

Climber who died felt unwell during expedition

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GERIK: Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) hostel supervisor Mohd Shahril Othman was coughing on the first two days of the climb up Gunung Chamah last week.

According to Mohd Hizani Zainon, a guide engaged to lead the Gunung Chamah team which set out on June 21, Shahril, 29, felt weak and by the fourth day complained that his limbs were numb.

"By then he was unable to walk," said Hizani yesterday.

Hizani, 33, said the team decided not to let Shahril, who was chaperone to the six student climbers in the Gunung Chamah team, continue the journey at Sungai Peres as he was very weak then.

"We were planning to leave the jungle and get help for him," he said.

Hizani said he was cradling Shahril in his lap when he died at 3.40am on Saturday.

He and another guide, Adam Roheimy Rais, 31, left the Sungai Peres campsite at 6am to report the death, leaving three orang asli to look after the body.



Shahril: Was said to have had breathing difficulties before he died

Hizani returned to the jungle on a helicopter with Fire and Rescue personnel to airlift Shahril's body.

Fire department officer Ungku Abd Jalil Ungku Ismail from Subang, who headed the operation, said the rescuers found the Sungai Peres campsite at 10.30am yesterday, but only managed to find a spot to

land and fly out the body at 5pm, arriving at the landing strip here 30 minutes later.

Shahril's brother Sazali, a 42-year-old teacher in Arau, Perlis, said he saw him a day before the expedition.

"He was not feeling well but still wanted to go on the climb," he said, adding that Shahril also did not want to meet their mother because he was afraid she would stop him from going.

"My brother planned to celebrate our mother's birthday on July 1 at his UUM quarters," he said when met here yesterday.

Another brother, Zamzuri, 33, a graphic designer in Bangi, said: "All of us brothers are adventurous and I was shocked to hear of his death. I was told he had breathing difficulties before he died."

Student union representative Othman Mohd Shafawi, 21, who was part of the Gunung Chamah team, said Shahril was a friendly and cheerful man.

"He was singing along with us when we started on the expedition," he said.