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Croatia lost a friend, says Matesa

CROATIAN Prime Minister Zlatko Matesa extended his condolence to the Malaysian business community and family of DRB-Hicom chairman Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad who was killed in a helicopter crash in Kuala Lipis, Pahang on Monday night.

Speaking at a luncheon talk organised by the National Chamber of Commerce and Industry Malaysia (NCCIM) in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, the Croatian Prime Minister described Yahaya's death as the loss of a friend to Croatia.

"Last night (Monday), when Prime Minister (Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad) hosted a dinner, little did I realise that Croatia has many friends in Malaysia. But today, we lost one of our Malaysian friends," he added.

On Monday, Yahaya and his wife Puan Sri Rahana Othman as well as Mejar (Rtd) Azlizan, the pilot of the helicopter, were killed when the aircraft crashed in Kampung Jerangsang. They were flying to Marang, Terengganu to see Yahaya's bedridden mother when the mishap occurred at 11pm.

Following the tragedy, participants of the talk observed a one-minute silence as respect to the late Yahaya, who was also the NCCIM president.

Yahaya was supposed to deliver his welcoming address at the luncheon talk organised in conjunction with the two-day visit of the Croatian Prime Minister. Following the mishap, NCCIM vice-president Senator Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan delivered the welcoming speech.

Later, in a separate news conference, Matesa said Yahaya was best known by the Croatians and himself when the former took over Proton's chairmanship.

Matesa, who arrived in Kuala Lumpur on Monday, was supposed to leave for Croatia today but decided to reschedule his programme and returned home last night.

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