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Nor Ramlle's legacy remembered

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Nor Ramlle Sulaiman, the leader of Malaysia's 20-member expedition to conquer Mount Everest in 1997 who died early yesterday, will always be remembered by his team-mates and friends for his dedication and contribution to the mountaineering sport.

One of the two Malaysians to reach the summit, M. Magendran, 33, said Nor Ramlle was a dedicated person and one of the key players who made the Project Malaysia Everest '97 a success.

When they returned from the expedition, he said Nor Ramlle aimed to transform the Malaysia Mountaineering Association into a federation, and with the existing committees, it was done last year.

"His contribution would be remembered by all of us. He is indeed a great loss to the federation."

Magendran said news of Nor Ramlle's death came as a shock to all as he had never complained of any ill-health.

"When I received a call at 3.30am yesterday about his death, I just could not believe it," he said, adding that last week he saw Nor Ramlle the last time at the federation's meeting.

He said at the meeting, Nor Ramlle was busy discussing the progress and plans of the federation.

Magendran said Nor Ramlle, who was federation president, carried out his duties well and was able to reach out to everyone.

However, one of the many things about Nor Ramlle that he would never forget was his favourite phrase each time before a climb.

"Nor Ramlle would tell us to bring out what we brought in on our mountaineering expeditions. He was an environment lover and reminded us not to litter."

Muhamad Fauzan Hassan, 33, who were among the four who nearly made it to the summit on the final attempt, said he was saddened by Nor Ramlle's demise.

Muhamad Fauzan said Nor Ramlle was not only a dedicated mountaineer, he was also someone whom people would turn to for help.

"During the Mount Everest expedition, he was firm when dealing with tense situations and always ensured our safety."

N. Mohandas, 36, who successfully reached the peak of Mount Everest, said Nor Ramlle had a good heart and was a good leader.

Nor Ramlle died at his house yesterday at 2.30am. He was 45.

Magendran and Mohandas created history by becoming the first Malaysians to reach the summit of the 8,848m-high mountain after a 59-day climb at 2.10pm on May 23, 1997.

Nor Ramlee leaves his wife, Roslin Abdul Jalil, and two children, Norsharina, 19, and Norshazlin, 14.

The expedition was the brainchild of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who launched the project on June 4, 1996.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong conferred Nor Ramlle the Kesatria Mangku Negara.

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