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Azhar-World

AZHAR IS SET TO SAIL AROUND THE WORLD

LANGKAWI, Feb 1 (Bernama) -- Seaman Azhar Mansor is all set to begin his solo voyage around the world tomorrow in his RM1.8 million yacht "Jalur Gemilang" named after the national flag.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will be among the large number of people who will see him off at Awana Porto Malai here.

Azhar who will be 41 on Feb 11 hoped Malaysians would pray for his success as they had been supportive of his efforts for the mission this far.

"I have prepared two-and-half years for this trip including charting my route," he said.

"Owning the yacht and getting lots of support is not the end of the story. The real success will come when I have overcome the challenges of the sea around the world and safely return to Langkawi sometime in May this year."

His friends and relatives have also gathered at Tanjong Malai to see him set off tomorrow on his 40,000 km solo voyage.

He said his 70-year-old father Mansor Saad had been a constant source of support and encouragement.

The former president of the Kangar Town Council said his son had 20 years experience in the sea and would go through it.

Azhar had already received the letter of authorisation from the "World Sailing Speed Record Council (WSRC) for the trip.

He is the first yachtsman to begin the challenge of going around the world from the Indian Ocean compared to others who started off from the Atlantic Ocean, seafaring men said.

Azhar, who has a diploma in marine engineering, from the Singapore Polytechnic had previously served with merchant ships and had accumulated much experience in the sea.

He is bringing along two tonnes of canned food for the 100 to 130-day voyage.

Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim also called on Azhar and handed him a personal gift of RM10,000.

He said Azhar would not only bring glory to Malaysia but also to Perlis where he was born.

"I also aim to sail round the world and I am proud that Azhar is going before me," he added.

Azhar was born in Padang Katong, Kangar and had his early education at the Kangar English School and then went on to the Sultan Abdul Hamid College in Alor Setar and the Singapore Polytechnic.

-- BERNAMA

AD/NH AAM