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Azhar heading for final turnpoint

LANGKAWI, Sun. - Jalur Gemilang skipper Datuk Azhar Mansor has another 194 nautical miles to go before he rounds Sabang Island off northern Sumatra.

If weather conditions are favourable, Azhar is expected to sail pass the island in the next 24 hours.

Jalur Gemilang is now sailing at an average speed of eight knots. The yacht has progressed some 170 nautical miles from its last reported position.

In his despatch to shore base this evening, Azhar said he was maintaining progress in light conditions.

"The weather is clear and cloudy at times. I have another day to pass Sabang and prepare the yacht to head for its final turnpoint before heading to Langkawi."

Azhar's estimated time of arrival at the finish line on Aug 11 is between 4pm and 5pm.

Jalur Gemilang is located today at latitude 04 degrees 47' 18" North, longitude 092 degrees 01' 25" East. The ocean racer was headed at course bearing 065 degrees.

Since leaving Langkawi on Feb 2, Azhar had taken the ocean racer across three oceans and five of the southernmost capes in the world.

The skipper had sailed more than 24,968 nautical miles in five months. He has another 472 nautical miles to go before he reaches Langkawi on Aug 11.

Meanwhile at a welcoming committee meeting held at the Awana Porto Malai Resort here, protocol arrangements for VIP guests have been finalised by the various agencies.

Azhar's historic crossing to the finish line will be witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and more than 2,000 members of the public.

More than 50 vessels from the Marine Police, Maritime Department and other government agencies will be waiting for Jalur Gemilang about five nautical miles off the Star Cruise jetty at Awana Porto Malai.

Langkawi Marine Police Chief DSP Zakaria Embi said a passage for Azhar would be cleared to ease the sailor's approach to finish his voyage.

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