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New mast being fitted to Jalur Gemilang

Sam Cheong on Falkland Islands

WORK on Jalur Gemilang's new mast started yesterday in the spirit of gotong royong.

Airmen from the Royal Malaysian Air Force helped Azhar Mansur and Australian rigger Joel Berg in assembling the 22-metre mast. The three-piece mast had to be fitted and carefully drilled and riveted by hand.

The short daylight at the Falklands made the process a difficult one for the rigger who began the task as early as 8.30am.

"It will take a week before I can put the yacht out at sea after the new mast has been lifted," said Azhar.

"I have to make sea trials to see whether the mast is properly tuned and rigged. It has to be fit and ready for the big day," the skipper said.

During lunch break Azhar was treated to a hearty Malaysian meal of nasi panas and gulai lemak cili api by the RMAF airmen.

In the afternoon, the Malaysian aviators and newsmen were given a reception by Falkland's new Governor Donald Lamont at his residence where the Governor was presented with a letter of appreciation from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad by skipper Azhar.

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