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Mahathir-Adventurer

WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT FROM DR MAHATHIR FOR SOLO ADVENTURER

By: Mokhtar Hussain

ALGIERS, Aug 13 (Bernama) - Jalur Gemilang II solo adventurer Shamsurrijal Abdul Jamil's wish to meet Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the Algerian capital has finally come true.

However, he had to wait here for five days to get the chance to meet the Prime Minister before proceeding his journey around the world in a Proton GTi car.

Shamsurrijal, who celebrated his 38th birthday two days ago, said that meeting the Prime Minister had been most meaningful for him after travelling a distance of 40,000 kilometres past 28 countries over the last six months.

"Congratulations (for your efforts). Continue the journey till the end," the Prime Minister told Shamsurrijal. According to Shamsurrijal, the words of encouragement from Dr Mahathir had given him new vigour to face whatever challenges in his journey thereafter.

Shamsurrijal, who started his journey in February, had been following Dr Mahathir's itinerary in Algeria since the morning, including a visit to the Boumerdes region in east Algiers, the area which was worst hit by the earthquake on May 21.

Finally, he had the chance to meet the Prime Minister when Dr Mahathir was leaving one of the leading hotels here in the afternoon after attending a Malaysia-Algeria Business Dialogue.

Dr Mahathir also had a look at the car used by the adventurer in his solo journey around the world.

According to Shamsurrijal, the Prime Minister also asked about the condition of the car and whether there had been any problem faced during the challenging journey.

Dr Mahathir was in the Algerian capital for a three-day official visit beginning Sunday.

After the brief meeting, Shamsurrijal accompanied the Prime Minister to the Algiers airport, where he would depart for Swaziland for another visit.

Shamsurrijal would proceed with his journey by crossing the Mediterranean Sea to Rome, Italy to travel across the European continent before continuing the drive to North America and South America. He is expected to complete the journey in a year's time.

He is targeting to pass through 118 countries during his journey around the world.

On his experience, he said the journey had taught him various aspects about the people around the globe that made him realise how fortunate Malaysians were.

Shamsurrijal also said that he missed his family.

He hoped to meet his wife and four children in one of the cities he would be visiting during the Hari Raya.

"Although we keep in touch frequently via e-mail, I still miss them. They are also the 'number one supporters' for me," he said.

He said that during the six months he had been travelling, he had now understood several Asian languages, especially Arabic.

After this, he would strive to learn French and Spanish as these languages were important for interaction during his travels.

-- BERNAMA

MOK AZZ AO