

06 AUG 1999

Azhar-Arrival

AZHAR'S ARRIVAL RESCHEDULED TO WEDNESDAY

LANGKAWI, Aug 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysian mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor's return here upon accomplishing a solo east-west circumnavigation of the world has been rescheduled to 4 pm on Wednesday.

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) general manager Datuk Abdul Halil Mutalib said in a statement today that the rescheduling was due to prevailing wind conditions.

Abdul Halil, who is also organising chairman of the homecoming ceremony, said other arrangements remained unchanged.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali will welcome Azhar home.

Azhar was earlier scheduled to reach here at about 5pm on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, according to Azhar, the World Sailing Speed Record Council will send representatives to witness him crossing the finish line at the Star Cruise jetty next week.

In his latest e-mail to his shore base here, Azhar said he had contacted the WSSRC about his arrival and he said they were happy to have the same arrangement of two locally-appointed timekeepers witnessing the crossing.

As was the case when he set sail from here on Feb 2, the timekeepers were from the Malaysian Yachting Association (MYA) and the Star Cruise Terminal here.

In today's e-mail to his shore base at the Awana Porto Malai resort here, Azhar said they will be responsible to establish and furnish the official timing of the finish to the council which is based in Britain.

Azhar is almost certain of making history come next week as he had completely satisfied the WSSRC requirement by crossing the imaginary Equator twice on Feb 8 and yesterday at about 6.53am Malaysian time.

He e-mailed his shore base that he was progressing fairly good with the prevailing Southwesterly blowing at eight to 12 knots with slight and moderate sea.

Azhar said it was gentle to moderate breeze throughout the period with some light patches of cloudy weather with occasional rain.

Today, Azhar's RM2 million ocean racer, the Jalur Gemilang, managed to log 189 nautical miles, compared with 112 nautical miles over 24 hours yesterday, averaging 10 knots an hour.

The Kangar-born sailor was steering his way to Sabang in North Sumatra which is about 536 nautical miles from his position today.

Azhar, who is attempting to become the first Malaysian to sail solo around the world, is now into his 185th day at sea alone.

After having logged 24,623 nautical miles, he has another 814 nautical miles left to be covered.

Azhar reported his yacht's position at Latitude 02 degrees 16' 58" North, Longitude 086 degrees 52' 46" East.

-- BERNAMA

NH RYN