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Harbour races breeze to an end

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THE two-day harbour races at the Raja Muda International Regatta ended calmly as gentle winds helped the boats to complete the course on time.

In the Racing Class 1A Hollywood Boulevard came in first followed by Stella and Yo while in the Racing Class 1B, Yo emerged the winner followed by Scallywag and Dewi Bayu.

In the Premium Cruising Class it was Australian Maid which took the honours from Yendys and Shahtoosh while in the Cruising Class Muzbnuts won with Pelangi and Vela taking second and third.

The calm weather was in contrast to Wednesday's run from Penang to Langkawi which was held in an electric storm.

Most of the crew worked feverishly through the night strapped with life jackets, harnesses locked to the railings and doing a balancing act on board as the boats tossed around like tin cans.

The speedier boats managed to escape the storm as the north easterly winds pushed them hard along the busy Straits of Malacca and reached Langkawi before midnight.

Hollywood Boulevard with Ray Roberts at the helm proved that it was one of the fastest boats as it took line honours in Racing Class 1A but its low handicap relegated it to second place behind Yo skippered by Peter Ahern.

Hi-Fidelity captained by Neil Pryde came in third.

Dewi Bayu, with an all-women crew, proved they were a match for the seasoned sailors by winning Racing Class 1B. With Juanita Spencer and Tiffany Koo taking turns at the helm, the team proved they were capable of harnessing the elements to finish best in their class.

Scallywag crossed the finish line ahead of Dewi Bayu but was relegated to second place after its corrected time (which takes into consideration the International Racing Certificate handicapping system) fell behind the women's team. Singapore registered Sumatra coming in third.

Malaysian registered Yendys clinched the Premier Class as K. Garry and his crew outpaced Australian Maid with J. Wardill at the helm and New Zealand registered Intrigue of Stornoway with I. Nicolson at the wheel.

In the Cruising category Pelangi with A. Findlay at the helm took first place followed by Muzbnuts and Vela.

In the Classic boats category the only multi-hull competitor in the regatta - F31 - a trimaran - arrived at the Royal Langkawi Yacht Club (RLYC) ahead of Chalupa and Greensleeves.

The foul weather took its toll on the other Classic boats as they limped home hours later. This included the Navy's Dondang Sayang, the Liz Hallett-helmed Stardust and the Eveline, owned and skippered by Datuk Richard Curtis.

The contestants were later surprised when former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived at the RLYC and met some of them. Dr Mahathir was then briefed on the regatta and the expansion of the marina by RLYC general manager Wicky Sundram.