summit recommends taking counter terrorism enforcement to next level

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SYDNEY, March 18 (Bernama) -- The ASEAN-Australia Special Summit ended Sunday recommends that the enforcement cooperation between ASEAN member countries and Australia to counter terrorism be taken to the next level, especially in the sharing of intelligence information and findings, Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said.

The prime minister said this was because as terrorist threats could cross borders, certain information might not be important to one country, but might be useful and vital to others.

"Just like solving a jigsaw puzzle, it is possible that the important piece of information be found in other country," he told the Malaysian media at the end of the two-day summit here.

He said topics related to terrorist threats and violence terrorism were among the main topics at the special summit.

Apart from that, he said the restrictions on terrorists' funds must also be intensified so that terrorist groups would not have any financial sources.

The prime minister said in countering terrorism, it was also important to ensure that terrorist groups like Daesh would not get new recruits, and this could be done by focusing on education aspect.

"Right now, they still managed to influence certain individuals, and that means the tap is still flowing in terms of new recruits. I have informed the summit that our deradicalisation

programme has succeeded in achieving a rehabilitation rate of 97 per cent," he said.

Najib said the special summit had also accepted the Sydney Declaration, which also involved economic cooperation.

"We welcome Australia's roles to help ASEAN to achieve the Economic Community target by 2025 and the multiple-level Strategic Plan, in which Australia to provide funding, besides the ASEAN Connectivity," he said.

During the leaders' retreat, Najib said they also discussed strategic issues, such as the South China Sea, Korean Peninsula and other issues concerning ASEAN, including the Rohingya community in Rakhine State, Myanmar.

"I was asked to lead the discussion on nuclear issues in North Korea and the possible scenario, as well as the latest development relating to the meeting between US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un."

"Our stand is consistent and we want North Korea to stop its nuclear and ballistic missile programme, and we also want the Korean Peninsular denuclearised, hopefully to be achieved through peaceful negotiation," he said.

Najib said certain actions should be taken against North Korea to show the seriousness of the world community in the nuclear issues and that he hoped that the republic would realise that they would have a better future if they respected and fully observed the United Nations resolutions set in the interests of the republic, the Korean Peninsula and the world.

"Our ties with North Korea is still on, but we only cover from Beijing, we don't have embassy in Pyongyang," he said.

On the success achieved at the summit, Najib said Australia had recognised ASEAN as an important organisation which had succeeded in promoting regional peace and stability.

"I see Australia's wish to integrate ASEAN and Australian economy, as well as the cooperation in strategic fields including counter-terrorism, as the success of the summit," he added.

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