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Azhar-Recognition

WORLD SAILING BODY RECOGNISES AZHAR'S SOLO SAILING FEAT

LANGKAWI, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- After waiting for about a month, mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor today proudly showed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad the letter of recognition from the World Sailing Speed Record Council for his east-to-west round-the-world solo feat.

He got the opportunity at lunch time after Dr Mahathir finished visiting the booths at the maritime segment of the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace (LIMA '99) exhibition in Tanjung Malai here.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali looked at the letter with admiration.

Azhar said he received the letter signed by the council's secretary John Reed early last month.

"Actually, I wanted to show the letter to Dr Mahathir on Nov 20 but I thought it's best to see him during LIMA," he said.

In his letter dated Oct 22, 1999 Reed confirmed Azhar's achievement and congratulated all concerned.

Details of the record-breaking feat are as follows:

World Record: Round the World, assisted (stops), eastabout, single-handed.

Yacht: Jalur Gemilang

Dates: Feb 2 to Aug 11 1999.

Elapsed Time: 190 days, six hours 57 minutes two seconds.

Last night, Dr Mahathir conferred Azhar a honorary Navy Captain rank for his sea-faring achievement at a dinner in conjunction with LIMA.

Azhar was awarded the rank in a special commission by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah who is also Defence Forces' Supreme Commander.

Azhar, 41, is the first person to circumnavigate the globe solo using the new east-west route sanctioned by the council.

He was conferred a Datukship on May 18 by the Raja of Perlis in appreciation of his round-the-world voyage.

The Perlis-born sailor set sail from Langkawi on Feb 2 and returned here on Aug 11 after sailing 25,000 nautical miles over 190 days.

The main mast of his ocean racer broke into three when he sailed into a hailstorm in the notorious Southern Ocean, forcing him to be stranded in the Falklands for a month.

He continued his journey on May 26 after receiving a new mast flown by the Royal Malaysian Air Force in a special mission on May 13.

-- BERNAMA

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