

**Dr M To Launch Coffee Table Book 'ANTARCTICA: Malaysia's Journey To The Ice'  
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad will launch on Wednesday the coffee table book 'ANTARCTICA: Malaysia's Journey to the Ice' produced by the National Antarctic Research Centre (NARC).

The book, which has 275 pages of text and 366 photographs, is published in collaboration with the Malaysian National News Agency (Bernama) with funding from the University of Malaya and the Higher Education Ministry.

'ANTARCTICA: Malaysia's Journey to the Ice' gives an elaborate account of the icy continent, its geology, climate, flora and fauna, and the scientific research stations as well as the work of the multinational group of scientists and researchers who focus their efforts there.

It also relates the aspiration of Malaysia to persuade the international community to regard and accept Antarctica as a common heritage of mankind and utilise the conducive atmosphere it offers for research that will benefit humanity.

While it portrays the literal journey of scientists from tropical Malaysia to the icy continent to undertake research, it also depicts the unending symbolic journey of preserving Antarctica for the common benefit of mankind.

Prof Datuk Dr Azizan Abu Samah, Director of the NARC and Chief Editor of the book, described the publication as one of the biggest accomplishments of the NARC and a celebration of the 10th anniversary of its establishment.

He said the Malaysian Antarctica Research Programme (MARP) is one of the most successful programmes that Malaysia has undertaken and it is a fitful legacy of Tun Mahathir's vision on Antarctica.

Prof Datuk Dr Azizan said the personal accounts of many young Malaysian scientists and students who have been to Antarctica to undertake research have been included in the book to emphasise the fact that young people can achieve a lot if given the opportunity and space.

These are the people who will continue to advance Malaysia's aspirations in terms of Antarctica in the years to come, he said.

Tan Sri Dr Ghauth Jasmon, Vice Chancellor of the University of Malaya where NARC is located and host of the book launch, said the projects carried out under the MARP, especially those by researchers and scientists from the university, have gained international recognition.

This has facilitated research collaboration with polar countries that are active in Antarctic and Arctic research, he said.

Tan Sri Dr Ghauth said the University of Malaya, as a premier research university, is committed to moving the country higher in the global value chain and to creating new knowledge and valuable new findings necessary to enable Malaysia to become a developed nation.

Datuk Yong Soo Heong, Editor-in-Chief and acting General Manager of Bernama and an advisor of the publication, said the book portrays the literal journey of scientists from tropical Malaysia to the icy continent to undertake research and, at the same time, depicts the continuous journey of preserving Antarctica for future generations and benefiting humanity in the process.

He said the book would definitely be a much sought-after source of reference for people undertaking research on Antarctica and students pursuing studies on, for example, climate change, geology and Antarctic flora and fauna.

Datuk Yong congratulated the NARC in coming up with this book to help enrich the knowledge of Malaysians on the significance of Antarctica.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak, in a message in the book, congratulated the NARC for having brought out this publication to kindle in Malaysians an interest in Antarctica and to tell the story of a young nation's determination to maintain Antarctica as a territory for the common benefit of mankind.

He expressed the hope that there would be increased participation of Malaysia and Malaysian scientists in Antarctic research.

Mohd Najib praised the Malaysian scientists and young students who had excelled in research work on Antarctica and done the country proud even though Malaysia did not have its own research station on the icy continent.

Tun Dr Mahathir, in his foreword in the book, said curiosity had driven mankind to explore, to leave nothing untouched in any part of the planet Earth and, progressively, in places beyond as well.

"It is the fervent hope that this curiosity will not kill the cat, will not destroy this last unsettled continent," said Tun Dr Mahathir, who has strongly maintained that Antarctica must be preserved as a common heritage of mankind.

Tun Dr Mahathir headed a Malaysian delegation on a visit to the icy continent from Feb 6 to 13 in 2002.

"ANTARCTICA: Malaysia's Journey to the Ice" will stand out among coffee table books as the pictures within come from a rare collection of photographs taken by an exclusive group of scientists and a small number of Antarctic visitors.

The book will go on sale right after the launch at the NARC office in the University of Malaya and at Wisma Bernama at the promotional price RM99 per copy.

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