

17/02/2001

Malaysian Government gives RM380,000

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - The Malaysian Government today presented a cheque for US\$100,000 (RM380,000) to the Indian Government to show the country's serious concern and deep sympathy for the sufferings of the Gujarat earthquake victims.

The cheque was presented by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar to the Indian High Commissioner Veena Sikri at Wisma Putra.

Syed Hamid, in his speech, expressed his concern for the sufferings of the earthquake victims.

"India needs about US\$3 billion for the towns and cities affected by the earthquake. We hope the money will reduce their burdens."

Veena said she was grateful to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Government, the Foreign Ministry and its people for the assistance.

"We appreciate the immediate and spontaneous response received from the Malaysian Government. Malaysia not only gave monetary assistance, but were also quick to send their Special Malaysian Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART) and medical team (Malaysian Medical Relief Society) to help in the rescuing of victims," she said.

The SMART and medical teams, along with a liaison officer from the National Security Division and five Malaysian journalists, were in India for about two weeks from Feb 1.

Veena also thanked the individuals and corporate citizens in Malaysia who have assisted in organising fund raising events to help the earthquake victims.

"I am touched by their generosity. We have received lots of support and contribution from many parties including non-Governmental organisations," she said.

The New Straits Times also launched the Gujarat Earthquake Fund earlier this month and has since received overwhelming response from the public. Proceeds from the fund will be channeled to help the earthquake victims.

The earthquake which hit India on Jan 26 resulted in over 30,000 deaths and left more than a million people homeless.

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