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Mahathir-Orphan

YOUNG MAHATHIR ARRIVES IN MALAYSIA SEEKING HELP FOR HIS ORPHANAGE

SEPANG, April 14 (Bernama) -- A nine-year-old Indonesian orphan, whose foster father named him after former Malaysian Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, flew in here today from his earthquake-stricken home on Nias Island in Sumatra.

Clad in a striking red shirt and wearing a green "ketayap", the young Mahathir Mohamad who was orphaned two months after his birth in Medan, will get to meet Dr Mahathir tomorrow.

"I want to be a doctor," mumbled the visibly tired boy whose flight here was sponsored by Malaysia Airlines, accompanied by his guardian Yeor Hamun Harafa.

Asked what he would tell Dr Mahathir, he whispered: "I want to ask him to help repair my orphanage (on Nias Island)."

The boy was sent to the orphanage when he was four years old by his aging relative who took care of him for about two years after his foster father died in Medan.

Yeor Hamun said Mahathir was adopted by his foster parents when he was about two months old and he has no siblings.

The foster father, a goods trader in Medan who admired Dr Mahathir's leadership, decided to name the young boy after the Malaysian.

The boy grew up in the orphanage which was destroyed by the recent earthquake.

"He was living in a camp with 36 other children and he is very happy to come to Malaysia. I hope Malaysians will help the boy and our people in Nias Island," he added.

Malaysian Red Crescent media committee chairman Datuk Ahmad A. Talib said the organisation with the help of its Indonesian counterpart and Utusan Malaysia, which highlighted the boy's plight, helped to bring him to Malaysia.

Both Mahathir and Yeor Hamun will stay in Malaysia for an indefinite period.

-- BERNAMA

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