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Mahathir-Circumnavigation

PM CONFIDENT CIRCUMNAVIGATION BY AZHAR WILL SUCCEED

LANGKAWI, Dec 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that sailor Azhar Mansor's quest to circumnavigate the world may succeed.

He said that Azhar's determination to sail non-stop solo projected a positive image of the country.

Activities of such positive image of the country normally would not attract much public or media interest, he said when launching the yacht "Jalur Gemilang" owned by Azhar, at Tanjung Malai, here.

They were more interested in activities which projected a negative image of the country, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the private sector should sponsor more of such activities to show that they were proud of the country.

Perlis-born Azhar, 40, will try to break the world record of 105 days for non-stop solo sailing held by Frenchman Christophe Auguin.

Azhar is also determined to be the first person to sail non-stop solo on a new route verified by the United Kingdom-based World Sailing Speed Record Council (WSSRC).

The epic voyage, the first by a Malaysian, will take Azhar from Langkawi to the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic oceans then back to Langkawi passing through five southern-most capes.

His route would also involve making a long loop northwards of Brazil to complete the 21,600 nautical miles required by the WSSRC as a circumnavigation.

Meanwhile, asked to comment on a statement by international financier George Soros calling on his ouster and the release of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Dr Mahathir said that Soros was free to express his opinion.

"I don't wish to make any comments on the matter," he said.

-- BERNAMA

JM/NH RM