

23 MAY 1997

Mahathir-Everest

PM PROUD OF TEAM'S CONQUEST OF MOUNT EVEREST

KUALA LUMPUR, May 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is in London, congratulated the Malaysian team that conquered Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain, today.

"I am proud (that the Malaysian climbers) have reached (the peak of Everest)...our efforts have finally paid off," he said in a telephone interview with the RTM crew reporting the success of the Malaysian team from the base camp on Mount Everest.

Two national climbers, N.Mohandas, 35, and M.Magendran, 33, reached the 8,848m peak after braving thick snow, strong winds and freezing temperatures since March 1 when they started their bid to conquer the majestic mountain.

The interview with Dr Mahathir was telecast live over Televisyen Malaysia this afternoon. The prime minister at first wanted to speak to the two climbers but could not link up with them.

He also congratulated the other members of the team, who did not reach the peak, for their determination in making the country proud.

He asked the RTM crew to convey his greetings to the climbers and to advise them to be careful in their descent.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, are in London to promote the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) during his two-month leave.

Dr Siti Hasmah also congratulated the two climbers.

"I am proud because there are Malaysians who can reach the peak (of Everest)," she said, adding that other climbers could try in future.

Leader of the Malaysia-Everest '97 Project Noramlee Sulaiman, speaking from the base camp, expressed the climbers appreciation to the prime minister for his support of the project.

He asked the RTM crew to convey his greetings to the climbers and to advise them to be careful in their descent.

Dr Mahathir and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, are in London to promote the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) during his two-month leave.

Dr Siti Hasmah also congratulated the two climbers.

"I am proud because there are Malaysians who can reach the peak (of Everest)," she said, adding that other climbers could try in future.

Leader of the Malaysia-Everest '97 Project Noramlee Sulaiman, speaking from the base camp, expressed the team's thanks to the prime minister for his support of the project.

The project, mooted by Dr Mahathir, was launched by the prime minister on June 4 last year. He handed the Malaysian flag to the team on Feb 28, the day before they left for Nepal.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who also expressed his pride, said the success showed that Malaysians were capable of doing whatever they set their hearts on if there was determination, discipline and the will to work as a team.

"God willing, I and my family are thankful that the goal (to conquer Mount Everest) has been achieved...this shows that Malaysia can," he said when interviewed by RTM at his residence, here.

He said the success was also an inspiration to the young to take up such activity.

Anwar said the Everest team would be appointed to lead teams of

youngsters on other expeditions and adventures. -- BERNAMA
TM JK