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Record-bid

driver braves danger to meet PM

ALGIERS: Malaysian Shamsurrijal Abdul Jamil, who is aiming to set a world record for a solo drive round the globe in his Proton Satria GTi, braved danger and disregarding official advice, crossed the Algerian border from Tunisia last week to meet Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"The few minutes that I got to spend with the Prime Minister were worth the small sacrifices," he said after meeting Dr Mahathir just before he left for Swaziland yesterday.

Dr Mahathir's encouraging words, he said, made him more determined to succeed.

Shamsurrijal arrived in Algiers on Thursday after passing through the Tunisian border because the Algerian-Moroccan border was closed due to security problems.

He had earlier been advised by Malaysian embassy officials against attempting the feat because of the uncertain security situation along the border.

"I am not trying to tempt fate but I was very confident that being a Malaysian I could secure safe passage across the border.

"True enough, and even when I faced problems, the locals were very helpful when they heard that I was from Malaysia," he said.

Shamsurrijal, who left the country last February, is trying to beat the current world record by driving solo across 118 countries. The present record covers 111 countries.

The 38-year-old former quantity surveyor from Johor has so far travelled over 40,000km and covered 28 countries including Yemen, Egypt and Afghanistan.

He will leave for Eastern Europe through Tunisia soon.

Shamsurrijal plans to conclude his attempt and come back to the country by Aug 31 next year.