

## **Dr M applauds remarkable Thailand cave rescue**

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 11 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad today congratulated the rescuers made up of international divers and Thai authorities for their daring and remarkable rescue of 12 boys and their football coach from the Tham Luang Cave complex in Chiang Rai, Thailand, yesterday.

"On behalf of all Malaysians, I would like to congratulate the rescuers and the Thai authorities for the daring and remarkable rescue of the 12 boys and their football coach yesterday.

"We are elated that the rescue mission is a complete success and these boys can now return to their families. The mission has not been without sacrifices," he said in a Facebook post.

At the same time, Dr Mahathir also extended condolences to the family and friends of the former Royal Thai Navy SEAL diver Saman Kunan, 38, who died last Friday after delivering the much-needed oxygen tanks inside Chamber 3 of the cave during the mission to save the Wild Boars football team and their coach.

"Our hearts go out to Petty Officer First Class Saman Kunan who tragically lost his life while delivering oxygen tanks into the cave during the mission," he said.

The Prime Minister said Saman's heroic deed would remain etched in the memories of the Thais and the people all over the world who had followed the dramatic episode closely.

The 12 boys, aged between 11 and 16, and their 25-year-old coach went missing in the Tham Luang Cave Complex in Thailand's northern province of Chiang Rai on June 23.

They were found on July 2 after the search, conducted by more than 1,000 rescuers, entered the ninth day.

Thirteen foreign cave diving experts and five Thai navy rescuers participated in the first operation on Sunday that brought out four boys from the cave.

In the daring and harrowing operation, rescuers had to navigate through narrow passageways and murky waters inside the cave before ending the 17-day ordeal of the football team, with the last four brought out from the cave yesterday.

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