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Dr M: Azhar has done us proud

LANGKAWI, Wed. - "I'm proud to be a Malaysian..." with these words Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad touched a chord in the hearts of Malaysians who celebrated the safe return of solo sailor Datuk Azhar Mansor.

Choking with emotion, Dr Mahathir said Azhar's achievement was a source of pride and joy to all and that it should be a lesson that Malaysians could achieve whatever they set out to do.

At a simple yet colourful welcoming ceremony on the boardwalk of the Awana Porto Malai Resort, Dr Mahathir started off his brief speech by saying: "I don't have much to say ... except to Thank God."

After a pause where he was clearly trying to control his emotions, Dr Mahathir continued: "And how proud I am tonight to be a Malaysian. I am very proud to be a Malaysian.

"The success of Azhar is extraordinary because not everyone can sail round the world alone."

Saying only a tough and determined person could do it, Dr Mahathir added: "I do not think anyone of the 22 million Malaysians can do what Azhar has achieved.

"Like me, I think every Malaysian feels proud to be a Malaysian citizen because of what Azhar has done. He has given us a new spirit and the belief that we can do anything we set out to do.

"We have a slogan, Malaysia Boleh. Initially, we did not have much confidence in this. We thought others were extraordinary and could achieve many things. But today, we see a Malaysian sail from west to east in a journey not done by any other person in the world."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians would have greater confidence in themselves because of Azhar's achievement.

He believed that there were many Malaysians who wanted to achieve something and prove to the world that Malaysians could do it.

He said: "Azhar is an example to all of us, including politicians like myself ... not that I'm going to sail round the world but I will sail towards greater development and progress for our country. We should take this as a lesson and show the world that no one will look down on us. I congratulate Azhar."

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