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Malaysian-Wife

MALAYSIAN SADDENED BY LOSS OF HIS WIFE IN SEPT 11 ATTACK AT WTC

By: Salmy Hashim

NEW YORK, Feb 5 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Lee Kim Liang never thought that his daily telephone chat with his wife, Ang Siew Nya, who worked at the World Trade Centre, would be his last on Sept 11 last year.

"She would call every day at 8 in the morning to check on our two kids before they go to school from her 95th floor office at WTC. Sept 11 was her last call," says Lee at the makeshift memorial next to Ground Zero, the site where two hijacked aircraft were brutally rammed into New York's twin towers.

Lee chokes back his tears as he views the site where his wife used to work with a company called Marsh USA Inc, an insurance broker.

All that's left of WTC is a bare piece of property where digging continues for the remains of loved ones and other valuables. Several dump trucks stand by to collect the remains for further inspection at nearby Staten Island.

Lee, 40, who works at a trading company in New Jersey, recalls that black September day.

"When I heard the terrible news I rushed to the telephone to call her, but all the lines were down. I tried to go to Manhattan but all the roads and bridges were closed. It was only on the third day that I managed to get there. But I was told that she and thousands others were gone."

Ang, his late wife, left behind two young girls -- aged 4 and 8 - who are learning to grow up without their mother.

"The older one is very helpful. She is taking care of her younger sister," says Lee as he waits for Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, to arrive at the site.

Three Malaysians were buried at the crash site with almost 3,000 other people.

Visitors viewing Ground Zero are surrounded by memorabilia and pictures left by loved ones. There is a card that says, "Happy Anniversary to my husband" with a half eaten anniversary cake wrapped in aluminium foil.

Another is a picture of a smiling young man in his 30's which says: "This is my dady (sic) - Mike Wholey - I love him." The letter is accompanied by a drawing of a red heart and a black heart.

There are other touching scenes -- a row of bears, angels cut out from paper, a hat of a fireman, candles lit everywhere, pictures and more pictures of victims. Each sad picture tells a sad story that tears at your soul.

The wall of the memorial says: "In memory of the international victims of the World Trade Center attack. Sept 11, 2001." Flags of countries where the victims came from are painted on the wall which is now filled with condolence messages from visitors.

Dr Mahathir and his wife appear overwhelmed by the scene. The Prime Minister was given a briefing by an official from the Mayor of New York City's office. And he wrote a condolence message next to the Malaysian flag.

Dr Mahathir, who is deeply saddened by the tragedy, hopes that nothing like this will happen again because the victims, including the Malaysians, are innocent.

"After seeing the place, I feel nearer to the incident...difficult to understand how people could do such a thing. I feel very much saddened... more terrible to see pictures (on tv) of people jumping out the windows and

falling to their deaths," he said

The thick smoke which had enveloped the area is gone. But the breeze still brings with it a light dust and the faint smell of death.

May Ang and the thousands of victims at Ground Zero rest in peace.

-- BERNAMA

SH AHH JK