

22 OCT 2003

Fozi-Kayak

JOHOR-PERLIS KAYAKER SPURRED ON BY DR MAHATHIR

KANGAR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Ku Mohd Fozi Ku Husin, 52, who finished an 800km kayak expedition from Tanjung Piai, Johor, in Kuala Perlis near here today, dedicated the effort to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Perlis-born father of 10, who paddled his last stroke towards the Fisheries Development Authority jetty at 5.40pm, started out his quest at the Tanjung Piai National Park on Oct 1.

"I was so spirited to carry out the challenge to appreciate Dr Mahathir who has contributed so much," he told reporters after a function celebrating his journey.

His arrival was met by Perlis Housing and Local Government Committee chairman Loh Yoon Foo on behalf of the Menteri Besar and assemblymen from Perlis as well as Negeri Sembilan, where Ku Mohd Fozi is currently residing.

The paddler said he also chose the number 22, for the days of the expedition, the date of arrival and the number of stops along the way, for Dr Mahathir's 22 years in power.

"Strong currents, huge waves and fierce winds were among the challenges which I had to face to finish the expedition on schedule," he said.

He said in Tanjung Sepat, Selangor, he had to pull the kayak over 2km of mud after strong winds pushed him towards shore and said: "I had to pull for more than an hour to go on. At that time I was not able to push the kayak into deeper water because of strong currents".

Ku Mohd Fozi was thankful, however, that the kayak had not flipped over once during the journey, despite waves of up to 2m.

The arts aficionado also thanked supporters and those who had made the trip a success, although he ruefully admitted there had been many people who had not believed in him.

"Some told me to look in the mirror and judge myself before starting this. I was deemed to old to do it," he said.

He said future plans involved a similar kayak trip next year, from Kelantan to Johor Baharu.

-- BERNAMA

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