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Going global

IF Malaysians are to make their mark in the world, staying comfortably at home will not bring recognition. They should venture out, take risks and rise to the challenge of being world-beaters. Thankfully, of late, there have been Malaysians daring enough to answer the call of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, himself a fine example of someone whose indomitable will has made him a respected world statesman.

Two Malaysians, M. Magendran and N. Mohanadas, scaled Mount Everest, the world's highest mountain. Even though they were not the first, their achievement is still a tremendous feat. Another Malaysian hero is Datuk Azhar Mansor who courageously sailed solo around the world. The Malaysia Boleh spirit motivated Datuk Abdul Malik Mydin to swim the English Channel. We should also remember the Sidek brothers for their exploits in badminton and others as well, like Ong Beng Hee and Nicol David in squash.

On the corporate scene, some local entrepreneurs have made their presence felt overseas, such as Tan Sri Francis Yeoh with his takeover of Wessex Water in the UK. Petronas and MISC are among companies which have gone global. In international diplomacy, Tan Sri Razali Ismail is an outstanding diplomat and United Nations mediator. Actress Datuk Michelle Yeoh has won international fame, while Zhang Toi and Datuk Jimmy Choo have carved out reputations in fashion. In science, we have Prof Datuk Dr Mazlan Othman, the first woman director of the UN Office of Outerspace Affairs. But of consistent paucity are our men and women of letters, in Bahasa Malaysia or English, whose renown in the arts and literature has barely been established regionally, let alone farther afield. We salute the global Malaysians who have made it. They should inspire more Malaysians to take on the world.