

02 AUG 1999

Azhar-Sailing

ELABORATE WELCOMING CEREMONY AWAITS AZHAR

LANGKAWI, Aug 2 (Bernama) -- With another 1,330 nautical miles more for Malaysian mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor to reach home, elaborate welcoming ceremony has been lined up for the "Wira Dunia" (World Hero).

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) General Manager Datuk Abdul Halil Mutalib said the ceremony would kick off as soon as Azhar reached the finishing line at the Star Cruise jetty on Aug 10.

He said federal and state government departments were involved in the preparations.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would be on hand to receive the Kangar-born sailor, he told reporters after chairing a meeting to finalise the preparations.

Meanwhile, Azhar faced the slow sailing conditions for the third consecutive day today.

"Still within the light convergence zone of the Equator and the progress is slow with North Northwesterly wind blowing at four to eight knots with slight sea", Azhar said in his e-mail to his shore base at the Awana Porto Malai resort here.

Azhar said it was light air and at times condition was becalmed with cloudy weather and scattered rain.

Yesterday, Azhar hoped to catch up with some speed again as he got further north.

The RM2 million Jalur Gemilang yacht registered only 130 nautical miles over 24 hours.

He is now steering his way to Sabang in North Sumatera which is about 1,054 nautical miles from his position today.

Azhar, who is bidding to become the first Malaysian to sail solo around the world, is into his 181st day in the open sea alone and has logged 24,062 nautical miles.

Azhar reported his yacht's position at Latitude 03 degrees 29' 37" South, Longitude 080 degrees 12' 66" East with an average speed of six knots.

-- BERNAMA

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