

08 MAR 1998

Northpole

THREE FIRSTS FOR NORDZIAH WHEN SHE DROPS ON THE NORTHPOLE

KUALA LUMPUR, March 8 (Bernama) -- An administrative officer with the Malaysian Federation of Parachutists Nordziah binte Mohamed Noor will be the first Asian, the first Malaysian and the first Malay woman to drop by parachute at the Northpole come April 18.

Northpole Parachuting Expedition leader Abdul Rahim Dahalan said Nordziah, 39, will be among 15 parachutists who will jump from a height of 3,500 m and land near the Ice Airport in Siberia.

The other parachutists are from the police, armed forces and the Federal Territory Parachutist Club, he told reporters at a practice jump at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa here today.

Abdul Rahim, who is also the federation president, said another two more practice jumps will be held at the Sungai Besi military airport on March 21 and 22, before the team leaves for Moscow on April 1.

From Moscow, they will proceed to Khatanga, a small town in Siberia, where they will board an Antonov 124 for an eight-hour flight to their jump site in the Northpole.

Due to the extreme cold weather conditions with temperatures of between -40 and -70 degrees Celsius, the parachutists will immediately be taken by a waiting Russian air force helicopter to the Ice Airport half an hour away, where they will proceed back to Moscow.

The RM2 million expedition will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on March 30. -- BERNAMA

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