

Malaysia to send team to Antarctic

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Malaysia plans to send a research expedition to the Antarctic "some time in the near future," Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said everyone had a right to the Antarctic although there were some quarters in the world who thought otherwise.

"We have taken the initial step in the preparation to send our expedition team to carry out research activities there," he said when launching a kayak expedition at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa here.

"This kayak expedition is the first step towards that noble goal," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it would not be long before Malaysian researchers set foot on the Antarctic. He, however, did not mention the target time.

"Nevertheless, when the right time comes and our Malaysian team has been well exposed to the various challenges and difficulties, we will proceed to the Antarctic to undertake scientific experiments and studies."

However, Malaysia would not go there for costly research work.

"It is going to be a cheap experiment for a start."

He praised the kayak expedition project undertaken by the Kuala Lumpur Association of Outdoor Recreation (Perwip).

Dr Mahathir also called on all States to form teams to undertake similar physical activities.

"Such teams should be a combination of all Malaysians irrespective of ethnic origins and age so that they will be able to learn and understand better the lifestyle and problems faced by all.

"Competitions should also be encouraged for such activities in the future," he said.

The Perwip expedition is scheduled to complete its trip in canoes along the Malaysian coast this February.

Some 250 youths are participating in the more than 1,659 nautical mile expedition, started in April 1986 in conjunction with the 1986 National Sports Week.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah and Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, also witnessed a performance by a four-man canoeing team at Tasik Titiwangsa after the launching.