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Call for urgent shift in energy strategy

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PETALING JAYA: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said the escalating conflict in West Asia is exposing Malaysia to energy supply disruptions and price volatility, and called for an urgent shift in the country's energy strategy.

He said intensifying geopolitical tensions in the Middle East are reverberating across economies far beyond the region, laying bare deep vulnerabilities in global energy systems and challenging assumptions of economic resilience.

Speaking at the Kuala Lumpur-Ankara Dialogue 2026, he said Malaysia must confront the reality that it is not insulated from external shocks.

"For Malaysia, this means acknowledging that we are not immune to disruptions in global energy supply," he said, adding that Putrajaya has taken steps to manage exposure to volatility while safeguarding supply and cushioning cost-of-living pressures.

However, he emphasised that short-term interventions would not suffice without long-term structural reform.

"This is not merely an environmental necessity. It is a strategic imperative," he said, calling for a transition towards cleaner and more resilient energy systems.

His remarks come as concerns grow over supply disruptions linked to tensions in the Gulf.

Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Fadillah Yusof said Malaysia's petroleum supply remains stable, with sufficient reserves in place, and assured that contingency measures are ready to ensure continuity under any scenario.

Also the Energy Transition and Water Transformation minister, Fadillah added that the government stands ready to source fuel from alternative markets should disruptions tied to the West Asia conflict persist.

Anwar described the worsening crisis in the Gulf as a "harsh and dismal reality", marked by civilian casualties, widespread destruction of infrastructure and escalating humanitarian costs.

He said the erosion of international norms, coupled with the unchecked use of military force, is undermining global stability.

"A rules-based international order cannot be invoked selectively. Its credibility rests on consistent and even-handed application, particularly in moments of crisis."

While condemning violence in Gaza, Lebanon and beyond, Anwar urged restraint, emphasising that diplomacy must remain central despite heightened tensions.

"It is incumbent on us to remain cool-headed and steadfast in the pursuit of diplomacy for peace and stability."

He also highlighted the role of middle powers such as Turkiye in de-escalation efforts, pointing to Ankara's engagement with regional stakeholders, including Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt, as a model of constructive diplomacy.

He added that Malaysia stands in solidarity with such efforts, alongside partners advocating dialogue and consultation. However, he also said diplomacy without sincerity risks becoming meaningless.

"The world has seen too many ceasefires that serve merely as interludes between escalations. What is required now is not the management of conflict, but its resolution."

Anwar underscored the need to strengthen international cooperation, adding that sovereignty, resource security, defence self-reliance and interdependence remain critical pillars of national resilience.

He called for broader collaboration beyond governments, involving institutions, industries and civil society, to ensure diplomacy delivers tangible outcomes.

Framing the crisis as a defining moment for the global order, Anwar urged collective action to avert long-term instability.

"Do we act, collectively and with purpose, to avert a crisis whose consequences would be felt across generations?"

"Or do we allow short-term calculations for quick gains that lead to long-term instability?"

"Giving peace a chance is not a mere mantra. It must be built patiently." – *By Harith Kamal*