

PM promises show of gratitude for rescuers

Anwar mulls special medals and bonuses for SAR team

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has proposed that the Special Malaysia Disaster Assistance and Rescue Team (SMART) in Turkiye be given a special medal and allowance for their excellent search and rescue (SAR) work.

The Prime Minister, who just returned from his visit to Turkiye, said he witnessed the sacrifices made by the Malaysian team at ground zero.

"Not one of them complained that they were tired or thirsty, and they had given their best service. Some of them worked for two weeks," he told the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Anwar said he will consult with the Treasury on the appropriate amount of allowances for Malaysian rescuers based on their period of service.

"I also propose that we issue a letter of appreciation and also a special service medal for the SMART members," he added.

The Malaysian SAR team, comprising members of SMART, the Fire and Rescue Department, the Civil Defence Force and the Royal Medical Corps of the Armed Forces stationed in Nurdagi, had shown extraordinary capability with efforts that the nation can be proud of, said Anwar.

He added that the Turkiye government had also praised Malaysia's SAR team for their efficiency in

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Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim

helping rescue efforts for the earthquake victims there.

"Our teams at ground zero had almost reached 200 personnel, and this does not include the additional team deployed to Syria," he said.

Anwar also noted that a special reconnaissance team of 21 personnel members had been dispatched to Syria to conduct an assessment of the humanitarian aid there.

He said Malaysia had provided more help for Turkiye due to the huge scale of the earthquake there.

"This (the earthquake) has rarely happened, aside from the earthquake that caused a tsunami that hit Aceh in Indonesia in



Side chat: Anwar and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi at the Dewan Rakyat in Kuala Lumpur. - Bernama

2004," he added.

The Prime Minister also told the Dewan Rakyat that the country's humanitarian aid fund for earthquake victims in Turkiye and Syria has reached RM50mil so far.

Among the contributors are Yayasan Albukhary, which donated RM10mil; The Associated Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia (ACCCIM) (RM4.4mil); Brahim's Dewina Group (RM3mil); YTL Corp Berhad (RM2mil) and Sime Darby Foundation (RM1.5mil).

To a question from Ahmad Tarmizi Sulaiman (PN-Sik) on the specific amount contributed by the Federal Government, Anwar said

that he will propose for the amount to be increased during the next Cabinet meeting on Friday considering the critical situation there.

Anwar added that the Cabinet has already approved US\$1mil (RM4.4mil) for Turkiye.

He also said that Wisma Putra will reach out to Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man (PN-Kubang Kerian) to assist his team, which will be going on a mission to Turkiye between March 2 and 7.