

18 AUG 1999

Mahathir-Quake

M'SIA SENDS CONDOLENCES TO QUAKE-HIT TURKEY

By: Azman Ujang

KHABAROVSK (Russia), Aug 18 (Bernama) -- Malaysia has expressed condolences and sympathies to the people of Turkey's northwestern provinces hit by yesterday's devastating earthquake.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, expressing shock over the tragedy, said in a message to his Turkish counterpart Bulent Ecevit that Malaysia would extend whatever assistance to the victims.

"I was shocked to learn of the devastating earthquake that struck parts of Turkey yesterday. Please accept the people's condolences and sympathies of the government and people of Malaysia in this moment of tragedy and loss," he said in the message to Ecevit before leaving here for China.

The earthquake, measuring 6.7 on the Richter scale, struck at 3.02am local time (8.02am Malaysian time) with an epicentre located at Izmit on the Marmara Sea.

More than 1,000 people were killed and thousands more injured in the quake which lasted about 45 seconds.

The temblor also rocked nearby cities of Istanbul, Bursa and Sakarya and was felt in the capital Ankara, about 600km away, and the central Anatolian province of Kayseri.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians joined the Turks in prayers as the search for survivors continued and efforts to rebuild devastated communities commenced.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar, who accompanied Dr Mahathir, sent a similar message to his Turkish counterpart Ismail Cem saying he was deeply saddened by the tragedy.

Syed Hamid said that he prayed that Allah would give the affected people "great strength and determination to rebuild their lives and communities".

-- BERNAMA

AU RYN