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Mahathir-Swim

GO FOR WORLD RECORDS, DR M TELLS MALAYSIANS

LANGKAWI, May 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has thrown a challenge to the younger generation of Malaysians -- strive hard to set world records in the fields they are involved in.

"I hope the feat achieved by Malik will be an example to the younger generation, and I dare the younger generation to improve the country's achievements (to world standards)," he said at a ceremony to welcome Abdul Malik Mydin at the end of his historic swim here today.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians had achieved world-class feats, including conquering Mount Everest, sailing round the world and excelling in endurance equestrian races.

Abdul Malik has become the first person to swim from Kuala Perlis to Langkawi, covering the 48km journey across Melaka Straits in 14 hours and three minutes.

The 28-year-old Penangite left Kuala Perlis at 9.45pm yesterday and reached the Kuah Jetty here at 11.48am to a grand welcome.

The swim, billed the Langkawi Challenge, was part of Abdul Malik's preparation for his mission to swim across the English Channel either in July or August.

"This shows that if we work hard we will achieve success," he said.

Abdul Malik, said Dr Mahathir, had been training for more than three years, including swimming in seas with very cold waters.

"Thank God, today we can see the result. It is not easy to swim for 48km, setting off last night, without sleep and with limited food. But he was in high spirits to continue his swim. He was swimming at 58 strokes per minute," he said.

In fact, Abdul Malik 's determination and self-confidence had enabled him to complete the course some four hours earlier than expected, said Dr Mahathir, who is the patron of the English Channel Challenge to be undertaken by Abdul Malik.

The prime minister said although Abdul Malik was swimming in a cage to avoid being stung by jellyfish, "Don't anybody think that he was holding to the cage and was only being pulled along. I myself saw him swimming freely in the cage."

Dr Mahathir flagged off Abdul Malik in Kuala Perlis and took a boat to follow the final part of his swim.

He congratulated Abdul Malik for his success and hoped that it would inspire other Malaysians to achieve similar feats. Abdul Malik is a businessman and former national cyclist.

"If we seek the easy route ... we will ultimately be destroyed," he said, referring to the fact that there is no easy way to success.

He also thanked Abdul Malik's coaches and the sponsors of the Langkawi Challenge.

The final segment of Abdul Malik's swim and the welcoming ceremony were aired live by RTM.

In an interview with RTM at the ceremony, Dr Mahathir said the younger generation could chalk up world-class achievements in many more challenging activities if they tried hard enough.

He said the tendency of looking for success in the short term might satisfy the desires of the participants but would prove to be counter-productive.

A race would only be successful if the people dared to face and overcome

challenges, he said.

-- BERNAMA

MZM JM YBY