

Relief centre plan gets support

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PUTRAJAYA: Malaysia's proposal for a regional humanitarian relief centre looks set to become a reality. It has not only received the support of the Five Power Defence Arrangement (FPDA) members, but also several other countries.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the United States, Japan and India too had expressed keen interest in being a part of the centre that would help countries within or outside the region that had been hit by disasters.

The FPDA members are Malaysia, Singapore, Australia, Britain and New Zealand.

"We can mobilise the forces of FPDA members and other countries to ensure that more co-ordinated and faster aid reaches recipient countries.

"With co-ordination and planning, we can activate the plan when a disaster strikes," Najib said after receiving medical supplies worth RM500,000 from Ranbaxy (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd managing director T. Jeyabalan for the victims of the Yogyakarta earthquake in Indonesia.

Also present were Hospital Kuala Lumpur cardiologist Datuk Dr K. Jeyakumar and Mindef medical chief Maj Jen Datuk Sulaiman Mahmood.

Najib said a working paper would be prepared on the most suitable modality for the centre.

He mooted the proposal to establish the centre at the plenary session of a high-level security forum in Singapore on Sunday.

Yesterday, FPDA defence ministers made a courtesy call on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi at his office here.