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## Malaysian puts off flight across three continents

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Syed Ahmad Abdul Hadi Syed Hussein Alattas will embark on his solo flight across three continents in January and not on Oct 17 as intended due to severe hurricanes over the Northern Atlantic Ocean.

The 29-year-old freelance pilot and aircraft builder is taking up a challenge by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to fly his self-built Velocity RG light aircraft - named Putrajaya Malaysia - from Fullerton, California, to Langkawi.

"This challenge is just a prelude to my ultimate goal to fly solo around the world," he said.

Syed Ahmad plans to finish the journey in about 83 hours with 14 stops over 26 days.

He will cross North America, Europe and Asia, making him the first Malaysian to make such an attempt.

Syed Ahmad decided to postpone the flight after monitoring weather patterns over the Northern Atlantic Ocean. He said the hurricanes are expected to last for the next two to three weeks.

He could launch his bid after that but said he did not want to fly during Hari Raya.

Syed Ahmad has spent the last three years preparing for a solo round-the-world flight. The effort, he says, has shown him how difficult it can be for locals to be adventurous in taking up challenges.

Sponsorship has trickled in slowly.

Microsoft (M) Sdn Bhd will help set up the website which will carry updates on the journey while Mofaz Air has agreed to provide hangarage and office space for the flight's operations centre in Langkawi.

Bisnestek Sdn Bhd is to supply a digital camera and other hardware for taking pictures enroute and new radio station WOWfm is to broadcast reports of the flight while food products brand Manja has given financial support.

NST is the official newspaper.

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