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Good weather a blessing for North Pole expedition team

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The good weather conditions was a blessing for the 16 Malaysian parachutists who landed on the drop zone of the North Pole at 1.45am, yesterday.

Expedition leader Abdul Rahim Dahalan said the temperature was -25 degrees Celsius, which was slightly higher than the expected -40 degrees Celsius, when they jumped from a helicopter at a height of about 3,500 metres.

The jump took the team about half an hour and they stayed in the North Pole for two hours.

The first jump was made by Mejar Kamaruddin Abdullah followed by Lt Ahmad Ramli Kardi, both of the Royal Malaysian Air Force.

"There was a clear sky and it was really amazing. Being on barren, cold and isolated land made us think that God is great," he said from Moscow NTV station via teleconferencing in TV3's Seri Pentas today.

Earlier, Abdul Rahim, parachuting leader Lt (Rtd) Abdul Aziz Ahmad, his assistant Kapt (Rtd) Abdul Rahmat Omar and Nordziah Mohamed Noor spoke to Umno Youth chief Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Abdul Rahim said the scenery was just like what was depicted in films.

"We miss home but we had a duty to perform which was to do the country proud by proving that Malaysians are capable explorers," he said.

Nordziah Mohamed Noor, who was the 13th person to jump, said she was able to overcome her fear after getting signals of support from her teammates.

Malaysia is the first Asian country to organise the expedition to the North Pole which has seen American, German, Canadian, Russian, Italian and British expedition teams.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad commended the team for its success yesterday.

The expedition was organised by the Youth and Sports Ministry and Malaysian Parachuting Federation and financed by various sponsors.

Besides planting the national colours Jalur Gemilang, expedition members also succeeded in landing a Proton Wira during the jump. The only other car that had been landed on the North Pole was a Volkswagen in 1994 by a German team.

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