

PM proud of M'sian SAR team in Turkiye

GAZIANTEP (TURKIYE): Proud is how Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim described his feelings over the efficiency and professionalism displayed by the Malaysian search and rescue (SAR) team helping the earthquake victims in Nurdagi here.

He said the Malaysian SAR team comprising members of the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART), Fire and Rescue Department, Civil Defence Force and Malaysian Armed Forces Royal Medical Corps stationed in Nurdagi had shown extraordinary capability that the nation could be proud of.

"I'm proud of our team who have

shown their capability and are making extraordinary sacrifices.

"The governor and governor representatives here have also mentioned how dedicated our team is.

"On behalf of all Malaysians, I would like to convey our deepest appreciation to the team.

"We pray for the burden shouldered by the people here to be eased.

"On Malaysia's part, we will do our level best to help," the Prime Minister told reporters after visiting the Malaysian SAR team camp at Nurdagi Stadium yesterday.

Anwar said RM30mil in relief funds for Turkiye had been successfully raised.

Earlier, the Prime Minister spent about 40 minutes visiting the camp.

He arrived here at 9am local time (2pm Malaysian time), accompanied by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Sabah, Sarawak Affairs and Special Functions) Datuk Armizan Mohd Ali.

The entourage was welcomed by Malaysian SAR contingent deputy commander Safrizan Suhaini and MAS-10 team leader Abdul Manaf Che Isa.

The Prime Minister was briefed on the team's operations by Safrizan before meeting two special members of the SAR team - Frankie and

Denti.

The two tracker dogs belonging to the K9 unit of the Fire and Rescue Department, which were involved in the search and rescue efforts during the Batang Kali landslide, were assigned for the Turkiye mission.

Anwar also brought cheer to the camp when he sportingly agreed to join the team on the field and pose for group pictures with the rescuers.

The Prime Minister had decided to visit Turkiye on the basis of friendship and at the request of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who he said had contacted him twice over the matter.

On Feb 11, Anwar contacted Erdogan immediately after arriving from an official visit in Bangkok Thailand, to convey his condolences and prayers over the disaster.

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale hit southern Turkiye and Syria on Feb 6.

As of Feb 13, the death toll in Turkiye was reported to have reached 31,644, with another 106,428 people injured, while in Syria, 5,329 have died and 14,500 suffered injuries.

So far, the Malaysian SAR team has successfully brought out 47 bodies from under the rubble and rescued a family of five who survived the earthquake. — Bernama