

## Man continues to climb Gunung Rajah despite brush with death

NST (REGION) PAGE 22 4/3/2015

**BENTONG:** Despite being struck by lightning while hiking up Gunung Rajah 11 years ago, Muhammad Sobri Zainal continues to help hikers climb the mountain.

The odd job worker, 30, said he was still traumatised by the incident, in which two climbers were killed.

"I will never forget the tragedy but it does not deter me from helping others to conquer Gunung Rajah, which is one of the most difficult mountains to climb in the country," said Sobri.

"We were assisting an expedition from Kuala Lumpur when we stumbled on a group of private college students without a guide."

Concerned about the students' safety, Sobri invited them to join the expedition.

"It was raining heavily when we reached the peak. We invited the students to take shelter with us as they did not have tents."

Sobri said he was trying to expand

his tent when there was a flash of blinding light followed by a thunderous clap.

"It happened so quickly. I was thrown onto the rocky ground and was paralysed. My heart was beating fast and I knew that we had been struck by lightning."

Sobri said he could see two victims — Ahmad Shah Jaafar, 24, and Mohd Nazim Ibrahim, 35, — lying motionless inside the tent. A burnt smell filled the area.

He said some expedition members rushed down to the Chamang recreational area to get help and the victims were taken to hospital by helicopter.

Sobri said he had to wait for more than 24 hours before he was sent to Kuala Lumpur Hospital, where he was treated for serious burns for two months.

"I could not move my limbs and the doctors told me that I would never be active again."

But, Sobri proved them wrong



Members of the Pahang Media team posing for a picture on Gunung Rajah on Sunday. Pic by Iskandar Tajuddin

when he started hiking just two weeks after he was discharged.

He has assisted hundreds of ex-

pedition teams to conquer Gunung Rajah, which became famous because of the incident.

He also helped to guide the Pahang Media team to hike up the mountain on Sunday.