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Mahathir-Antarctica

DR M REITERATES CALL TO EXPLORE ANTARCTICA

LANGKAWI, May 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has reiterated his hope that Malaysians would trek across Antarctica to prove their determination in facing risks and challenges.

The prime minister said traversing the icy continent was indeed an enormous challenge for people from tropical countries like Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said he suggested several years ago that Malaysians should trek across Antarctica but no one had yet taken up his challenge, possibly because they were deterred by the high risks involved.

"Previously, I suggested that Malaysians should trek across Antarctica. Although we come from a hot region, it does not mean that we cannot withstand cold," he said today.

He was speaking to reporters after a ceremony to welcome marathon swimmer Abdul Malik Mydin, who reached here to become the first man to swim the 48km journey from Kuala Perlis to Langkawi.

Dr Mahathir said a journey by foot across the Antarctica carried high risks but the people should learn to manage risks wisely and not "concede defeat before competing."

"Of course, it is very dangerous to undertake, but danger exists everywhere ... driving a car also has its risks, an accident can happen and cause death," he said.

On another matter, Dr Mahathir said it was up to the private sector whether to follow the government's decision to give workers bonus.

He said the government could not force the private sector to pay bonus as it was aware that business was declining.

However, if companies could afford there was no harm in giving workers incentives, he said.

In the government's economic stimulus package unveiled on Wednesday, Dr Mahathir announced a half-month bonus for civil servants.

-- BERNAMA

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