

26 OCT 2003

Kayak-PM

MELAKA STRAITS KAYAKERS PAY TRIBUTE TO PM

JOHOR BAHRU, Oct 26 (Bernama) -- Kayakers who paddled 902km along the Melaka Straits, from Kuala Perlis ke Johor Baharu, today ended their quest and devoted their achievement to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The 16-day expedition, which involved five solo kayakers and two who took turns at the paddle, was led by Samari Mohamad Senang, who said the success was dedicated to the Prime Minister for his contributions to the country.

Samari, a Sports Unit staff of Universiti Malaya, said efforts were being made to record the feat into the Malaysia Book of Record, adding that the feat was also a world record as Selat Melaka was the longest straits in the world.

Speaking of the challenges faced by the members, who were students from the university, Samari said the biggest obstacle was huge waves which topped two metres.

Despite training for three months, he said, the team had to stop for a while near Tanjung Tuan to avoid being capsized by really strong waves.

The inclement weather also played a part in making the quest hard and "at times, the participants had to face big waves and strong winds for six hours," he said, adding that the toughest journey was from Tanjung Tuan to Solok Minyak.

The expedition's youngest member, Zawawi Zainal, 20, said he faced many scary moments during the quest including a capsized.

"My kayak capsized once after being hit by a huge wave. However, with the help of my friends, I managed to face the challenge," he said.

Meanwhile, Rizan Amiruddin, 23, the only female kayaker, said she was proud of paddling the Straits even though she took turns with another participant.

"Even though I have entered other expeditions before, this experience of kayaking 902km of the Melaka Straits is my proudest moment," she said.

-- BERNAMA

MHI EMK