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KUALA LUMPUR, SEPT 8 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD GAVE THE HONOUR OF FLAGGING OFF THE ARMED FORCES WALKATHON HERE TODAY TO AN ARMY CORPORAL WHO HAD LOST HIS LEGS TO A COMMUNIST TERRORIST BOOBY TRAP, A GESTURE THAT WON THE APPROVAL OF ALL THOSE PRESENT AT THE OCCASION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO DEFENCE MINISTER WAS ABOUT TO FLAG OFF THE MAIN EVENT OF THE WALKATHON AT PADANG MERBOK HERE WHEN HE SAW CPL SIRAT BIN TAMBI ON A WHEELCHAIR AMONG THE SPECTATORS.

THEN A TROOPER, SIRAT OF THE 1ST RANGER BATTALION HAD BOTH HIS LEGS BLOWN UP BY A BOOBY TRAP DURING A JOINT MALAYSIAN-THAI OPERATION AGAINST COMMUNISTS TERRORISTS IN THE BETONG BORDER AREA IN 1979.

AFTER BEING ASKED TO TAKE DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR'S PLACE TO FLAG OFF THE MAIN EVENT OF THE DAY, CPL SIRAT, WHO NOW WORKS AT THE KINRARA MILITARY HOSPITAL, STOOD UP WITH THE AID OF ARTIFICIAL LIMBS TO DO THE JOB.

EARLIER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO ARRIVED DRIVING A METALLIC BLUE PROTON SAGA, FLAGGED OFF THE VIP EVENT. -- MORE
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THE EIGHT KM WALKATHON TODAY WAS PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS HELD IN CONJUNCTION WITH ARMED FORCES DAY WHICH FALLS ON SEPT 16. ABOUT 4,000 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN THE EVENT.

PRIVATE MOHAMED NOR HAJI AHMAD WON THE MEN'S EVENT AND PRANITA WANIDAH IDRIS THE WOMEN'S EVENT.

CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCES GEN TAN SRI MOHAMED GHAZALI SETH AND CHIEF OF ARMY GEN DATUK GHAZALI CHE MAT WON THE FIRST AND SECOND PRIZES RESPECTIVELY FOR THE VIP EVENT.

CPL SIRAT WAS ALSO PRESENTED WITH A SOUVENIR FOR OFFICIATING THE MAIN EVENT. -- BERNAMA
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