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Mat Sabu: Strengthen relations to tackle non-traditional threats

The leaders also discussed ways to enhance cooperation and information-sharing to address regional security issues

by DASHVEENJIT KAUR

REGIONAL and international defence cooperation is important in tackling Asean's security situation, especially on dealing with non-traditional threats, said Defence Minister Mohamad Sabu.

At the 13th Asean Defence Ministers' Meeting (ADMM) retreat in Bangkok, he reiterated the need for member countries to strengthen their relations to face challenges such as cyber security issues.

The leaders also discussed ways to enhance cooperation and information-sharing to address regional security issues, such as terrorism and maritime security.

Mohamad also raised Malaysia's concern on the Rohingya crisis in Rakhine State where he warned that the current situation should be handled wisely to prevent the Rohingya refugees from fleeing to neighbouring countries including Malaysia.

"This is also to prevent them from being influenced by extremist ideologies due to their suffering," he said in a statement yesterday.

Held concurrently with the



Mohamad (right) at the ADMM retreat in Bangkok reiterates the need for member countries to strengthen their relations to face challenges

ADMM retreat was the 6th ADMM-Plus meeting, which was attended by the defence ministers of all 10 Asean-member countries together with representatives from eight Dialogue Plus Partners countries — namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and the US.

Mohamad also emphasised on complex geopolitical issues in the South China Sea and the need for

Plus countries to respect and adhere to the commitment made at the 5th ADMM-Plus meeting last year.

He stressed that all parties need to refrain from carrying out any activities or actions that may further complicate the situation.

During the retreat, members have agreed that Malaysia will co-chair the ADMM-Plus Experts' Working Group from 2020 to 2023 with South Korea.

Mohamad noted that his presence in these programmes is part of the diplomacy initiatives that Malaysia has adopted to promote positive defence relationships through multi-lateral and bilateral platforms.

Bernama reported during the 6th ADMM Plus Meeting yesterday, Mohamad addressed the complexity of geopolitics arising in the South China Sea.

He emphasised the need for all 10

Asean-member countries and eight dialogue partner countries — namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russia, and the US to respect and adhere to the commitment made at the 5th ADMM Plus Meeting last year.

"All parties must exercise self-restraint in the conduct of activities (in disputed the South China Sea) and avoid actions that may further complicate the existing situation," he said.

In line with Thailand's theme "Sustainable Security" for its chairmanship this year, Mohamad encouraged ADMM Plus members to embrace the theme as an enduring vision of bringing peace, security, and stability to the region with respect to Asean shared interest and centrality as the key guiding principles.

Earlier, Mohamad attended the opening ceremony of a defence exhibition — Defence and Security 2019 at IMPACT Exhibition and Convention Centre in Nonthaburi.

He also officiated the Malaysia Pavilion at the exhibition. It is Malaysia's effort to develop and promoting defence industry in the region.

During the event, he took the opportunity to promote the 17th Defence Services Asia Exhibition and Conference and National Security, which will be held in Kuala Lumpur next year.