

04 FEB 1999

Azhar-2ND DAY

AZHAR IN HIGH SPIRITS OFF SUMATRA, HAS COVERED 276 NAUTICAL MILES

LANGKAWI, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Malaysian yachtsman Azhar Mansor now on a quest to circle the globe has covered 276 nautical miles after two days. He set sail from here on Tuesday.

His speed was improving and was reported 76 nautical miles from his first point, a spokeswoman at the monitoring station in Tanjung Malai here said.

"He gave his position at about 4am today and said he is fine and was in high spirits and is confident of accomplishing his feat", she added.

He had some difficulties, though, in steering the yacht due to light wind conditions in the area where he was, she said.

Azhar will send his report daily either through e-mail or telex.

His RM1.8 million yacht, Jalur Gemilang a handsome 15.2 m single handed high performance ocean racer is equipped with facsimile, e-mail and telex facilities.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad sent off Azhar on his 21,600 nautical mile historic voyage on Tuesday.

The spokeswoman said Azhar needed an average wind speed of 15 knots to steer the yacht comfortably.

Azhar's voyage is the first attempt to circle the globe beginning from the Indian Ocean with Langkawi as the starting point as previous attempts by Westerners began from the Atlantic Ocean.

Frenchman Christophe Auguin holds the current world circumnavigation record of 105 days, 20 hours, 31 minutes and 23 seconds set in 1997 in the yacht "Geodis".

To accomplish his feat, Azhar would have to sail along Cape Leeuwin off Australia, South Cape of New Zealand, Cape Horn in South America, Fernando de Noronha Island in the Atlantic Ocean, the Cape of Good Hope and back to Langkawi in May this year.

-- BERNAMA

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