

Anwar apologises for coming home late
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Opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim has apologised for being unable to return promptly to help flood victims in Malaysia, but reminded that his absence should not be the issue.

“I call on all to focus their attention on cooperation and giving room and opportunity for all who want to offer assistance, don’t cling to politics or discriminate,” he said on arrival at the Kota Bharu’s Sultan Ismail Petra Airport.

According to the Sinar Harian report yesterday, Anwar said he was unable to return because flights were unavailable and his ticket could not be changed.

“I apologise because I have returned late. Really I was unable to come home immediately because there were no flights, and my ticket bookings could not be changed,” Anwar was reported saying.

“The photo of my cycling that has been circulated was taken before the floods started, don’t tell me it’s also an issue for me to cycle before the floods,” he added.

Anwar’s call to put aside political differences appears to be targeted at reports of Pakatan Rakyat aid being turned away.

For example, DAP Mengkibol state assemblyperson Tan Hong Pin last week complained that he was shooed away while distributing aid to flood victims at a relief centre in Kluang, Johor.

Today DAP Perak complained that the BN-run Perak government has refused to accept the RM100,000 aid from the Selangor government.

Anwar said, “Don’t look at it from the angle of politics, look from the wellbeing of the people.”

Retaliation for Najib-Obama jibes

Last month when Prime Minister Najib Razak was attacked for golfing with US President Barack Obama while floods ravaged the East Coast, Gerakan Youth chief Tan Keng Liang retaliated posting a photo of Anwar cycling with his family in New Zealand.

Tan on Dec 24 posted the photo of Anwar’s family alongside that of Najib playing golf with Obama, saying, “A stark contrast between Najib and Anwar on how they spent their holidays...”

On Dec 26 a pro-Umno blog also made a tit-for-tat asking why no one criticised Anwar’s wife for going cycling as her Selangor constituency Kajang experienced flash floods, instead

of criticising Najib.

Penang Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng was not spared the counterattacks, with pro-government Friends of BN Facebook alleging that the CM's absence while on holiday would delay the state's RM1.5 million flood aid.

The blog also posted what appears to be an old photograph of Lim on holiday, claiming, "The money can only be channelled when Lim returns next year."

Penang exco in charge of welfare, caring society and environment Phee Boon Poh called the claim a "black lie", clarifying the state has already begun disbursement of the funds.

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